

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

**The Karaites, a Religious and Linguistic Minority in Eastern Galicia
(Ukraine)
1772-1945**

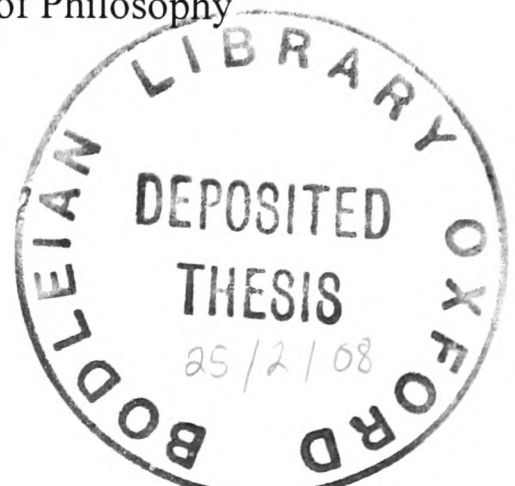
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A thesis submitted to the Board of the Faculty of ~~Modern~~ History in partial fulfillment
of the academic requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Trinity term, 2007



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Abstract

The dissertation is dedicated to the history of the East European Karaite Jews (Karaites), a highly interesting ethno-religious Jewish group. It focuses on the Karaites of Galicia (Ukraine) from 1772 to 1945.

The first four chapters of the dissertation are devoted to the Austrian period in the history of the Galician Karaites (1772-1918). Chapter One demonstrates that the Karaites represent an unparalleled example of preferential treatment of a Jewish community by the Austrian administration. Chapter Two provides readers with an overview of the “internal” history of the Karaite communities of Halicz and Kukizów. Chapter Three outlines the religious and ethnographic customs and traditions of the Galician Karaites. Chapter Four focuses on relations between the Karaites and their ethnic neighbours – the Slavs and the Ashkenazic Jews. Chapter Five is dedicated to the history of the Karaites in Polish Galicia between the two world wars. It is in this period that the Karaites started to become more and more separated from the Ashkenazic Jews. Chapter Six reconstructs the process of dejudaization and Turkicization of the Karaite community, highlighting the role of Seraja Szapszał, the Karaite ideological leader. It ends with an analysis of the history of the community during the period of the Nazi occupation. Chapter Seven outlines the ultimate decline of the Galician community after the Second World War. It also describes the current state of the Galician Karaite community and its historical legacy. The conclusion provides some essential remarks regarding the position of the Karaite case within the wider framework of Jewish and European history.

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Long Abstract

The history of the East European Karaite Jews (Karaites), a highly interesting ethno-religious Jewish group, and especially of its Galician-Volhynian sub-ethnic branch, undoubtedly deserves much closer examination than has been the case until now. The Karaites are members of an independent, dissident religious movement within Judaism. The earliest Karaite settlers appeared in the territories which belong to present-day Poland, Lithuania, Western Ukraine and the Crimea in the late Middle Ages, not later than the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries. In the late Middle Ages and early modern times Karaite communities played an important role in Jewish life in Eastern Europe. While retaining Hebrew as their *leshon ha-qodesh* (Heb. “sacred language”), the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite communities adopted the Turkic Karaimo-Kypchak language (a.k.a. Karaim) in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries as their *Umgangssprache*. This unusual feature differentiated the Karaites from their ethnic neighbours – the Yiddish-speaking European Jews, the Slavic Poles and the Ruthenians (Ukrainians).

My dissertation focuses primarily on the Karaites of the region traditionally called in the academic literature “Eastern Galicia.” Scholars are still at a loss with

regard to the exact date of the settlement of the Karaite community in Galicia in general, and in the town of Halicz in particular. Nevertheless, medieval Latin sources attest that there was a Karaite community in Lwów, then the capital of Galicia, already in the fifteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, most likely, the community emigrated to Halicz. In the sixteenth century there were several smaller Karaite communities in other Galician towns. The Karaite community of Halicz, which was apparently engaged mainly in agricultural activity, was much larger and more important than that of the Rabbanites (i.e. Talmudic Jews) until the middle of the eighteenth century. From the eighteenth century onwards, however, the Halicz Karaites became less numerous and influential.

A few hundred Karaites living in Galicia became citizens of the Habsburg monarchy after the first partition of Poland in 1772. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, the Karaites of Austria and Russia started to receive preferential legal treatment, while being exempt from many burdens imposed upon other Jewish citizens of these two countries. Thus, in the period from 1772-1918, while being separated religiously, linguistically, and legally from their religious brethren, the Talmudic Jews, the Karaite community of Galicia was also separated geographically from their more numerous co-religionists living in Volhynia, Lithuania, and the Crimea. Because of this isolation and a ban imposed on mixed marriages with representatives of non-Karaite communities, the Austrian period also became the beginning of demographic stagnation, resulting in the practical disappearance of the community after the Second World War.

Maria Theresa's Royal Decree of 24 October 1774, which exempted the Karaites from the payment of marriage tax and a half of poll-tax, was the first in a series of privileges granted to the Karaites by the governments of European countries

in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From this point on, the Karaites, presented as the “exemplary Jews of the country,” were often used by Austrian state officials as a convenient tool in anti-Rabbanite propaganda. This is why the tiny Karaite community received very great and, perhaps, somewhat undeserved attention in the anti-Jewish polemical literature and travel reports of that period. These Karaite–Rabbanite tensions notwithstanding, the nineteenth century also became the age of developing contacts between Galician Karaite intellectuals and Rabbanite scholars, leaders of the Jewish Enlightenment.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania, never strong in numbers, amounted to only about a thousand persons. In the interwar period, in order to secure their privileged non-Jewish status, the Polish Karaites had to conceal the Judaic character of their faith and ethnic identity. According to the pseudo-scholarly theory developed by Seraja Szapszał, the head of the Polish-Lithuanian community between the two world wars, the Karaites were not Jews at all, but Turko-Khazar nomadic proselytes, who at some point accepted the Karaite, non-Talmudic Mosaic faith. In spite of the fact that this theory was based on more than dubious (and sometimes simply falsified) evidence, in the 1930s the Karaite community embraced this doctrine, and gradually started losing its original Judeo-Karaite identity. In Galicia, however, the process of the loss of Jewish identity, and acceptance of the new Turkic one, was much less evident than in any other Karaite community in Eastern Europe.

Szapszał’s pseudo-scholarly Turkic theory and rapid dejudaization of Karaite society, in fact, saved the Karaites during the Holocaust. In 1939 Nazi officials, tricked by the seemingly academic argumentation of Szapszał and his followers, somewhat hesitatingly recognized the Karaites as non-Jews. During the war the

Karaites, for the first time, started to associate the word “Jew” with mortal danger – which stimulated the loss of Judeo-Karaite identity in the post-war period. This is the reason why after the end of the war the process of Turkicization of the East European Karaite community was almost complete, and since that time most Karaites have considered themselves to be “Karaites of Turkic extraction” (or, alternatively, “Turks of Karaite faith”). Again, in Galicia this process was much less radical than in other communities, and many local Karaites preserved their Judeo-Karaite identity even after the war.

Despite their insignificant numbers, the Karaites played an important role in the intellectual and academic life of twentieth-century Poland. Post-war development of Oriental studies in Eastern Europe can hardly be imagined without scholars of Karaite origin, such as A. Zajączkowski, Wł. Zajączkowski, A. Dubiński, Z. Abrahamowicz, J. Sulimowicz, A. Sulimowicz, and Z. Dubińska. Unfortunately, the unique and culturally-specific Galician-Volhynian Karaite community has practically disappeared. At the time of this writing, the Halicz community consists only of two elderly ladies. A few other remaining speakers of the Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language live outside Ukraine. Thus, we must state with some sorrow that one more ethnic minority and one more language have almost completely disappeared from the European scene.

Up until now the whole bibliography of Galician Karaitica is limited to a score of studies (mostly of narrow linguistic and epigraphic character) or a few pages in larger works on the Jews in Austria or the Karaites in Eastern Europe. In spite of the undoubted interest on the part of scholars in the Galician-Volhynian branch of Karaism, there is still no comprehensive study or monograph dedicated to the history of this highly interesting and unique community. This may be explained first of all by

the fact that Karaite manuscripts, scattered in a few archival collections of the former Soviet Union, became almost inaccessible to Western scholars soon after 1917.

Furthermore, every scholar dealing with any aspect of the Karaite history in Eastern Europe inevitably has to come across a most serious methodological problem related to authenticity of some Karaite sources. It was argued that nineteenth-century Karaite leaders distorted and falsified some sources in order to prove to the Russian administration the “noble” ancient origins of the Karaites – and thus receive further alleviations in the legal status of the Karaite community in Russia and Poland. Moreover, in the twentieth century in the process of the Turkicization of their identity the group of Karaite leaders headed by Seraja Szapszał started a new wave of conscious misinterpretation of Karaite history, one that was often accompanied by falsification of historical sources and documents.

Thus, a scholar analysing the history of the East European Karaites should always carefully weigh the authenticity of almost every document of Karaite origin. I hope that in my study I managed to achieve a much more objective approach to the analysis of Karaite sources than most of my academic predecessors. Besides, in contrast to many other students of the problem, who often understood Turkicization of the Karaites as a natural development of their history, I analysed that phenomenon as a superficial and ideologically motivated process, which would not have taken place if it were not for the growth of anti-Semitism in Poland and in the rest of Europe.

Another methodological problem of the study of Karaite history in Eastern Europe is related to the necessity of reading sources in several European (German, Russian, French, English, Polish, Ruthenian/Ukrainian, and Yiddish) and Oriental (Hebrew and Karaim) languages. My knowledge of all of the aforementioned languages has allowed me to attempt the first comprehensive study of the history of

the Galician Karaite community from its beginnings until today. The main emphasis of my dissertation is, however, on the period between the First Partition of Poland (1772) and the end of World War II (1945), the time when Galicia was a part of the Austrian Empire, interwar Poland, and finally Soviet and Nazi-occupied territory. Such a chronological frame of my study is explained first of all by my intention to trace the development of the Galician Karaites as a compact ethnic entity in as wide historical context as possible, from the end of early modern period through the nineteenth-century Slavicization of their traditions until the end of the Second World War and ultimate Turkicization of the community. Geographically, the dissertation will be limited to the historical borders of Eastern Galicia, with the main emphasis on the history of Halicz and Kukizów. Despite this, in order to offer a comparative analysis of the Karaite case in a general framework of the history of East European ethnic minorities, I will make frequent historical excursions beyond the Galician borders.

The structure of the dissertation is as follows. The first four chapters are devoted to the Austrian period in the history of the Galician Karaites (1772-1918). Chapters One and Two represent two different views of the history of the community. “External” (i.e. non-Karaite) sources, which are analysed in Chapter One, provide readers with a view of the life of the community as seen from outside. These sources elucidate the position of the Karaites among other ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities of Austrian Galicia and describe the process of legal separation of the Karaites from other Jewish subjects of the country. It is argued in this chapter that the Karaites represent an unparalleled example of preferential treatment of a Jewish community by the Austrian administration which exempted the Karaites from the most burdensome Jewish laws and limitations. A special subchapter is dedicated to

personal contacts between Austrian monarchs and members of East European Karaite communities. Chapter Two, based mostly on sources of Karaite origin, provides readers with an overview of the “internal” history of the Karaite communities of Halicz and Kukizów, with a small subsection devoted to the city of Lwów (Lemberg). Particular attention is given to the history of monuments of Karaite culture in Galicia, such as cemeteries and synagogues.

Chapter Three, also based mostly on “internal” Karaite sources, outlines the religious and ethnographic customs and traditions of the Galician Karaites in the given period. This chapter shows the unique character of Karaite ethnographic and religious traditions which represented a curious mixture of Jewish, Slavic, and Turkic elements, one which can hardly be found in any other ethnic minority in Europe. A special role in the religious life of the community from 1772 to 1918 was played by the Crimean Karaites, whose influence is also analysed in this chapter. Chapter Four focuses on relations between the Karaites and their ethnic neighbours – the Slavs (Poles and Ruthenians/Ukrainians) and the Ashkenazic Jews. Special emphasis is placed upon an analysis of relations between the Galician Karaites and the local Rabbanite community – relations which oscillated from bitter hatred and animosity to brotherly friendship and peaceful dialogue. A separate sub-chapter is devoted to contacts between the Karaites and the Galician *maskilim*, leaders of the Jewish Enlightenment. I attempt to demonstrate here the exceptional position of the Karaites as intermediaries in the Rabbanite-Christian dialogue in Austria, in which the Karaites managed to establish friendly relations and were equally respected by both sides of the dialogue.

Chapter Five is dedicated to the history of the Karaites in Polish Galicia between the two world wars. It is in this period that the Karaites started to

become more and more separated from their Ashkenazic neighbours – legally, spiritually, and culturally. Indeed, the Polish government put the Karaites on the same exceptional legal footing as did the Austrian administration – and thus again made the Karaite community a separate and privileged ethnic entity. Chapter Six reconstructs the process of internal and external dejudaization of the Galician Karaite community, highlighting the role of Seraja Szapszał, the Karaite spiritual and administrative leader, who actually “created” a new, Turkic ethnic identity for the East European Karaites. Using the Karaite U-turn from rigid non-Talmudic Jews to a group with distinctive Turkic identity as a case study I show here the somewhat artificial nature of every ethnic identity, which may be constructed and deconstructed depending on the current political and ideological needs. Chapter Six ends with an analysis of the history of the community during the period of the Nazi occupation, the Second World War, and finally, the Soviet liberation of Galicia. It analyses also specifically the non-Jewish status accorded to the Karaites by the Nazis – a decision which saved the Karaites during the Holocaust.

Chapter Seven outlines the ultimate decline of the Galician community after the Second World War. It also describes the current state of the Galician Karaite community and its historical legacy. This chapter shows that vigorous preservation of traditional ethnic culture does not always promote the physical survival of the community – another unusual feature of Karaite history. The conclusion provides some essential remarks regarding the position of the Karaite case within the wider framework of Jewish and European history and stresses the importance of studying the Karaites as one of the most interesting and unusual ethnic cultures in Europe.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ADB	<i>Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie</i>
AAN	Archiwum Akt Nowych, Warsaw
AGAD	Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, Warsaw
AN PAN	Archiwum Nauki PAN i PAU, Kraków
Bod	Bodleian library, Oxford
DAIFO	Derzhavnyi arkhiv Ivano-Frankivs'koï oblasti, Ivano-Frankivs'k
<i>EJ</i>	<i>Encyclopaedia Judaica</i>
HK	Hofkanzlei (Vienna, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Staats-Archiv des Innern und der Justiz)
HR	Hofreisen (Vienna, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv)
<i>KA</i>	<i>Karaj Awazy</i> (Łuck, 1931-1938)
<i>KRPS</i>	<i>Karaimsko-russko-pol'skii slovar'</i> (Moscow, 1974)
<i>KV</i>	<i>Karaimskie Vesti</i> (Moscow, 1994-2003)
<i>KZh</i>	<i>Karaimskaia Zhizn'</i> (Moscow, 1911-1912)
MS LMAB	Manuscript Division of the Lietuvos Mokslų Akademijos Biblioteka, Vilnius (Wilno)
MKIK	Muzei karaïms'koï istoriï ta kul'tury, Halicz
MWRiOP	Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego, Warsaw
<i>MK</i>	<i>Myśl Karaimska</i> (Wilno-Wrocław, 1924-1947)
NLR	National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg
<i>PO</i>	<i>Przegląd Orientalistyczny</i> (Warsaw, 1949-)
<i>RO</i>	<i>Rocznik Orientalistyczny</i> (Warsaw)
Yurchenko MSS	uncatalogued miscellaneous manuscripts collected by Ivan Yurchenko, Halicz (Halych)

b. = ben (Heb. “son”)

CrTat. = Crimean Tatar

Germ. = German

GVKar. = Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language

Heb. = Hebrew

Ital. = Italian

Kar. = Karaim

KarCrTat. = Karaite ethnolect of the Crimean Tatar language

Pol. = Polish

Rus. = Russian

Ukr. = Ukrainian

WWI = World War I

WWII = World War II

Yid. = Yiddish

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my most sincere gratitude to all persons and institutions without whose academic, financial, and personal support this dissertation could not have been completed.

To my supervisor, Professor Robert Evans (Oxford), for his help and advice.

To members of the Halicz Karaite community for their genuine friendliness and hospitality during my stay in Halicz. A special word of thanks goes to the late Ms. Janina Eszwowicz (1930-2003), the last head of the local community, who was an inexhaustible source of first-hand information on various aspects of the history and culture of the Galician Karaites.

To Ivan and Natalia Yurchenko (Halicz), founders of the local Museum of Karaite History and Culture, enthusiastic students of Karaite history and indefatigable collectors of Karaite rarities, for years of friendship and assistance in my work with Karaite manuscripts and printed books kept in Halicz.

To Professor Dan Shapira (Jerusalem) and Ms. Golda Akhiezer (Jerusalem), for valuable advice related to various historical and linguistic problems with which this dissertation deals.

To Professor Jerzy Tomaszewski (Warsaw) for his help with my research in Polish archives.

To Daniel Lasker, Professor of Jewish Values at the University of the Negev (Beer Sheva), for general advice related to my research in the field of Karaite Studies.

To Mr Alfred Eidlisz of Touro College, for his academic help and permission to use materials from his unparalleled collection of rare Karaite printed books.

To Professor Barry D. Walfish (Toronto), and Mr Brad Sabin Hill, the director of the YIVO library (New York), for useful bibliographic references.

To Dr Catherine Andreyev (Oxford) for her comments on earlier drafts of this dissertation.

To the late Mr Bogusław Firkowicz (Warsaw), for permission to use his private collection of Polish Karaitica.

To Dr Ol'ga Vasil'eva and Boris Zaikovskii, assistants in the Manuscript Department of the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, for their help in my work with the Abraham Firkowicz archival collection.

To Thomas Gruber (Merton College), for his help with deciphering the convolutions of nineteenth-century Austrian handwriting and translating excerpts from German sources.

To Matthew Jenkinson (Merton College), for his friendly help in general academic matters.

A special word of thanks goes to Mr Leonard Fox (Charleston) for proof-reading the manuscript of my dissertation, correcting infelicities in my academic English, and valuable advice regarding Karaite history.

To the institutions whose financial and academic support helped the author to carry out his research:

To Merton College for providing me with a Domus scholarship for my doctoral studies and annual travel grants for trips to European and Russian archives.

To the Graduate School for Social Research (Warsaw) and its dean, the late Professor Stefan Amsterdamski, for supporting my archival research and field-trips to Poland, Lithuania, and western Ukraine.

To the Moscow Centre for University Teaching of Jewish Civilization, “Sefer,” especially to its director, Dr Victoria Mochalova, the head of the Academic Council, Dr Rashid Kaplanov, and also to Ms Anna Shaevich, the programme coordinator – for many years of most cordial support in my research and teaching activity.

To the Institut für Europäische Geschichte (Mainz) for their hospitality during my stay and research in Germany. I am especially grateful to Dr Ralph Melville for valuable advice related to the content of my study.

To the Chais Center for Jewish Studies in Russian (Jerusalem) for funding my research and study in Israel within the framework of the “Eshnav” programme in August 2002 and 2004.

To the Royal Historical Society (London) and the Colin Matthew Fund of St. Hugh’s College (Oxford) for generous financial support to assist my research trips to European libraries and archives.

Introduction

The topicality of studying the Galician Karaites as a vanishing ethnic minority

While writing this dissertation I was often challenged by my Western colleagues to explain my reasons for being interested in such (in their opinion) an obscure and insignificant ethnic minority as the Galician Karaites.

Such a question would have hardly been asked by anyone from Eastern Europe. In the Crimea, Poland, and Lithuania, where the Karaites have been living since the late Middle Ages, this ethnic group is known not only to a narrow circle of linguists and historians, but also to a much wider audience. The Karaites and their history seem to be especially admired in the Crimea and Lithuania, largely because of the fact that the Karaite communities there inhabited Troki (Trakai), Wilno (Vilnius), Mangup, Theodosia, Çufut-Qale, and Eupatoria – the most popular tourist attractions of these two regions. Interest in the Karaites on the part of a wide non-academic audience often has a somewhat problematic aspect. In Eastern Europe, to the deep regret of serious and objective scholars, the pseudo-historical theory “proving” the non-existent Khazar origin of the local Karaites is much more popular than sober academic assumptions regarding their Jewish ethnogenesis. Heated and quite impolite discussions regarding the nature of Karaite ethnic identity are commonplace in public discourse in some parts of the former Soviet Union.

Especially complicated is the situation in the Crimea, where a few leaders of non-Karaite extraction (!), who possess virtually no idea about Karaite history, religion, and culture, currently head the local Karaite community. Some of them are

actually vandalizing the medieval Karaite cemetery of Çufut-Qale, moving the tombstones, and practising there pseudo-historical neo-pagan rituals¹ – something that the pious nineteenth-century Karaites would have interpreted as an ultimate blasphemy and violation of all religious principles. Furthermore, in spite of the fact that today only a few Karaites are able to speak the Karaim dialect (ethnolect) of the Crimean Tatar language,² their leadership is trying to downplay their “Turkic” identity in order to obtain the same privileges as the “autochthonous” inhabitants of the Crimea, the Crimean Tatars.³ This is why, paradoxically, the study of Karaism in Eastern Europe sometimes represents quite a difficult task which requires from a scholar not only academic acumen and objectivity, but also courage to oppose false accusations and even political pressure.

The antagonism between the Karaites and scholars began to grow during the late Soviet period. Leaders of the Karaite community often wrote complaints to the highest Communist officials in order to put a ban on studies that objectively analysed Karaite history. In 1984 their petitions to the Politburo of the Communist party were crowned with success: a special regulation officially banned Soviet scholars from publishing studies related to the Karaites’ Jewish past.⁴ In the 1990s the unwillingness of radical Karaite leaders to recognise the importance of the linkage between the Karaites and Jewish civilization became even stronger.⁵ Most Western readers and

¹ These include veneration of trees and some less clear practices (see *Karai (Krymskie karaimy): Istoriia, kul'tura, sviatyni* (Simferopol', 2000), 22-2; cf. Alexander Babadżan, “O dębach i o wtajemniczonych,” *Awazymyz* 1 (2006)). Much more serious damage to the cemetery involves the removal of tombstones from their original places. Similar pseudo-historical attempts to “revive” non-existent pagan practices are currently practised by many neo-pagans in Western Europe.

² Henryk Jankowski, “Nowy 5762 rok u Karaimów na Krymie,” *PO* 1-2 (2002): 104-106.

³ See “Aborigeny ili prishel'tsy?” *Russkii Mir* (9.08.2002); “Samye korennye?” *Russkii Mir* (9.08.2002).

⁴ S.S. Mikhailov, “Moskovskie karaimy v 1920-1980-ykh godakh,” *Vostok* 5 (2005): 53; cf. information about similar petitions composed by the Karaite leader Semita Kushul' in a letter written by I. Baryl'nik, 1989 (Keston Institute, SU/Kar, fol. 2).

⁵ Israeli expedition, which arrived in the Crimea with the aim of epigraphic investigation of the Karaite cemetery of Çufut-Qale in August 1997, was expelled from the cemetery by a group of people who

scholars, who have never visited Karaite sites in Eastern Europe, are sometimes simply unaware of the aforementioned political currents accompanying this seemingly innocent historical topic.

In my opinion, the time when historians devoted their attention only to *numerically* strong nations and ethnic groups is long past. Today, no one would question the necessity of studying the Samaritans, even though in 2004 their community amounted to only about 654 members.⁶ Undoubtedly, the intellectual contribution to world culture by ethnic minorities such as the Karaites and the Samaritans is important enough to justify the study of their history.⁷ At the present time, despite their small numbers, the Karaites represent perhaps the most educated ethnic group in the world. The percentage of educated people among the Karaites is simply incredible: according to the statistical surveys of 2001-2002, as many as 54 percent of the Karaites in Poland and 45.7 percent in Lithuania had higher education.⁸ Furthermore, several members of the Karaite communities of the Crimea, Poland, and Lithuania are known as important state figures who significantly influenced the political situation of the region. A full list of famous Karaite scholars, writers, artists, politicians, and

claimed to be the “Turkic Karaites” (for a sarcastic analysis of this accident, see Enver Trupchu [Alexei Nezhivoi], “A za evreia otvetish!” *Krymskoe vremia* (16.07.1998)). Natal’ia Kashovskaia (Eupatoria/St. Petersburg) received several phone-calls with threats of physical punishment. Especially severe campaign in the press and Internet was organized against Professor Dan Shapira, one of the leading Israeli specialists in the field of Karaite Studies. Many other East European scholars who study the Karaites have similar unpleasant stories to tell.

⁶ Yurii Snopov, “Samaritiane: istoriia i sovremennaia etnosotsial’naia situatsiia,” *Etnograficheskoe obozrenie* 3 (2004): 81-83. In passing, it is important to mention that the comparison of the Karaites with the Samaritans was commonplace in early modern literature on Jewish sects (e.g. Richard Simon, “Supplement concerning the Carraites and Samaritans,” in Leone Modena, *The History of the Present Jews throughout the World*, transl. Simon Ockley (London, 1707), 241-260; Abraham Geiger, “Die gesetzlichen Differenzen zwischen Samaritanern und Juden,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 20 (1866): 527-573).

⁷ In the process of compiling a comprehensive Karaite bibliography, we collected an estimated 8,000 publications on Karaite and Karaite-related topics (*The Karaites and Karaism: an Annotated Bibliography*, ed. Barry Walfish with assistance of Mikhail Kizilov (Jerusalem, 2008) (in the press)).

⁸ Lucjan Adamczuk, Halina Kobeckaitė, Szymon Pilecki, *Karaimi w Polsce* (Warsaw, 2003), 39.

physicians could be continued *ad infinitum*.⁹ Another example of a similar highly intellectual and influential community is the Frankists, members of the sectarian movement of Jewish converts to Catholicism, which emerged in the second half of the eighteenth century. It is undoubtedly not a coincidence that the Frankists, like the Samaritans, were often confused with the Karaites because of their rejection of the Talmud.¹⁰

Let me, however, try to summarize the main tendencies in the history of the Galician Karaite community in order to show why, in my opinion, the study of this unique ethnic group is important for a better understanding of the history of Eastern Europe, its religious and linguistic minorities, and theories of nationalism in general. The history of the East European Karaite Jews (or Karaites),¹¹ a highly interesting

⁹ To give some examples, Seraja Szapszał was instrumental in the suppression of the unsuccessful Constitutionalist uprising in Persia in 1908 (see §5.1 and ch. 6). Solomon Krym (1867/8-1936) was the prime-minister of the Crimean Provisional government in 1920 and the founder of Simferopol' State University. Iosif Grigulevich/Grigulewicz (1913-1988) was a Soviet secret agent who took part in Trotsky's assassination and personally knew Ernesto Che Guevara. He subsequently became important Soviet scholar (Nil Nikandrov, *Grigulewicz. Razvedchik, 'kotoromu vezlo'* (Moscow, 2005)). Halina/Galina Kobeckaitė (Kobecka) is head of the department of National Minorities in Lithuania, and Lithuanian Ambassador to Turkey. Romuald Marko Kozyrovičius (Kozyrowicz) was elected minister of natural resources of independent Lithuania (1990-1991), and later became Lithuanian Ambassador to Russia (since 1993). Abram Besicovitch (Bezekowicz), a Karaite from Berdiansk, was one of the most famous twentieth-century mathematicians, a professor and lecturer at Cambridge (J.C. Burkill, "Abram Samoilovitch Besicovitch 1891-1970," *Biographical Memoirs of Fellows of the Royal Society* 17 (1971): 1-16). Samuel and Alexander Maykapar were leading classical musicians in the Soviet Union (B. Vol'man, *S.M. Maykapar: Ocherk zhizni i tvorchestva* (Leningrad, 1963)). From the second half of the nineteenth century on, practically all the mayors of Eupatoria and Karasubazar were of Karaite origin (especially famous is one of them, Semen Duvan (1870-1957)). There is a Karaite Street in every city in the Crimea and in many Ukrainian and Lithuanian towns. Marutha Sher-Menuhin (1892/6-1996), a Tatar-speaking Jewess from Yalta, the mother of the famous violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, claimed to be descendant from the Crimean Karaites (Yehudi Menuhin, *Unfinished Journey* (London, 2001), 6; for a discussion, see Tony Palmer, *Menuhin: A Family Portrait* (London-Boston, 1991), 3, 157-158). In spite of the fact that much may be said about the contacts between A. Mickiewicz and A. Pushkin and the Karaites, the theories concerning the Karaite origin of A. Pushkin (e.g. A. Zinukhov, "Abram iz roda Gannibalov," *Sovershenno sekretno* 6 (2001): 14-16) are also absolutely groundless.

¹⁰ The Frankists were often called "Karaites" during the Frankist-Rabbanite disputations of the 1750s (Paweł Maciejko, *The Frankist Movement in Poland, the Czech Lands, and Germany (1755-1816)*. D.Phil. thesis (Oxford, 2003), 27, 36-37, 74).

¹¹ *Alia*: Engl. "Karaims," "Caraites," or "Qaraites;" Pol. "Karaimi" or, more archaic, "Karaici" and "Karaimowie;" Russian "karaimy;" in Turkic languages "Karaylar/Qaraylar". In nineteenth century German they were called *Karaiten*, *Karaimen* or *Karaimiten/Caraimiten*; cf. modern Germ. "Karäer." All these forms are derived from Hebrew "qara'im." Apart from some specially indicated cases, I will use the term "Karaites" in this study as the most academically established English name of this ethnic group. The term "Karaim" will be used as the designation for the Karaites' Turkic Kypchak language.

ethno-religious group of Jewish origin, and especially of its Galician-Volhynian sub-ethnic branch, undoubtedly deserves much closer examination than has been the case until now. The Karaites are members of an independent dissident religious movement within Judaism. Its origins are still being debated: according to Rabbanite sources the movement started only in the eighth century A.D., whereas the Karaites themselves claim ancient Israelite origins. Whatever the facts may be, by the eleventh century Karaite communities were present in many countries of the Middle East, Byzantium, Northern Africa, and the Iberian Peninsula. According to some estimates, in this period, the Golden Age of Karaism, the Karaites constituted a substantial part of the Jewish population worldwide. The Karaites derive their name from the Hebrew word for Scripture. The Hebrew term *qara'im* (sing. *qarai*) should be translated as “readers,” in the sense of “those who read the Scripture.” The name itself reflects the main characteristic of the movement, viz. the recognition of the *TaNaKh* (i.e. the Old Testament) as the sole and direct source of religious law, with the rejection of the Oral Law (i.e. the Talmud, a later Rabbinic commentary and legal code based on the *TaNaKh*).¹²

The earliest Karaite settlers appeared in the territories which belong to present-day Poland, Lithuania, Western Ukraine and the Crimea in the late Middle Ages, not later than the thirteenth to fifteenth centuries.¹³ In the late Middle Ages and early modern times Karaite communities played an important role in Jewish life in Eastern Europe. In many places, such as Troki (Lithuania), Łuck (Poland), and especially in the Crimea, it was the Karaites who represented the overwhelming majority of Jewish

¹² For a general survey, see *Karaite Judaism. A Guide to Its History and Literary Sources*, ed. Meira Polliack (Leiden, 2003).

¹³ For a discussion, see Mikhail Kizilov, “The Arrival of the Karaites (Karaims) to Poland and Lithuania: A Survey of Sources and Critical Analysis of Existing Theories,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2003/2004): 29-45; Golda Akhiezer, Dan Shapira, “Qara'im be-Lita u-ve-Wohlyn-Galitsiyah ad ha-me'ah ha-18,” *Pe'amim* 89 (2002): 19-60.

inhabitants. While retaining Hebrew as their *leshon ha-qodesh* (Heb. “sacred language”), the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite communities adopted the so-called “Karaimo-Kypchak language” in the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries as their *Umgangssprache*.¹⁴ This feature differentiated the Karaites from their ethnic neighbours – the Yiddish-speaking Ashkenazic Jews, the Slavic Poles and the Ruthenians (Ukrainians), and even from their Tatar-, Greek-, and Arabic-speaking Karaite brethren of the Crimea, Turkey, and the Near East. The Turkic language of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, traditionally called by them *leshon Qedar* (Heb. “language of the Kedarites”¹⁵), is known in the academic literature as “Karaim/Qaraim/Qaray” or “Karaimo-Kypchak/Qıpçaq of Lithuania and Galicia-Volhynia” (sometimes also called “Northern” and “Western Karaim”¹⁶). Today, Karaim is considered one of the most ancient spoken Turkic languages in the world, and perhaps the most northern Turkic language in Europe. The exact reasons and circumstances which caused early Karaite believers to adopt this language as their *Umgangssprache* somewhere in the vast steppe areas of *Desht-i Kypchak* (“The Cuman Steppe”) has represented a subject of heated academic debate since the end of the nineteenth century.¹⁷

My dissertation focuses primarily on the Karaites of the region traditionally

¹⁴ The Karaimo-Kypchak language is one of the Kypchak languages of the Oghuz-Kypchak sub-group of the Common Turkic languages belonging to the Turkic branch of the Altaic family of languages.

¹⁵ Here used in the sense of the “language of nomads” since the Kedarites, sons of Kedar (Qedar), were normally referred to as “nomads” in the Bible. Sometimes Hebrew sources used this term to denote some other languages (e.g. Arabic).

¹⁶ In Turkic languages Karaim is also called *K(Q)aray tili*, *K(Q)arayçe* or *K(Q)araimçe*. For an analysis of the historical development of the Galician-Volhynian (i.e. Western) variety of the Karaim language, see Mikhail Kizilov, “Faithful Unto Death: Language, Tradition, and the Disappearance of the East European Karaite Communities,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 36:1 (2006): 73-93. On Northern (Troki) Karaim, see (with caution) Timur Kocaoğlu, and Mykolas Firkovičius, *Karay. The Trakai Dialect* (Munich, 2006); Mykolas Firkovičius, *Mieñ karajče ūrianiam* (Vilnius, 1996).

¹⁷ For a survey, see Dan Shapira, “Miscellanea Judeo-Turkica. Four Judaeo-Turkic Notes: Judaeo-Turkica IV,” *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam* 27 (2002): 475-496; idem, “The Turkic Languages and Literatures of the East European Karaites,” in *Karaite Judaism*, 657-708.

called in the academic literature “Eastern Galicia.”¹⁸ For centuries Galicia was a disputed land. Originally an independent Ruthenian duchy (Rus. *Galitskoe kniazhestvo*), in the fourteenth century it became a part of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (Pol. *Rzeczpospolita*). From the late eighteenth century until 1918 Galicia was a region in Habsburg Austria; again a part of Poland in the interwar period; and a Soviet- and Nazi-occupied territory from 1939 to 1944. After the end of the Second World War, Galicia became part of the western area of the Ukrainian Soviet Republic, and in 1991 – of independent post-Soviet Ukraine. Throughout this time, Galicia was a hospitable home for many ethnic and religious groups, such as Ukrainians, Poles, Jews, Tatars, Armenians, Gypsies, Czechs, Slovaks, Rusyns, Mennonites, Old Believers, Russians, Germans, and, last but not least, the Karaites. Some of these minorities inhabited Galicia from medieval times, some appeared on the historical map later, and many of them still live in Ukrainian Galicia today.

Scholars are still at a loss with regard to the exact date of the settlement of the Karaite community in Galicia in general, and in Halicz in particular. According to the late romantic Karaite tradition, this event happened in the mid-thirteenth century. Unfortunately, many “picturesque” details of this tradition force scholars to doubt the veracity of such an early date of Karaite arrival in the region (for more information, see §4.1.2). Nevertheless, medieval Latin sources attest that there was a Karaite community in Lwów, then the capital of Galicia, already in the fifteenth century. In the early sixteenth century, most likely, the community emigrated to Halicz.¹⁹ In the sixteenth century there were several other smaller Karaite communities in Galician

¹⁸ Germ. *Ostgalizien*; Pol. *Galicja* and (especially in the interwar period) *Małopolska Wschodnia*; Rus. *Galitsiya*, Ukr. *Halychyna*; historically also known as *Rus' Czerwona* or *Ruthenia*. At present Galicia is a region in South-Eastern Poland and Western Ukraine (83,740 km²). The Ukrainian part (49,485 km²) includes L'viv, Ivano-Frankivs'k and Tarnopol' regions, whereas the Polish part (34,255 km²) contains Rzeszów and a large part of the Kraków districts. See Illustrations, fig. 1.1-3.

¹⁹ For a discussion, see Majer Bałaban, “Karaici w Polsce,” in his *Studja Historyczne* (Warsaw, 1927), 15-18.

towns such as Żydaczów, Tyśmienice, and Złoczów. It seems that these communities later also emigrated to Halicz.²⁰ The Karaite community of this town, which was apparently engaged mainly in agricultural activity, was much larger and more important than that of the Rabbanites (i.e. Talmudic Jews) until the middle of the eighteenth century. From the eighteenth century onwards, however, the Halicz Karaites became less numerous and influential.²¹

A few hundred Karaites living in Galicia (Halicz, Kukizów, and some families in other towns) became citizens of the Habsburg monarchy after the first partition of Poland in 1772. From the end of the eighteenth century onwards, the Karaites of Austria and Russia started to receive preferential legal treatment, while being exempt from many burdens imposed upon other Jewish citizens of these two countries. Thus, in the period from 1772-1918, while being separated religiously, linguistically, and legally from their religious brethren, the Talmudic Jews, the Karaite community of Galicia was also separated geographically from their more numerous co-religionists living in Volhynia, Lithuania, and the Crimea. Because of this isolation and a ban imposed on mixed marriages with representatives of non-Karaite communities, the Austrian period also became the beginning of demographic stagnation, resulting in the practical disappearance of the community after the Second World War.

Maria Theresa's *Allerhöchste Entschliessung* (Royal Decree) of 24 October 1774, which exempted the Karaites from the payment of *Heiratssteuer* (marriage tax) and a half of *Kopfsteuer* (poll-tax), was the first in a series of privileges granted to the

²⁰ Jan Tyszkiewicz with reference to AGAD, Akta Skarbowe 65 A, no.1 (Jan Tyszkiewicz, *Tatarzy na Litwie i w Polsce. Studia z dziejów XIII-XVII w.* (Warsaw, 1989), 155, 233); Philip Miller, "Evidence of a Previously Undocumented Karaite Presence in Galicia," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 17 (1989): 36-42; Elżbieta Horn, „Położenie prawno-ekonomiczne Żydów w miastach ziemi halickiej na przełomie XVI i XVII w.,” *Biuletyn ŻIH* 40 (1961): 36.

²¹ According to the census of 1627 there were 24 Karaite houses (i.e. more than a hundred souls) in Halicz in contrast to a handful of Rabbanites. In 1765, however, there were only 99 Karaites compared with 258 Rabbanites in Halicz (Majer Bałaban, *Spis Żydów i Karaitów ziemi Halickiej i powiatów Trembowelskiego i Kołomyjskiego w r. 1765* (Kraków, 1909), 6-7; idem, "Karaici," 20).

Karaite by the governments of European countries in the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. From this point on, the Karaites, presented as the “exemplary Jews of the country,” were often used by Austrian state officials as a convenient tool in anti-Rabbanite propaganda. This is why the tiny Karaite community received very great and, perhaps, somewhat undeserved attention in the anti-Jewish polemical literature and travel reports of that period.²² These Karaite–Rabbanite tensions notwithstanding, the nineteenth century also became the age of developing contacts between Galician Karaite intellectuals and Rabbanite scholars, leaders of the Jewish *Haskalah* (Heb. Enlightenment). Moreover, many Karaite prayer-books and theological works were published in Jewish printing houses of Vienna and Budapest during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.²³ Therefore, even after 1918, when Galicia again became part of Poland, some of the local Karaites still preserved many traditions specific to the “Austrian” part of their history.

At the beginning of the twentieth century the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania, never strong in numbers, amounted to only about a thousand persons. In the interwar period, in order to secure their privileged non-Jewish status, the Polish Karaites had to conceal the Judaic character of their faith and ethnic identity. According to the pseudo-scholarly theory developed by Seraja Szapszał, the head of the Polish-Lithuanian community between the two world wars, the Karaites were not Jews at all, but Turko-Khazar nomadic proselytes, who at some point accepted the Karaite, non-Talmudic Mosaic faith. In spite of the fact that this theory was based on more than dubious (and sometimes simply falsified) evidence, in the 1930s the Karaite community embraced this doctrine, and gradually started losing its original Judeo-Karaite identity. In Galicia, however, the process of the loss of Jewish identity, and

²² Wolfgang Häusler, *Das galizische Judentum in der Habsburgermonarchie. Im Lichte der Zeitgenössischen Publizistik und Reiseliteratur von 1772-1848* (München, 1979), 35, 59, 72, 74.

²³ For a full bibliography, see Barry D. Walfish, “Karaite Press and Printing,” in *Karaite Judaism*, 926.

acceptance of the new Turkic one, was much less evident than in any other Karaite community in Eastern Europe.

Szapszał's pseudo-scholarly Turkic theory and rapid dejudaization of Karaite society, in fact, saved the Karaites during the Holocaust. In 1939 Nazi officials, tricked by the seemingly academic argumentation of Szapszał and his followers, somewhat hesitatingly recognized the Karaites as non-Jews. During the war the Karaites, for the first time, started to associate the word "Jew" with mortal danger – which stimulated the loss of Judeo-Karaite identity in the post-war period. Moreover, most of the representatives of the older generation, who remembered pre-Szapszał times and tried to preserve original Karaite traditions and practices, had passed away. This is the reason why after the end of the war the process of Turkicization was almost complete, and since that time most Karaites have considered themselves to be "Karaites of Turkic extraction" (or, alternatively, "Turks of Karaite faith"). Again, in Galicia this process was much less radical than in other communities, and many local Karaites preserved their Judeo-Karaite identity even after the war.

Despite their insignificant numbers, the Karaites played an important role in the intellectual and academic life of twentieth-century Poland. Thanks to their learnedness and religiosity, in the 1920s the Karaites of Halicz possessed more Karaite manuscripts than any other Karaite community in Europe.²⁴ Post-war development of Oriental studies (especially Turkology and Karaite studies) in Eastern Europe can hardly be imagined without scholars of Karaite origin, such as Ananjasz Zajączkowski (1903-1971), his nephew Włodzimierz Zajączkowski (1914-1982), Alexander Dubiński (1924-2002), and Zofia Dubińska. Two important Karaite Orientalists, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz (1923-1991) and Józef Sulimowicz (1913-

²⁴ This is according to personal observations of Tadeusz Kowalski (AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:2, fol. 30).

1973), were of Galician origin.

Unfortunately, the unique and culturally-specific Galician-Volhynian Karaite community has practically disappeared. The author of this dissertation was himself a witness to the last stage of its existence: during his first visit to Halicz (May, 2002) there were still seven members of the community, all of them born before the Second World War (some even before the First World War). At the time of this writing, the Halicz community consists only of two elderly ladies. A few other remaining speakers of the Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language live outside Ukraine. Thus, we must state with some sorrow that one more ethnic minority and one more language have almost completely disappeared from the European scene.

Objectives of the dissertation.

Up until now the whole bibliography of Galician Karaitica is limited to a score of studies (mostly of narrow linguistic and epigraphic character) or a few pages in larger works on the Jews in Austria or the Karaites in Eastern Europe. In spite of the undoubted interest on the part of scholars in the Galician-Volhynian branch of Karaism, there is still no comprehensive study or monograph dedicated to the history of this highly interesting and unique community.²⁵ This may be explained first of all by the fact that Karaite manuscripts, scattered in a few archival collections of the former Soviet Union, became almost inaccessible to Western scholars soon after 1917. Jacob Mann (1888-1940) was perhaps the last Western scholar who managed to get access to the largest collection of Karaite archivalia in the world, that of Abraham

²⁵ The Polish Orientalist, Jan Grzegorzewski, attempted to write a comprehensive study on the history of the community, but could not accomplish his work because of his death in 1922 (see his drafts in AN PAN, K III-6, no. 16). Grzegorzewski's archival legacy received absolutely groundless sarcastic evaluation by another major student of Karaim linguistics, Tadeusz Kowalski (see his "Materiały karaimskie ś.p. Jana Grzegorzewskiego," *MK* 10 (1934): 19-28). I intend to dedicate a separate article to a new, more objective analysis of Grzegorzewski's archival collection.

Firkowicz (St. Petersburg), in the 1930s.²⁶ Judaica archival collections of the former Soviet Union were made accessible to both Western and Russian scholars only in the late 1980s. Another large collection of Karaite manuscripts and material objects of Galician provenance had been recently collected by the Halicz enthusiast scholar, Ivan Yurchenko. This collection (the Yurchenko MSS) is still in the process of catalogization. The author of this study is one of the first scholars who managed to start its historical analysis. The remote geographic location of Halicz was one of the reasons that field work in the local community started only recently, at the last stage of its existence.

Furthermore, every scholar dealing with any aspect of the Karaite history in Eastern Europe inevitably has to come across a most serious methodological problem related to authenticity of some Karaite sources. Indeed, as early as the mid-nineteenth century Mordecai Sultański, his disciple Abraham Firkowicz, Solomon Beim, and some other Karaite leaders were accused of consciously mishandling Karaite epigraphic and manuscript sources. It was argued that they apparently distorted and falsified some sources in order to prove to the Russian administration the “noble” ancient origins of the Karaites – and thus receive further alleviations in the legal status of the Karaite community in Russia and Poland.²⁷ Moreover, in the twentieth century in the process of the Turkicization of their identity the group of Karaite leaders headed by Seraja Szapszał started a new wave of conscious misinterpretation of

²⁶ See his classic *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol.2: *Karaitica* (Philadelphia, 1935).

²⁷ For a preliminary analysis of the most important Karaite forgeries, see Dan Shapira, “Nyneshnee sostoianie riada pripisok k kolophonam na bibleiskikh rukopisiakh iz pervogo sobraniia A.S.Firkovicha,” in *Materialy Deviatoi Mezhdunarodnoi Konferentsii po Iudaike*, pt.1 (Moscow, 2004), 102-130; idem, “Remarks on Avraham Firkowicz and the Hebrew *Mejelis 'Document'*,” *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 59:2 (2006): 131-180; idem, “Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2002-2003): 223-260; idem, “The *Mejelis 'Document'* and Tapani Harvianen: On Scholarship, Firkowicz and Forgeries,” in *Omeljan Pritsak Armağanı / A Tribute to Omeljan Pritsak*, ed. Mehmet Alpargu and Yücel Öztürk (Sakarya 2007), 303-393.

Karaite history, one that was often accompanied by falsification of historical sources and documents.²⁸

Thus, a scholar analysing the history of the East European Karaites should always carefully weigh the authenticity of almost every document of Karaite origin. Even though there are only a few non-authentic sources related to the history of the Galician Karaites, I hope that in my study I managed to achieve a much more objective approach to the analysis of Karaite sources than most of my academic predecessors. Besides, in contrast to many other students of the problem, who often understood Turkicization of the Karaites as a natural development of their history, I analysed that phenomenon as a superficial and ideologically motivated process, which would not have taken place if it were not for the growth of anti-Semitism in Poland and in the rest of Europe.

Another methodological problem of the study of Karaite history in Eastern Europe is related to the necessity of reading sources in several European (German, Russian, French, English, Polish, Ruthenian/Ukrainian, and Yiddish) and Oriental (Hebrew and Karaim) languages. Unfortunately, most East European authors writing about the Karaites today base their studies *only* on Russian and Polish sources – and consequently, come to absolutely wrong conclusions because of their bad knowledge of the “internal” Karaite sources in Hebrew. Western scholars, on the other hand, often disregard sources in Slavic languages. Both East European and Western scholars seldom use sources in Turkic languages of the East European Karaites – and thus also often receive a somewhat distorted perspective on Karaite history.²⁹

My knowledge of all of the aforementioned languages has allowed me to

²⁸ On Seraja Szapszał and Turkicization of Karaite history see more in ch. 6.

²⁹ Even such a distinguished scholar as Jacob Mann committed a few mistakes in his *Texts and Studies* because of his weak knowledge of Slavic and Turkic languages (Jacob Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*, vol. 2: *Karaitica* (Philadelphia, 1935)).

attempt the first comprehensive study of the history of the Galician Karaite community from its beginnings until today. The main emphasis of my dissertation is, however, on the period between the First Partition of Poland (1772) and the end of World War II (1945), the time when Galicia was a part of the Austrian Empire, interwar Poland, and finally Soviet and Nazi-occupied territory. Such a chronological frame of my study is explained first of all by my intention to trace the development of the Galician Karaites as a compact ethnic entity in as wide historical context as possible, from the end of early modern period through the nineteenth-century Slavization of their traditions until the end of the Second World War and ultimate Turkicization of the community. Geographically, the dissertation will be limited to the historical borders of Eastern Galicia, with the main emphasis on the history of Halicz and Kukizów – the two most important seats of the Karaite community of the region.³⁰ Despite this, in order to offer a comparative analysis of the Karaite case in a general framework of the history of East European ethnic minorities, I will make frequent historical excursions beyond the Galician borders.

The structure of the dissertation is as follows. The first four chapters are devoted to the Austrian period in the history of the Galician Karaites (1772-1918). Chapters One and Two represent two different views of the history of the community. “External” (i.e. Gentile, non-Karaite) sources, which are analysed in Chapter One, provide readers with a view of the life of the community as seen from outside. These sources elucidate the position of the Karaites among other ethnic, religious, and linguistic minorities of Austrian Galicia and describe the process of legal separation of the Karaites from other Jewish subjects of the country. It is argued in this chapter that the Karaites represent an unparalleled example of preferential treatment of a

³⁰ Kukizów only until 1830/1, when the community chose to leave the town.

Jewish community by the Austrian administration which exempted the Karaites from the most burdensome Jewish laws and limitations. A special subchapter is dedicated to personal contacts between Austrian monarchs and members of East European Karaite communities. Chapter Two, based mostly on sources of Karaite origin, provides readers with an overview of the “internal” history of the Karaite communities of Halicz and Kukizów, with a small subsection devoted to the city of Lwów (Lemberg). Particular attention is given to the history of monuments of Karaite culture in Galicia, such as cemeteries and synagogues.

Chapter Three, also based mostly on “internal” Karaite sources, outlines the religious and ethnographic customs and traditions of the Galician Karaites in the given period. This chapter shows the unique character of Karaite ethnographic and religious traditions which represented a curious mixture of Jewish, Slavic, and Turkic elements, one which can hardly be found in any other ethnic minority in Europe. A special role in the religious life of the community from 1772 to 1918 was played by the Crimean Karaites, whose influence is also analysed in this chapter. Chapter Four focuses on relations between the Karaites and their ethnic neighbours – the Slavs (Poles and Ruthenians/Ukrainians) and the Ashkenazic Jews – from 1772 to 1918. Special emphasis is placed upon an analysis of relations between the Galician Karaites and the local Rabbanite community – relations which oscillated from bitter hatred and animosity to brotherly friendship and peaceful dialogue. A separate subchapter is devoted to contacts between the Karaites and the Galician *maskilim*, leaders of the Jewish Enlightenment. I attempt to demonstrate here the exceptional position of the Karaites as intermediaries in the Rabbanite-Christian dialogue in Austria, in which the Karaites managed to establish friendly relations and were equally respected by both sides of the dialogue.

Chapter Five is dedicated to the history of the Karaites in Polish Galicia between the two world wars. It is in this period that the Karaites started to become more and more separated from their Ashkenazic neighbours – legally, spiritually, and culturally. Indeed, the Polish government put the Karaites on the same exceptional legal footing as did the Austrian administration – and thus again made the Karaite community a separate and privileged ethnic entity. Chapter Six reconstructs the process of internal and external dejudaization of the Galician Karaite community, highlighting the role of Seraja Szapszał, the Karaite spiritual and administrative leader, who actually “created” a new, Turkic ethnic identity for the East European Karaites. Using the Karaite U-turn from rigid non-Talmudic Jews to a group with distinctive Turkic identity as a case study I show here the somewhat artificial nature of every ethnic identity, which may be constructed and deconstructed depending on the current political and ideological needs. Chapter Six ends with an analysis of the history of the community during the period of the Nazi occupation, the Second World War, and finally, the Soviet liberation of Galicia. It analyses also specifically the non-Jewish status accorded to the Karaites by the Nazis – a decision which saved the Karaites during the Holocaust.

Chapter Seven outlines the ultimate decline of the Galician community after the Second World War. It also describes the current state of the Galician Karaite community and its historical legacy. This chapter shows that vigorous preservation of traditional ethnic culture does not always promote the physical survival of the community – another unusual feature of Karaite history. The conclusion provides some essential remarks regarding the position of the Karaite case within the wider framework of Jewish and European history and stresses the importance of studying the Karaites as one of the most interesting and unusual ethnic cultures in Europe.

The system of transliteration.

A number of technical problems were caused by the use of sources and academic literature in languages other than those of Western Europe. Special difficulty was presented by personal names and toponyms, which could be spelled in different ways, depending on the chronological period, the source language, and even on the personal preferences of authors. Moreover, a few different variants were sometimes used to denote the same place and/or person. Thus, the Polish town of *Kukizów*, the settlement with an important Karaite community from 1688 to 1831, is called *Kukisow* in German, *Krasny Ostrow* in Polish, *Yafeh Ya'ar* in Hebrew, *Kokizov* in Russian, and *Kukeziv/Kukyziv* in Modern Ukrainian. Modern Ukrainian *L'viv* was called *Lwów* in Polish, *Lemberg/Lemburg* in German, *Leopolis* in Latin, *Ilov/Ilew* in Karaimo- and Armeno-Kypchak, and *L'vov* in Russian. Taking into consideration the fact that most sources and scholarly publications use the Polish spellings of place names (e.g. *Kukizów*, *Halicz*, and *Lwów*), apart from some specially indicated cases, I have decided to use the Polish variants as well.³¹ Nevertheless, for some central place names, and in the bibliography, I have used the accepted English spellings (Warsaw, Vienna, Moscow, etc.).

A slightly different system is used with regard to personal names. In most cases I use the accepted English variants of Hebrew names (thus *Isaac* and not *Izaak* or *Yitshaq*). Karaite surnames, however, which started to be widely used in Austria and Poland only after 1772, are usually spelled according to the Polish transliteration. Therefore, I have normally used the Polish spellings of Karaite surnames (thus

³¹ The Polish and Ukrainian place names are provided in accordance with Volodymyr Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy pivdennozakhidn'oi Ukraïny (Halychyny) na 1.1.1939 / Ethnic Groups of the South-Western Ukraine (Halychyna-Galicia) 1.1.1939* (Wiesbaden, 1983).

Firkowicz, Sultański, Łucki and not *Firkovich, Sultanski, Lutski*).³² Plural forms of Hebrew terms are used here in accordance with the standards of the Hebrew language: the ending *-ot* for the feminine gender (e.g. *mezuzah* [sg.]; *mezuzot* [pl.]), and the ending *-im* for the masculine gender (e.g. *hazzan* [sg.]; *hazzanim* [pl.]). The Turkic plural ending *-lar/-ler* have been used for plural forms in Turkic languages.

For Hebrew I have used a slightly modified system accepted in many recent dictionaries of the Hebrew language; the YIVO system of transliteration has been used for Yiddish, and the Library of Congress method for Russian and Ukrainian. Because of the lack of an accepted system of transliteration for the Galician-Volhynian dialect of Karaimo-Kypchak, I have used the Polish transliteration accepted by the local Karaite authors in the interwar period.³³ Quotations from documents in Hebrew, Turkic, West European, and Slavic languages have been translated into English. Original texts of some of these sources are to be found in Appendices. Most important Hebrew and Karaim terms are explained in the Glossary. The terms explained in the Glossary are italicized only the first time I use them in the text. Due to considerations of space, translations of the titles of publications in the Hebrew and Karaim languages are provided only in the bibliography, and not in the footnotes.

³² Such a system was used by Jacob Mann in his *Texts and Studies*.

³³ See the periodical *Karaj Awazy* ("The Karaite Voice"), published in Łuck from 1931 to 1938. Cf. also *Karaj sez-bitigi. Słownik karaimski. Karaimisches Wörterbuch*, ed. Alexander Mardkowitz (Łuck, 1935). There are a few other systems of transliterating various dialects of Karaim (by T. Kowalski, J. Grzegorzewski, E.A. Csató-Johanson, H. Jankowski, and D. Shapira), each of them comprehensible mostly to linguists specializing in Turkic languages. Our system may be read without any problems by anybody acquainted with Polish orthography.

Chapter 1. The Karaites in Austrian Galicia: the Community as Seen from Outside

1.1. *The Karaites and Toleranzpolitik.*

1.1.1. *The Karaites and their place in the general framework of Joseph's Toleranzpolitik.*

The 1770s constituted the beginning of a new era for Galicia, its land and people. Austria, which had started to occupy Polish territory already in the late 1760s, annexed large parts of Galicia and Volhynia as a result of the First Partition of Poland in 1772. The newly-acquired regions were named the *Königreich Galizien und Lodomerien*, later also called *Ostgalizien* (Eastern Galicia).¹ Austria did not take part in the Second Partition of Poland (1793), but largely profited from the Third Partition (1795) and annexed Kraków, the districts of Chełm and Sandomierz, the whole of *Małopolska* (Small Poland), and some other Polish lands. The territories received in the course of the Third Partition (altogether 47,000 km² and about 1.5 million people) started to be called *Westgalizien* (Western Galicia). Both annexations went peacefully, without any resistance and bloodshed, in spite of the evident and undoubted resentment on the part of the local Slavic population.

Among the most numerous ethnic groups of the area, which can hardly be called “ethnic minorities” because of their large numbers, were the Ruthenians (i.e. Western Ukrainians),² Poles, and Jews. The less numerous groups included the Armenians,

¹ About 81,900 (or 89,669) km² and ca.2.13 million people (or 2.48 million according to the first Austrian census) (Rudolf A. Mark, *Galizien unter österreichischer Herrschaft. Verwaltung – Kirche – Bevölkerung* (Marburg, 1994), 2).

² In German sources, usually referred to as the *Ruthenen* or *Rusniaken*; Latin *Rutheni*. I will use the term *Ruthenians*, since from 1772 to 1918 this part of the population of present-day Ukraine called themselves *rusyny* (i.e. Ruthenians). It is only since the beginning of the twentieth century that the local population has used the term “Ukrainians” as a self-designation (Wolfdieter Bihl, “Die Ruthenen,” in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol.3: *Die Völker des Reiches*, pt.1, ed. Adam Wandruszka and Peter Urbanitsch (Vienna, 1980), 555). One group of Ruthenians, the Carpathian Rusyns, has retained its Ruthenian identity until today (*Rusin'skyi yazyk*, ed. Paul Robert Magocsi (Magochii) (Opole, 2004), esp.37-38).

Hungarians, Germans, Gypsies, Russians, Romanians and Moldavians, Czechs, Slovaks, and, finally, the main focus of this dissertation, the Karaites.³ It is rather difficult to find precise statistical data related to the Karaite population of the region. A few contemporary authors who most likely based their information on hearsay and other unreliable sources, provided exaggerated numbers of the Karaite population soon after the annexation of Galicia by Austria: 280 families;⁴ 350,⁵ 609,⁶ and even 5,000 souls.⁷ According to our estimates, however, the Karaite community of Galicia was much less numerous. At the end of the eighteenth century the Karaite population of the region could hardly have exceeded 200-300 people.⁸ Thus, the Karaites constituted only 0.1 percent of the whole Jewish population of the region.⁹ Nevertheless, as will be shown later, these two hundred Karaites would play a very important role in the ideological combat between the Jews and the Austrian administration. Twentieth-century Karaite authors and non-Karaite scholars often

³ For a general analysis, see *Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 3.

⁴ Joseph Rohrer, *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1804), 145-146.

⁵ See the report delivered on 11 Dec. 1861 by Johann Vinzenz Goehlert (or Göhlert) to the session of the Philosophic-Historical class of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Vienna (Johann Vinzenz Goehlert, "Die Karaiten und Mennoniten in Galizien," *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historische Classe der Kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften* 38 (1861): 601; an adaptation of this report was published by M. Wiener as "Die Karäer in Galizien betreffend," *Monatsschrift für die Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* 12 (1863): 329-335; cf. Wolfdieter Bihl, "Notizien zu den ethnischen und religiösen Splitter-, Rest- und Sondergruppen in den habsburgischen Ländern," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 3, pt. 2, 973).

⁶ [Franz Kratter], *Briefe über den itzigen [sic] Zustand von Galizien. Ein Beitrag zur Staatistik und Menschenkenntnis*, vol. 2 (Leipzig, 1786), 149.

⁷ Josef Karniel, *Die Toleranzpolitik Kaiser Josephs II* (Gerlingen, 1985), 443.

⁸ According to the state census of 1767 there were 19 Karaite households (perhaps ca. 100 individuals) (AGAD Lustracje dz. XVIII, no. 62. Lustracja Starostwa Halickiego, fol. 15; cf. Appendix 1.3). According to the official data of 1774 there were 149 adult Karaites living in Galicia; together with children the community consisted of ca. 200 individuals ("Ausweis was die Juden Kopf Steuer nach der Lustration de Anno 1765 ertrage und wie viel von denen Kahalen mittels ihren Fassionen hier auf Köpfe angegeben, mithin mehr oder weniger zur Schuldigkeit pro Anno 1774 fürgemerkt worden," in HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784 (Lemberg, 23 May 1775); see Appendix 1.4).

⁹ The official statistical data of the censuses of 1773-1786 provided highly inconsistent numbers: from 144,200 up to 224,981 Jews in Galicia (Majer Bałaban, *Dzieje Żydów w Galicyi i w Rzeczypospolitej Krakowskiej 1772-1868* (Lwów, n.d.), 21; Horst Glassl, *Das österreichische Einrichtungswerk in Galizien (1772-1790)* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 190-191). According to the communal Jewish data gathered in 1774 there were 150,654 Jews in the region (see "Ausweis..." HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784 (Lemberg, 23 May 1775)). It is most probable, however, that the Jewish population of the region amounted to about 200,000 – 225,000 souls.

exaggerated the paucity of the East European Karaite community by suggesting that the Karaites were the smallest ethnic minority in Europe. Statistics show, however, that in Austria the Karaites definitely were not the smallest ethnic and religious minority: the Mennonite community of Galicia consisted of ca. 130 persons in the Lemberg Kreis (1784),¹⁰ whereas the Judaizing Sabbatarians numbered fourteen persons (Transylvania, 1894).¹¹

The policy of Maria Theresa with regard to the ethnic and religious minorities of Austria and its newly acquired provinces was not uniform. On the one hand, her enmity towards the Protestants and other non-Catholic inhabitants of the country was as great as her antipathy for the Jews.¹² On the other, the Empress understood the economic importance of the non-Catholic population for the benefit of the country. Nevertheless, the so-called *Theresianische Judenordnung* of 1776, which in itself was an extension of the Moravian *Judenordnung* of 1753, brought Austrian Jewry a number of heavy taxes and burdensome legal restrictions.¹³

A new epoch for religious freedom in Europe started in the 1780s, with the famous *Toleranzpolitik*, which was carried out by Joseph II during his independent rule after the death of his mother, Maria Theresa. The Edict of Tolerance (*Toleranzpatent*) was first issued by Joseph II in October 1781, and extended three months later in January 1782. Only three religions were allowed to be tolerated (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), whereas representatives of other religious and

¹⁰ Bihl, "Notizien," 971-972.

¹¹ Ibid., 949-974. The Sabbatarians (Germ. *Sabbatisten* or *Sabbatharier*; Heb. *shomrei shabbat* – "keepers of the Sabbath") were members of a radical Protestant sect in Hungary (Torben Meyer, "Somrei Sabat," *EJ* 15 (1971), 139-140; Samuel Kohn, *Die Sabbatharier in Siebenbürgen* (Budapest-Leipzig, 1894)).

¹² Saul K. Padover, *The Revolutionary Emperor: Joseph II of Austria* (London 1967), 181.

¹³ For details see Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 293-296; Stanisław Grodziski, "The Jewish Question in Galicia," in *Focusing on Galicia: Jews, Poles, and Ukrainians. Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 12, ed. Israel Bartal, and Antony Polonsky (London-Portland, 1999), 61-72. The full text of the new *Judenordnungen* is to be found in HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784. No. 1096. 16 July 1776: Patent, Die Einführung der neuen Juden-Ordnung betreffend (87 fols.).

sectarian movements were supposed to be treated as Catholics and “follow Catholic discipline.”¹⁴

Nevertheless, Joseph’s attitude towards the Jews, in spite of its radical difference from his mother’s enmity with regard to the Mosaic believers of the country, was rather ambivalent. While trying to Germanise Austrian Jewry and make useful citizens of the Empire out of them, Joseph introduced a number of new radical laws. These laws, however, were hardly compatible with the policy of tolerance and understanding which was proclaimed by him. The Jews were encouraged (or, rather, forced) to discontinue usage of Hebrew and (especially) Yiddish, attend public German schools, receive German family names, start wearing European dress and engage in agriculture. Moreover, their judicial autonomy was abolished, and a number of heavy taxes were introduced.¹⁵

Joseph’s policy of tolerance received quite a critical reaction in many European countries. Frederick of Prussia ironically mentioned that it was Joseph’s title of “the king of Jerusalem” that prompted him to make an alliance with the Jews,¹⁶ whereas Catholic authorities severely criticized him for his tolerance of the Protestants. The most enthusiastic response to his reforms was, perhaps, in Russia, where Catherine II, with her admiration for Enlightenment and Tolerance, encountered the same problems as Joseph did with regard to the population of recently acquired lands.

As we shall see below, the Karaites, in contrast to the Rabbanite Jews, were treated very favourably and soon received a status almost identical to that of Christian citizens of the Empire. Favourable treatment of the Karaites is a good example of the

¹⁴ “...als Katholiken zu betrachten und der katholischen Disziplin zu unterwerfen” (the Royal Decree of 31 Jan. 1782 as quoted in Paul (Pavel) von Mitrofanov, *Joseph II. Seine politische und kulturelle Tätigkeit*, trans. from Russian V. von Demelič, vol. 1 (Vienna-Leipzig, 1910), 725).

¹⁵ See more in Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*; Grodziski, “Jewish Question;” John Doyle Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews. The Origins of the “Jewish Question” in Russia, 1772-1825* (Dekalb, 1986), 41-43.

¹⁶ Padover, *Revolutionary Emperor*, 186.

general pragmatism of Joseph's *Toleranzpolitik*. It seems that the question of the economic utility of a given ethnic minority (and not its religious affiliation) was the main basis for differential legal treatment of various ethnic groups living in Austria at that time. This is why, while persecuting such "useless" sectarian groups as the Abrahamites (Deists) and Sabbatarians,¹⁷ Joseph exempted from many legislative burdens insignificant, but "useful for the state", ethno-religious minorities such as the Karaites, Mennonites, and Philippovtsy (Lippowaner).¹⁸

1.1.2. *The Karaites and Steuerzahlung.*

In June 1773, soon after the annexation of Galicia, Joseph II decided to make a *Hofreise* through Galicia in order to become acquainted with the newly acquired province. "Je vais partir pour la Galicie; altri guai!" – wrote Joseph II to his brother in July 1773. In August 1773, already in Lwów (Lemberg), then the capital city of Galicia, he added: "Me voilà donc au milieu des Sarmates."¹⁹

The Emperor's first impression was quite negative: he found Galicia to be exceedingly poor, with a number of neglected small Jewish towns (Yid. *shtetl*, Pol. *miasteczko*) inhabited by thousands of Jews, who were, in his opinion, absolutely worthless and useless for the state. Contact with enormous masses of Galician Yiddish-speaking Talmudic Jews, whom he had never seen before and who appeared to be entirely alien to agriculture and farming, produced a rather unpleasant

¹⁷ Mitrofanov, *Joseph II.*, 725-726; Bihl, "Notizien," 973-974. These two Judaizing sects rejected most Christian principles and were inclined towards complete conversion to Judaism.

¹⁸ The *Philippovtsy* (also: *Philippony* or *Lipovane/Lippowaner*) are a part of the movement of the Russian *Starovery* (Old Believers). The Mennonites were one of the Anabaptist Christian sects which settled down in Galicia and Southern Russia in the eighteenth century.

¹⁹ As cited in Larry Wolff, "Inventing Galicia: Messianic Josephinism and the Recasting of Partitioned Poland," *Slavic Review* 63:4 (2004): 818. The trip to Galicia was one in the series of Joseph's travels to the new provinces of Austria in the 1770s (see more in Derek Beales, *Joseph II*, vol. 1: *In the Shadow of Maria Theresa 1741-1780* (Cambridge, 1987), 359-367). For the precise itinerary of the Emperor in Galicia see "Reis Carte Seiner Kayserlichen Majestaet in denen Provintzien deren Königreiche Gallicien und Lodomerien anno 1773," HR NK 5, Konv. 5, I Abteilung, fols. 325-326.

impression on the Emperor. For a while he was seriously contemplating the idea of sending a third of the Jewish population of Galicia away from the country, while employing the rest as day-labourers.²⁰ While observing the Jews, who at that time were engaged mostly in petty trade and commerce, the Emperor came up with the idea of the necessity of forcing the Jews into physical labour and, especially, into agriculture. The only exception that gave grounds to hope that the disagreeable mores of the local Jews might be improved was... the Karaites. The news about the existence of the Karaites, the community of agricultural non-Talmudic Jews in Galicia, suggested an absolutely new solution of the “Jewish question” in the region. The fact that the Karaites were apparently just a tiny minority within the minority did not matter. They represented an important example of the possibility of Jewish involvement in agriculture – and this was the key reason for the benevolent treatment of the Karaites by the Austrian state.²¹

Count Johann Anton von Pergen²² wrote a report in which the Karaites were characterized as a Jewish sect whose members paid a poll-tax (*Kopfsteuer*), as did all other Jews, but seemed to be highly different from them. In contrast to other Jews, the Karaites dressed themselves like Poles (a very important feature!) and were actively engaged in agriculture.²³ According to the fiscal data of 1774, the Galician Karaite

²⁰ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 288.

²¹ One should add that some Rabbanite Jews also were involved in agriculture. In 1784, for example, in the circuits of Neu-Sandez and Stanislau 1,410 Rabbanite families received land on their temporary property to work it as peasants (Horst Glassl, *Das österreichische Einrichtungswerk in Galizien (1772-1790)* (Wiesbaden, 1975), 214). In 1910 there were as many as 93,471 Rabbanites involved in agriculture in Galicia (10.72% of the whole Rabbanite population) (Wolfdieter Bihl, “Die Juden,” in *Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 3:2, 913). Nevertheless, the Karaites represented an important example of mass involvement of an entire (though not very numerous) Jewish community in agriculture.

²² Johann Anton Graf von Pergen (1725-1814), an important historical figure, was the first governor of Galicia after its annexation (1772-1774) (Paul P. Bernard, *From the Enlightenment to the Police State: the Public Life of Johann Anton Pergen* (Urbana, 1991); Franz A.J. Szabo, “Austrian First Impressions of Ethnic Relations in Galicia: The Case of Governor Anton von Pergen,” in *Focusing on Galicia*, 49-60).

²³ See Pergen’s “Beschreibung der Königreiche Galizien, und Lodomerien nach dem Zustand, in welchem sie sich zur Zeit der Revindicirung durch Ihre Kais.Königl. Apostolische Majestät, und

community consisted of 149 taxpayers who had to pay to the royal treasury 298 gulden (i.e. two gulden per capita).²⁴ At Joseph's request, officials of the Galician *Gubernium* gathered more information about the Karaites, and on 4 September 1774 they reported to the Emperor that the majority of the Karaites lived from agriculture. Some of them were doing other physical work or were engaged in the carting trade (*Fuhrwesen*).²⁵

At the time when the Karaite question was examined in the Hofkanzlei (Court Chancellery), the chancellery received an application from the Galician Karaite *Itzko Salomonowicz* (or "Salmanowicz"; both variants are Polonised forms of the Hebrew "Isaac ben Solomon"). The Karaite asked to be exempted from the payment of half of the marriage tax (*Heiratssteuer*) (from ten to five ducats).²⁶ The Karaite wrote his application, perhaps, in response to the prohibition of 1773. This prohibition barred Jews from marrying without the permission of the gubernial officials and the payment of the tax, which had to prove the "tax capability" of the prospective spouses.²⁷ Itzko substantiated his claim by the fact that he "was not a Jew, but a peasant" (*sic!*); therefore, he should pay the same taxes as other peasants.²⁸ The marriage tax in Galicia was very high indeed, but such categories of Jews as peasants, artisans,

besonders im Monat Julius 1773. befunden haben," HR NK 5, Konv.5, I Abteilung, fol. 475v, 12mo. Cf. Ludwik Finkel, "Memoriał Antoniego hr. Pergena, pierwszego gubernatora Galicyi, o stanie kraju," *Kwartalnik Historyczny* 14 (1900): 24-43, regarding the Karaites, see p. 31 (based on a different copy of Pergen's *Beschreibung* kept in the Ossolineum (Lwów, MS 525)).

²⁴ "Ausweis..." HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784.

²⁵ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291. Cf. Appendix 2.1.

²⁶ According to Wolf, from twenty to ten ducats (Gerson Wolf, "Karaiten in Halicz," *Die Neuzeit* 23:10 (9 March 1883): 95). 1 ducat was roughly equal to 4-5 gulden/florins.

²⁷ Grodziski, "Jewish Question," 64.

²⁸ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 292. In official documents this Itzko (Icko/Isaak) was referred to as *der erste Heuratsbewerber* among the Karaites (Bałaban, "Karaici," 34). According to Z.Abrahamowicz, he is the same person as a certain "Karaim Salomonowicz" mentioned in 1785 as the merchant returning to Halicz from Istanbul with a Turkish passport (Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje Karaimów w Haliczu," *PO* 1-2 (2001): 13). The text of this historic petition was partially cited in Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291-293. In April 2005 while trying to find the document quoted by Karniel in the Austrian State Archive, I discovered that it was not in place, and thus could not be consulted. Therefore, I will have to rely on Karniel's citations. In passing, it is worthwhile mentioning that many archival Austrian documents related to Galician Jewry (including the Karaites) disappeared in the fires of 1927 and 1944, and what has remained has not been properly catalogued yet.

workers, rabbis, school-teachers, and soldiers were usually exempted from this tax.²⁹ The court chancellery in Vienna, reinforced by the opinion of Empress Maria Theresa, decided to support Itzko in his claim and suggested that he pay a half of the *Heiratssteuer*, and also only half of the *Kopfsteuer* (poll-tax/per capita tax).³⁰

Paradoxically enough, in response to this enquiry the gubernium suggested an even more radical measure: to exempt the Karaites completely from payment of the *Heiratssteuer*. At the same time the Hofkanzlei expressed the hope that the Karaites might serve as a good example for all other Jews. We may assume that the fact that Empress Maria Theresa had already envisaged the differentiation between the Karaites and other Jews played a very important role in such a favourable treatment of the Karaite case.³¹ After some discussion between the gubernium, the Hofkanzlei and the Staatsrat the Karaites were exempted from the payment of half the poll-tax by the Royal Decree of Maria Theresa issued on 24 October 1774:

[...] In view of their praiseworthy moral behaviour, the Karaites living in Galicia are deserving of different treatment: from now on they would be required to pay only the single poll-tax, which is to be considered a mere tolerance fee only, because they [the Karaites] possess lands, which they cultivate as peasants, and like Christian subjects they are obliged to supply natural produce [Naturalien], and therefore with all justice deserve to be distinguished from other Jews, because the latter possess no land and therefore are temporarily obliged [to pay] the double poll-tax, and on whom, in contrast to the Christian subjects, land-tax can consequently not be levied after sowing.³²

²⁹ [Joseph Wertheimer], *Juden in Oesterreich. Vom Standpunkte der Geschichte, des Rechts und des Staatsvortheils*, vol.1 (Leipzig, 1842), 272.

³⁰ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291-293. Unfortunately, Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (HK IV T.8. K.1549) does not possess any data on Jewish marriages from 1754-1783. In 1774, i.e. before the reduction of their taxes, the Karaite communities of Kukizów and Halicz had to pay the *Kopfsteuer* of 298 gulden per annum ("Ausweis...", HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784 (Lemberg, 23 May 1775)).

³¹ The documents mention that the Empress "...dieser Sekte ohnehin eine Unterscheidung von den übrigen Juden bereits zugedacht hätte" (Bałaban, "Karaici," 34).

³² My translation of the Decree of Maria Theresa on 24 Oct. 1774. For the German original, see Goehlert, "Karaiten," 599-600, ft. 2 and Appendix 2.1. This decree is also mentioned in a letter of Abraham Leonowicz to A.Firkowicz, Halicz, 1818: NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 1v.

As one may see from the text of the decree, the main reason for making this distinction between the Karaites and the Talmudic Jews was to encourage the wider involvement of the Galician Jewish population in agriculture. According to the later Josephinian *Anordnung* of 1785, Rabbanites who were engaged in agriculture also did not have to pay any *Heiratssteuer*.³³

Thus, the text of the aforementioned decree differentiated the Karaites from all other Jews of the country and suggested setting them on an equal footing with the Christian population. Therefore, the Theresian-Josephinian Jewish legislation (*Judenordnung*) was not, in fact, applied to the Karaites, who had been exempted from most of the Jewish duties, taxes, and dues. For example, in contrast to the Rabbanites they did not have to pay burdensome Jewish taxes on *kosher* (ritually permissible) meat (*Koscherfleischsteuer* or *korobka/krópka*) and Sabbath candles, and were not obliged to serve in the army. Moreover, they were also freed from the payment of the marriage tax. Nevertheless, like the Rabbanites, they still had to pay the *Schutzsteuer* (“protectionist tax,” also known as the “tolerance contribution tax” (*Toleranzabgabe* or *Toleranzgebühr*)). In the period from 1774 to 1817 the amount of the “protectionist tax” annually exacted from the whole Galician Karaite community was 47 gulden.³⁴

In 1818 the Karaites were exempted from all sorts of additional duties related to military activity.³⁵ In 1821 they were set on the same legal footing as the Christian inhabitants of the country, and thus were entirely excluded from the official legal system applied to the Jewish population of the country. From that point on the

³³ Glassl, *Das österreichische Einrichtungswerk*, 216.

³⁴ *Hofdecret* of 24 Oct. 1774, no. 1857; Gubernische Verordnung of 14 June 1817, no. 45915 (Michael Stöger, *Darstellung der gesetzlichen Verfassung der galizischen Judenschaft* (Lemberg-Przemyśl, 1833), vol. 2, § 84. “Besteuerung der Karaiten,” 137-138).

³⁵ Abraham Leonowicz to A. Firkowicz, Halicz: NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 2r.

Karaites were exempted from the *Schutzsteuer* and had to pay only *alle gewöhnlichen Landessteuern* (Germ. “all regular taxes”) which were imposed on Christian inhabitants of Austria.³⁶

The differentiation of the Karaites from other Jews in Austria was the earliest example of the benevolent treatment of the Karaites by European governments in the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries. A number of conspicuous parallels in the legal treatment of the Austrian and Russian Karaites (exemption from the double poll-tax and military conscription, permission to own land, *et al.*) allow us to make a cautious suggestion that Catherine’s Jewish policy in the 1790s, and the benevolent treatment of the Karaites, was, in fact, inspired by her communication with Joseph II.³⁷ Indeed, in 1795 Catherine II issued a special *ukaz* (“order”) which exempted the Karaites from the double taxation imposed on the Rabbanite Jews. The same decree allowed them to own and inherit land.³⁸ In 1827, during the rule of Nicholas I, which was oppressive for the Jews, the Karaites were freed from the military conscription obligatory for other Jewish subjects of the Empire. This exemption again is conspicuously reminiscent of the exemption of the Karaites from military service in Austria in 1790.³⁹

³⁶ *Hofdecret* of 30 Jan. 1821, no.2443 (Stöger, *Darstellung*, vol.2, 137-138). For more details on the Austrian decrees of 1774, 1789, 1790, 1804, and 1814 concerning the Karaites, see *ibid.*, vol. 1, 104-105, ft. 10. For a detailed analysis of the Austrian Jewish legislation and taxes, see Wertheimer, *Juden*, vol.2.

³⁷ Cf. John Klier: “The attempt to restructure Jewish economic life [in Galicia]... closely paralleled measures undertaken at the same time by the Russian government” (Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews*, 41). In 1787, together with Catherine II, Joseph visited the Crimea, where he personally encountered the Karaites of Çufut-Qale (for details, see ch. 1, § 1.3). For more information on relations between Joseph II and Catherine the Great, see John T. Alexander, *Catherine the Great. Life and Legend* (New York-Oxford, 1989), 241-244, 256, 260-261.

³⁸ See the text of the decree in Oleg Belyi, “Iz istorii karaimskoi obshchiny Kryma v kontse XVIII – nachale XIX veka,” *Krymskii muzei* 1 (1994): 30-35; cf. Philip Miller, *Karaite Separatism in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Joseph Solomon Lutski’s Epistle of Israel’s Deliverance* (Cincinnati, 1993), 218; *idem*, “A Speculation on External Factors in the Formation of the Crimean Karaite (National) Identity,” in *Judaism and Islam: Boundaries, Communication and Interaction: Essays in Honor of William M. Brinner*, ed. Benjamin H. Hary *et al.* (Leiden, 2000), 340.

³⁹ In addition to these and many other alleviations in their status, in 1863 the Karaites were given the same rights as Orthodox citizens of the Russian Empire (*Sbornik starinnykh gramot i uzakonenii*

Such extraordinary treatment of the Karaites certainly could not pass unnoticed by the Austrian public. In 1804/5⁴⁰ the Rabbanites, jealous of the privileged status of the Karaites, sent an appeal to the head of the Stanisławów circuit (Germ. *Kreishauptmann*; Pol. *starosta cyrkularny*). In this document they stated that the Karaites were the same Mosaic believers as other Jews and, consequently, should pay the same taxes and obey Austrian Jewish laws. Surprisingly, the head of the circuit viewed this appeal positively and the Karaites were soon deprived of their privileged status. Nevertheless, Abraham ben Levi Leonowicz, the leader of the community, undertook a trip to the town of Stryj and later to Lwów, where he complained to the Galician governor about this unfair decision. The governor immediately restored the *status quo*.⁴¹

Christian authors, on the contrary, enthusiastically viewed the Karaites as the “proper” and “exemplary” Jews of the country (see ch.1, §1.2.1). In spite of such positive treatment of the Karaite case in Vienna and St. Petersburg, it seems that local administrations did not always follow official decrees to the letter and often breached the Karaites’ rights and privileges (see more in ch.2, §2.2.1).

1.1.3. *The Karaites and Militärdienst.*

In 1789, only a year before his death, Joseph II decided to introduce perhaps the most revolutionary part of his *Judenordnungen*. From this point on, the Jews, like all other citizens of Austria, were obliged to serve in the army. Reaction in Jewish circles to

Rossiiskoi imperii kasatel'no prav i sostoianiia russko-poddannykh karaimov, ed. Z.A. Firkowicz (St. Petersburg, 1890), 109-223). The legal differentiation of the Russian Karaites has been studied exhaustively in Miller, *Karaite Separatism*.

⁴⁰ 5564 from the creation of the world (=1804/5 A.D.). Zarachowicz’s calculation that 5564 is equal to 1795 is certainly wrong.

⁴¹ Abraham Leonowicz composed a special prayer dedicated to this event. This story was documented in Hebrew by his grandson, Levi Leonowicz; unfortunately, only a Polish translation of this prayer has survived (see Zarach Zarachowicz, “Przyczynki do dziejów gminy karaimskiej w Haliczu. Z dokumentów przeszłości,” fols.6-7 (the Yurchenko MSS); a copy of this article which is kept in Vilnius does not have this document (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1334)).

this innovation was not uniform. Many Jewish *maskilim* and intellectuals enthusiastically accepted Joseph's decision as promoting wider acculturation of the Jews and their integration into European society. To give an example, Ezekiel Landau (a.k.a. Noda bi-Yehuda), a Rabbi from Prague, approved of the new law and even encouraged young Jewish recruits to be true to the *Kaiser*, not forgetting, though, their religious precepts.⁴² However, the reaction of the orthodox Jewish circles in Galicia, who perceived this measure as the ultimate danger to the preservation of religious traditions and values, was highly negative. Indeed, it seemed almost impossible to follow the complicated laws of *kashrut*, celebrate religious holidays and the Sabbath in view of the general complexities and difficulties of everyday life in the army. For many Jewish recruits, their military life was the beginning of alienation from the traditional community, often resulting in conversion to Christianity and complete dissociation from Jewish society. Nevertheless, many Austrian Jewish soldiers managed to follow their religious precepts even in the army and during the First World war.⁴³

For the tiny Karaite community participation in the *allgemeine Wehrpflicht* (general conscription) meant that every year a few young Karaites would leave their traditional nest, perhaps never to return. However, to the great relief of the community, on 16 March 1790 the Austrian officials issued decree no. 6245 which exempted the Karaites from service in the army.⁴⁴ While the exact circumstances of

⁴² He gave as a present to each recruit a tobacco pipe with the inscription "Seyd Gott getreu und dem Kayser!" (Erwin A. Schmidl, *Juden in der K. (u.) K. Armee. Jews in the Habsburg Armed Forces* (Eisenstadt, 1989), 38). See more on the general reaction of the Jews to the introduction of the *Wehrpflicht* in *ibid.*, 38-66.

⁴³ The Jews were normally allowed not to bear arms during the Sabbath and to celebrate other religious holidays in the improvised field synagogues (Schmidl, *Juden*, 200-201). Much more difficult was the destiny of Jewish recruits in the Russian army, for whom it was hardly possible to follow their religious obligations (Simon Dubnov, "Sud'by evreev v Rossii v epokhu zapadnoi 'pervoi emansipatsii' (1789-1815)," in *Evrei v Rossiiskoi imperii v XVIII – XIX vekakh* (Moscow-Jerusalem, 1995), 349-356).

⁴⁴ Abraham Leonowicz to A. Firkowicz, Halicz, 1818: NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 1v; cf. Goehlert, "Karaiten," 600. The Karaites were not the only ethnic group exempted from military service. In the

this new privilege in the status of the Karaite community in Austria remain unclear, it seems that the Galician Karaites were freed from the *Wehrpflicht* thanks to the financial support that they accorded to the army. According to Abraham Leonowicz, in 1790, during the war with Turkey (Heb. *Yishma'el* in original), the Austrian administration decided to recruit Karaites as soldiers (= *ba'alei milhamah*). The Karaite community, however, financially supported the Austrian army – and thus “found mercy in the eyes of the officials of the *gubernia*.”⁴⁵ The Rabbanites, who also often wished to pay some additional tax instead of going into the army, normally were not allowed to do so.

Nevertheless, this decree was not the end of the problems pertaining to the Karaites' service in the army. In the second decade of the nineteenth century Galician authorities thrice tried to draft some members of the Karaite community of Kukizów into the army. The Karaites again had to “invest” some money in Austria's military activity (or, bluntly speaking, bribe officials). As a consequence, the local Karaites had to borrow large sums of money and were in debt to one of the local landowners.⁴⁶ It seems that in 1831 some Galician Karaites were recruited to the Austrian army in spite of all the royal edicts. The Karaites tried to plead before the Emperor, but could not do so because of the spread of cholera in the country.⁴⁷

In the 1850s the privileged status of the Karaites and their exemption from military recruitment began to be questioned by the Halicz municipal authorities. In 1853 they sent a request to Vienna suggesting not exempting the Karaites from the

1780s and 1790s, while being characterized (along with the Karaites) as “exemplary and hard-working peasants,” the Mennonites and Philippovtsy (Lippowaner) were allowed to practice their religion and were freed from military service (Bihl, “Notizien,” 968-972; Mark, *Galizien*, 57).

⁴⁵ Abraham Leonowicz to A. Firkowicz, Halicz, 1818 (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 1v).

⁴⁶ Letter from the community of Kukizów to Russian Karaite communities; Hebrew, Kukizów, 1822 (NLR Evr.II A, no.1720, fol.1v).

⁴⁷ Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz to Abraham b. Moses; Kukizów, 1831 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1631, fol. 2r); Abraham Leonowicz to Joseph-Solomon Lucki, Halicz, 1831-1832 (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 899, fol. 1).

Wehrpflicht.⁴⁸ The debates concerning the Karaite question apparently lasted for a few years. In 1859 the head of the community, *hazzan* Joseph ben Abraham Leonowicz, together with a few other leaders of the community of Halicz, undertook a trip to Vienna in order to submit a new petition to Kaiser Francis Joseph. In this petition the Karaites argued that they were not allowed to spill blood even during a war because of the fact that their religion was based on the literal interpretation of the Biblical precepts.⁴⁹ Due to support from the minister of the interior, count Agenor Gołuchowski,⁵⁰ their plea was accepted and the whole matter was decided in their favour. On 30 December 1859 the Emperor confirmed their exemption from the draft.⁵¹ On 3 January 1860 the Emperor's decree was officially ratified by the ministry of the interior, and on 19 January of the same year it reached the Karaite community in Halicz. With traditional providentialism the community accepted the news as another confirmation of God's benevolence to the people of Israel, and joyfully celebrated the event on the same day. The community invited to this festivity not only the members of their *qehilah* (=community), but also local municipal authorities, lawyers, and some other important officials.⁵²

⁴⁸ "Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom. Mittheilungen von Josef Löwy," *Kochbe Jizchak* / כוכבי צדק 31 (1865): 82.

⁴⁹ Reuven Fahn, "Le-qorot ha-qera'im be-Galitsiah (Polin qatan) (yeshuveihem ve-hakhameihem-hazzaneihem)," in his *Kitve' Reuben Fahn*, pt.1. *Sefer ha-qera'im*, b.1 (Lwów, 1929), 50. Fahn, nevertheless, confused two separate Karaite petitions concerning the military draft – that of 1859 and that of 1869 (*ibid.*, 51). Cf. Polish publications after WWI, which mentioned that the religious principles of the Galician Karaites did not allow them "to spill blood during a war" ("Karaici w wojsku polskim," *Czas*. 24 Dec. 1921).

⁵⁰ Count Agenor Gołuchowski (1812-1875) was one of the most important Austrian politicians of the nineteenth century; a member of the Austrian parliament, minister of the interior, and governor of Galicia. Joseph Leonowicz mentioned that he visited Gołuchowski a few times in Lwów ("Divrei ha-brit," *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 81). The Karaites told Fahn that Leonowicz had been walking with Gołuchowski arm-in-arm – which might be an exaggeration on the part of Fahn's Karaite informants (Reuven Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140).

⁵¹ "Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom," *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 81; Goehlert, "Karaiten," 600. The Mennonites received a new confirmation of exemption from conscription almost at the same time as the Karaites, on 7 Dec. 1859 (Bihl, "Notizien," 971).

⁵² "Divrei ha-brit," *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 81-82.

However, in 1869 Francis Joseph introduced a new system of the general conscription, and the Karaites again had to request exemption from the draft. The Karaites substantiated their claim by a new appeal in which they used the same pattern as before. They mentioned their exemplary way of life, rejection of the Talmud and separation from other Jews already before the birth of Jesus (!),⁵³ usefulness for the state, and, finally, their insignificant numbers (95 men and 85 women).⁵⁴ Their petition was also supported by the opinion of Count Potocki, then the Austrian minister of agriculture. On 31 August 1869 Francis Joseph accepted their plea and freed the Karaites from service under arms.⁵⁵ This regulation, however, was not extended to the Karaite emigrants from other regions and those recently converted to the Karaite religion.⁵⁶

Thus, from 1869 on (including the period of 1914-1918), the Karaites were obliged to serve in the auxiliary units of the Austrian army. Most of the Karaites, it seems, were recruited to the medical units.⁵⁷ In spite of the fact that service in medical units was normally less dangerous than that under arms, for some of the Karaites their

⁵³ The Galicians seem to have borrowed this claim from the analogous petitions of their Crimean Karaite brethren (see more on the origin of this claim in Mikhail Kizilov, *Karaites through the Travelers' Eyes* (New York, 2003), 67-70).

⁵⁴ This petition reached the Emperor on 6 Aug. 1868, when the new system of the *Wehrpflicht* had not yet been introduced (the full text of the petition has not survived; see excerpts in Wolf, "Karaiten," 95). Bałaban's opinion that the Karaites were obliged to serve in the medical units somewhat earlier, in the times of the hazzan Joseph-Joshua b. Abraham Leonowicz (hazzan in Halicz 1851-1866), seems to be wrong. Following R.Fahn, Bałaban confused the Karaite petitions of 1859 and 1869 (Bałaban, "Karaici," 22).

⁵⁵ The Karaites received this exemption together with the Lippowaner-Filippovtsy (Mark, *Galizien*, 57; Wolf, "Karaiten," 95; cf. the Austrian *Wehrvorschriften I Theil*, §96: 5 (AAN MWRiOP 1461, fol. 57)).

⁵⁶ During my first visit to Halicz, in Sep. 2002, I was fortunate to find a copy of the Emperor's decree exempting the Karaites from service under arms (Yurchenko MSS; typescript, in German). At that time I could not make a copy of the text. Unfortunately, later, in the process of cataloging this priceless document was lost. Nevertheless, the Yurchenko MSS contain a few copies of the Polish translation of the Emperor's decree, which were made in the 1920s. Perhaps these translations were done at the request of the local Polish authorities (see Decree 2/w l.19359 from 25 Oct. 1915; XIV l.1790 from 9 Nov. 1915; copied in Biała on 19 Oct. 1916 and in Halicz 19 July 1918: Yurchenko MSS; typescript, in Polish).

⁵⁷ The Yurchenko MSS contain copious miscellaneous documentation related to the army service of the Galician Karaites (photos, letters from the arena of military action, postcards, certificates of completion of military service, *et al.*; see Illustrations, fig. 9.4; Appendix 4).

service in the army ended rather tragically. Zachariah-Isaac Abrahamowicz (1878-1903), who was one of the most famous Karaite poets in Eastern Europe, fell ill while in army service and died soon afterwards. It is of interest that while in the army, the poet composed a few verses in Karaim, Ukrainian, and Polish.⁵⁸ The only extant picture of the poet shows him in Austrian military uniform.⁵⁹ Another talented Karaite, Mordecai (Marek) Szulimowicz, who was a student at the Jagellonian medical college in Kraków, died during his service in the army in 1908 at the age of 27.⁶⁰

Nevertheless, in the course of the military actions during the First World War none of the Karaite recruits was killed. In August 1914 most of the Karaite men living in Halicz were recruited to the Austrian army.⁶¹ The Yurchenko MSS contain numerous photos of the Karaite Austrian soldiers and letters written by them from such places as Hungary, Galicia, and Czech lands. At the end of 1914 the Russian army occupied Halicz. Paradoxically, during this time, the town was often visited by Karaite soldiers and officers of the rival Russian army. These Russian Karaites often entered the local Karaite synagogue and attended services there. Of interest is also the fact that among the Russian soldiers there were many Muslim Circassians, who, like

⁵⁸ He wrote these poems in Galicia (Stanisławów, Kniahynyn) and in Czech lands (Luka). See the excerpts in Samuel Ickowicz, "Zacharia" [poems in Karaim dedicated to the sixty-year anniversary of the death of Zacharia Isaak Abrahamowicz (1878-1903)] (Yurchenko MSS, collection of Janina Eszwowicz) and in Stepan Pushyk, "Karaïms'kyi poet Zakhar'ia Samuïlovych Abrahamowicz," in *Karaïmy Halycha: Istoriia ta Kul'tura/The Halych Karaïms: History and Culture* (L'viv-Halych, 2002), 113-124.

⁵⁹ Achad Haam, "Zecharja Jicchak Abrahamowicz," *KA* 2 (1931): 21; Illustrations, fig. 9.3.

⁶⁰ Jan Grzegorzewski, "Caraimica. Język Łach-karaitów. Narzecze południowe (łucko-halickie)," *RO* 1:2 (1916-18): 287-288. His full name was Mordecai-Shalom ben Samuel Szulimowicz (1882-1908). He was known to his colleagues by the nickname "Academician" (המכונה תואר אקאדמיק) (I. Yurchenko, O. Kefeli, N. Yurchenko, and O. Berehovykyi, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche bilia Halycha. Kataloh nadmohylnykh pam'yatnykiv* (L'viv-Halych, 2000), 162-163).

⁶¹ Zarach Zarachowicz, "Listy z Halicza," *MK* 1 (1924): 27-28; cf. Bałaban, "Karaici," 23. While delivering the paper "The History of the Karaite Community of Halicz in Interwar Period" to the conference *The Halicz Karaites: History and Culture* (Halicz, 4 Sep. 2002), I was informed by Anna Sulimowicz (a Karaite Orientalist of Galician origin) that there had been three Karaites who had served in the regular Austrian army under arms (not in the medical units!) and had been decorated for their military valour.

the Mosaic believers, were not allowed to consume pork. Thus, local Karaite women were hired to prepare proper “ritually clean” food for the Circassians. Their good relations with the Russian army forces helped the Karaites to save a Galician peasant who was being beaten by soldiers. He was released at the request of the Karaites.⁶²

In 1918 all Karaite soldiers safely returned home. After the disintegration of Austria in 1918 most Galician Karaites received Polish citizenship and served in military units of the Polish army on the same basis as all other residents of interbellum Poland.

1.2. The Karaites as the “exemplary Jews” of Austria

1.2.1. Idealisation of the Karaites in the Austrian press from the end of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century.

As is evident from the material presented in the preceding subchapters from the end of the eighteenth through the nineteenth century the Galician Karaites were distinctively differentiated in terms of their legal status from the Rabbanite Jews of the region. Why were the decisions of Austrian officialdom so much in favour of the Karaites, who were but a mere drop in the ocean of the thousands of Talmudic Jews? Why were the Karaites perceived by both state officials and public opinion as a better sort of Jews than their Rabbanite neighbours? This subchapter is an attempt to answer these questions.

In addition to legal decrees and official documents, one may distinguish the following types of sources that reflected perceptions of the Karaites by Austrian men of letters: travel accounts, official reports, polemical anti-Jewish literature, and

⁶² This is according to Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, who based his data on oral reports by the local Karaites (Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 14).

scholarly articles.⁶³ The earliest travel report about the state of the Galician Karaite community after 1772 was left by Franz Kratter (1758-1830), a young lawyer from Vienna. While working in Lwów he occupied the very modest position of collector of Jewish kosher taxes (*Koscherfleischsteuer*). Being bored by the dull routine of his life, he wrote a biting and sarcastic description of Galicia. In spite of the fact that his book received a highly critical reception,⁶⁴ his later literary and academic career was rather successful.⁶⁵ His book (published in 1786), full of compassion with regard to the deplorable position of the poor Galician Jews, leaves a very detailed description of Jewish life in the region. This is why his attention was attracted by the small colony of Karaites, whom he described as the “good Jews” of the country:

The Karaims, also known as Karaites, are a kind of Jews, who nevertheless do not recognise the Talmud and, perhaps, already on this account represent a better sort of people. They dress as Poles, cultivate the land, in all respects are treated on the same footing as [Christian] peasants, and are completely free from the taxes [imposed] on other Jews.⁶⁶

One of the reports by the Galician Gubernium (1774) also gave a very favourable evaluation of the local Karaites. The report emphasised the diligence and hard-working nature of the Karaites, and compared them to the biblical Israelites:

... these industrious, moderate, peaceful, cleanly people, who are not distasteful even to the Christians themselves, and who number around 200, spend their peaceful lives mainly in

⁶³ For an analysis of Austrian polemical and travel literature related to the history of Austrian Jews and Karaites, see Wolfgang Häusler, *Das galizische Judentum in der Habsburgermonarchie. Im Lichte der Zeitgenössischen Publizistik und Reiseliteratur von 1772-1848* (Munich, 1979), esp. 35, 59, 72, 74; Stanisław Schnür-Pełowski, *Galicians 1778-1812* (Lwów, 1896), esp. 65, 98-99, 120.

⁶⁴ He was even refused a professorship at Lemberg University (Wolff, “Inventing Galicia,” 825-826; Schnür-Pełowski, *Galicians*, 15-43). Cf. the critical response to his work: *An Kratter, den Verfasser der Schmähbriefe über Galizien* (Vienna, 1786).

⁶⁵ Zbigniew Frasz, *Galicia* (Wrocław, 2003), 28-29; Joseph Kürschner, “Kratter, Franz,” *ADB* 17 (1883), 55-56.

⁶⁶ [Kratter], *Briefe*, 149. All of the quotations provided in this subchapter have been translated by me into English. For German originals, see Appendices 2.2, 2.3, 3.1.

agriculture in the manner of the ancient Israelites, and therefore in many respects they could serve as an example both for the Christian and other Jewish inhabitants; indeed, not a single complaint has ever been laid against Karaites.⁶⁷

Thus, as is evident from this citation, their Jewish (as well as Christian) compatriots were supposed to take the Karaites' way of life as a model for their own life-style. Julius Fürst mentioned that Karaite houses were much cleaner than those of both the Rabbanite Jews and the Christians alike.⁶⁸ Later the motif of using the Karaites and their "exemplary life-style" in order to improve the character of Austrian Jewry became even stronger. Another official report of 1774 suggested converting all (!) Jewish citizens of Austria into Karaites:

... it would be exceptionally beneficial for the country if one could transform the other Jews into the so-called "Caraimiten" [...] At the same time nothing would be more desirable than if the other Jews, who currently are not capable of holding any property, but still have to live like [other] human beings, and thus are tempted to seek their livelihood in taverns, inns and the oppression of Christians, could be set on the same community-oriented and peaceful track as the "Caraimiten". For the equal treatment of the latter with the Christians would perhaps also stimulate the natural inclination of other Jews to acquire some property and at the same time would incite them to take up some work, and thus in due course they [the Jews] would be transformed from a nation which is onerous for Christians into good fellow citizens.⁶⁹

After a certain time, however, these projects regarding mass conversion of the Rabbanite Jews into Karaites were abandoned.

⁶⁷ As cited in Goehlert, "Karaiten," 600. Similar phrases may be found in other official reports (Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291-293); cf. also "Gehorsamster Bericht des Kayserl. König. Districts Directors N.2 In betrag der Sect. Lebens Arten und Unterhaltung der Karaimer Juden in der Statt Halicz," HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784; Doc.1494 (Oct.1774), fol. 1, 1^{mo}; "Beschreibung der Königreiche Galizien...", in HR NK 5, Konv.5, I Abteilung, fol. 475v, 12^{mo}. Stöger's positive characterisation of the Karaites was also based on the official documents mentioned above (Stöger, *Darstellung*, vol. 1, 104).

⁶⁸ [Julius Fürst], "Halicz (Die Karäer in Galizien)," *Der Orient* 5 (1844): 308.

⁶⁹ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 292.

The account of Balthasar (*vel* Belsazar) Hacquet (1739/40-1815), a professor of natural history at the University of Lemberg (Lwów) and a prolific travel writer,⁷⁰ is slightly less favourable with regard to the Karaites than those of his contemporaries. Hacquet had such a great loathing for Jews in general that he could not fully overcome it even when describing the Karaites. Nevertheless, while comparing the Karaites to other Jews, he certainly preferred the former:

The Karaites are much despised by other Jews; but they [the Karaites] are better for the state [than the Rabbanites], since they are engaged in agriculture, while the typical Jews [i.e. the Rabbanites] here in Poland are the most miserable, most timorous, poorest, filthiest and in many respects (except for swindling, of which they are more capable than anyone else) the most idiotic people in the whole country.⁷¹

Highly interesting is a detailed description of the Karaites, their mores, customs and traditions, which was left by Joseph Rohrer (1769-1828), Austrian littérateur, traveller and “enlightened bureaucrat.”⁷² This author personally visited Halicz in 1803 and had a lengthy conversation with Shalom Zacharjasiewicz, the head of the local Karaite community. Rohrer was somewhat disappointed to discover that the Karaites were subject to many superstitious beliefs, especially with regard to their funeral

⁷⁰ Hacquet was favoured by Emperor Joseph II and Maria Theresa, and most of his scientific and ethnographic expeditions were made with their help (Reichardt, “Hacquet, Balthasar,” *ADB* 10 (1879): 300; cf. Schnür-Pełowski, *Galicia*, 53-91a). He is also known as a friend of the famous German scientist and traveller, Peter Simon Pallas, and the author of the extravagant theory suggesting that the Crimean Gothic language was, in fact misunderstood Yiddish (Mikhail Kizilov, Viacheslav Masiakin, “Goty,” in *Ot kimmeriitsev do krymchakov* (Simferopol, 2004), 84).

⁷¹ This brief reference to the Karaites is followed by a lengthy anti-Semitic tirade concerning the uselessness and viciousness of the Talmudic Jews of Galicia (Balthasar Hacquet, *Hacquet's neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1788. und 1789. durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nördlichen Karpathen*, pt. 1 (Nuremberg, 1790), 198-203).

⁷² On Joseph Rohrer, “professor der politischen Wissenschaften und der Statistik in Lemberg,” see Ritchie Robertson, “Joseph Rohrer and the Bureaucratic Enlightenment,” in *The Austrian Enlightenment and Its Aftermath. Austrian Studies* 2, ed. R. Robertson, and E. Timms (Edinburgh, 1991), 22-42; idem, *The “Jewish Question” in German Literature, 1749-1939. Emancipation and its Discontents* (Oxford, 1999), 403-404; Hugelmann, “Rohrer, Joseph,” *ADB* 29 (1899): 64-68; Schnür-Pełowski, *Galicia*, 90b-121.

traditions. Nevertheless, he still wrote about them with deep sympathy and highly praised the purity and soberness of their religious views.⁷³

In addition to the travel account mentioned above, Rohrer also composed a most favourable ethnographic report on the Karaites, which was published in the third volume of his *Versuch über die Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie*. This report was also based on a comparison of the Karaites to the Talmudic Jews of Austria:

No Talmudic Jew wants to live next to a Karaite. He [a Talmudic Jew] claims that even the word “Karaite” is a term of abuse and that it means the same as a castrate [...] In any case it is clear that a Karaite possesses the virtues which an unprejudiced statesman calls for to a higher degree than the ordinary Talmudic Jew. A Karaite is not engaged in usury and does not enrich himself at the expense of other people and their property. Although he occasionally trades in horses, his most common occupation is agriculture and hard carting trade. A Karaite never just pretends to work, but he works with the application of all his energy. He lives in friendly peace with the Christians, disturbs and condemns nobody, is uncommonly modest, and behaves in such a peaceful manner that not a single complaint, be it by him or against him, is likely to be laid before the Christian courts.⁷⁴

In this report the Karaites are represented as friendly neighbours of the local Christian population, who had never been tried or sentenced in Christian courts of justice. Their marvellous fidelity to the law is emphasized in a few other contemporary accounts.⁷⁵ This motif, that is, the impeccable behaviour of the Karaites with regard to the law, is also stressed in many travel reports dedicated to the

⁷³ See “6. Brief. Bemerkungen über die Gebräuche und Sitten der Karaimen in Halicz und deren Rabbinen. Halicz den 27. Novemb. 1803” in Joseph Rohrer, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von der türkischen Gränze über die Bukowina durch Ost- und Westgalizien, Schlesien und Mähren nach Wien* (Vienna, 1804), 109-116.

⁷⁴ Joseph Rohrer, *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1804), 147-148.

⁷⁵ “Zu den bemerkenswerthen Thatsachen über diese Sekte gehört auch, dass in der criminalistischen Chronik seit Erwerbung Galiziens noch kein Karaite als Verbrecher oder Gesetzübertreter notirt erscheint....” (Goehlert, “Karaiten,” 601-602).

Volhynian and Crimean Karaites – in spite of the fact that archival research does not confirm its veracity. This characterisation seems to be an exaggeration resulting from the idealisation of the Karaites in the eyes of external observers.⁷⁶ Although it was quite possible that, as the source mentioned, there were no criminal acts committed by the Karaites after the annexation of Galicia (1772), there certainly had been legal proceedings against the Galician Karaites in previous centuries.⁷⁷

Most Austrian authors continued to compare the Karaites to the Rabbanites throughout the first half of the nineteenth century, always stressing the good moral and physical qualities of the former. Especially significant is the article by Emanuel von Kronbach, which was published in the *Österreichisches Archiv für Geschichte, Erdbeschreibung, Staatenkunde, Kunst und Literatur*:

The Karaites are quiet, modest, God-fearing, diligent, and industrious; they are cleaner and far more assiduous in their work than other Jews; their women also deserve this appraisal. Like the Christians they do every kind of work, including also the hardest occupations; but above all they are useful for the state because they cultivate their fields by themselves, wherein they are assiduously helped by their wives, children and servants, which is rare among other Jews... In their demeanour they are less mischievous, more open, less subservient... The Karaites speak Polish with less gesticulation, in a less squeaky, mouth-distorting and nasal manner than other Jews... The Jews... therefore still have to make several steps forward, which the Karaites, who are hated by them, have already taken.⁷⁸

⁷⁶ The impossibility of this “proverbial” non-criminal nature of the Karaites and the necessity of checking all legal cases (a task, perhaps, too difficult to be accomplished) was mentioned in the petition of the Troki Rabbanites as early as 1835 (Yulii Gessen, “Bor’ba karaimov g. Trok s evreiami,” *Evreiskaia starina* 4:3 (1910): 577).

⁷⁷ E.g. the case of the Kukizów Karaite woman, Hanna, who was found guilty of infanticide in 1747 (MS department of the Library of Ivan Franko National Lviv University, no. 617 III, fols. 54, 59v-62r; cf. Stefan Gąsiorowski, “Karaimi w Kukizowie,” in *Żydzi i Judaizm we współczesnych badaniach polskich*, ed. K. Pilarczyk and St. Gąsiorowski, vol. 2 (Kraków, 2000), 79).

⁷⁸ Emanuel von Kronbach, “Ueber die karaitischen Juden (gewöhnlich Karaimen genannt) im Königreiche Galizien,” *Österreichisches Archiv für Geschichte, Erdbeschreibung, Staatenkunde, Kunst und Literatur* 1:134 (8 Nov. 1831): 531.

This article immediately caused an indignant reply by the Jewish historian Joseph Wertheimer, who pointed out a number of historical and terminological mistakes made by Kronbach. Nevertheless, he also agreed with the necessity of wider involvement of the Jews in agriculture.⁷⁹

While most of the travel reports concentrated on the Karaites of Halicz, one traveller, the Polish Catholic priest S., visited and described the town of Kukizów, where a small Karaite colony lived until 1831. The priest visited Kukizów in 1843, when the Karaite community had already left the town. The generally positive tone of his account was strongly influenced by the traveller's encounter with the only remaining Karaite inhabitant of the town, who had converted to Christianity and married a Polish Catholic woman. At the end of his travel report the priest expressed the hope that the empty building of the Karaite synagogue would be purchased by the local Catholic community, which did not have any place of worship.⁸⁰

Thus, as is clear from the works cited above, the general image of the Karaites as seen from the perspective of Austrian officials, journalists, and travellers from the end of the eighteenth to the first half of the nineteenth century was highly positive, not to say idealised. It is rather difficult to judge to what extent this image reflected the actual state of things. Indeed, in contrast to the Ashkenazim, the Galician Karaites were rather actively engaged in agriculture and physical labour, and dressed in a less distinctive manner. They did not speak Yiddish and their children were usually

⁷⁹ Joseph Wertheimer, "Ueber Einiges in dem in Nr.134 dieser Blätter hinsichtlich der karaitischen Juden in Galizien enthaltenen Aufsätze," *Österreichisches Archiv für Geschichte, Erdbeschreibung, Staatenkunde, Kunst und Literatur* 1:141 (24 Nov 1831): 559-560; *ibid.*, 1:142 (26 Nov 1831): 561-563.

⁸⁰ This account was originally published as: Ks.S. z Galicji, "Synagoga Karaitów w Kukizowie," *Gazeta Kościelna* 1:43 (Poznań, 23 Oct. 1843): 328. Later it was reproduced with commentaries in Edmund Majkowski, "Wiadomość o Karaimach Kukizowskich i ich Kienesie w poznańskiej *Gazecie Kościelnej* z r. 1843," *MK* 12 (1938): 99-105.

married at a later age than those of the Rabbanites. All this evoked a justified sympathy on the part of Austrian Christian observers. However, it seems that the main feature that positively differentiated the Karaites from the Rabbanites was their rejection of the Talmud, which was seen at that time as the primary reason for the “viciousness” and “rottenness” of the Jews.⁸¹

As was shown above, a recurring motif in the descriptions of the Galician Karaites of that time is the comparison between the “bad Jews” (i.e. the Rabbanites, “corrupted” Talmudic Jews), and the “good Jews” (i.e. the Karaites, “pure” Jews, who remained faithful to the Old Testament). This anti-Talmudic attitude was expressed most articulately by Franz Kratter: “They [the Karaites] do not recognise the Talmud and, perhaps, already on this account they represent a better sort of people [than the Rabbanite Jews].”⁸² Almost all descriptions of the Galician Karaites were based on this dichotomy, and naturally such comparisons were always slanted in favour of the Karaites. Practically all travel and official accounts emphasized that the main reason for the “tadelloses und sittliches Leben” of the Karaites was their rejection of the authority of the Talmud. This is why, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, two hundred Galician Karaites, a mere drop in the ocean in comparison to 200,000 Galician Talmudic Jews, started to be used frequently in the Austrian press as the “exemplary Jews”, a pattern to be imitated by other, non-Karaite Jews.⁸³ Thus, we can say that the Karaites were in fact used by the anti-Semitic Austrian administration as a useful tool in anti-Rabbanite propaganda – and this might explain why the Karaites

⁸¹ On the negative perception of the Talmud in Austria see I. A. Hellwing, *Der konfessionelle Antisemitismus im 19. Jahrhundert in Österreich* (Vienna, 1972), 118-137.

⁸² [Kratter], *Briefe*, 149.

⁸³ “Wir werden aus einer Reihe publizistischer Quellen das ständig wiederkehrende Motiv von der Vorbildlichkeit der landwirtschaftlich tätigen Karäer für die “übrigen Juden” kennenlernen” (Häusler, *Galizische Judentum*, 35; cf. *ibid.*, 72, 74).

received from the state so many privileges and alleviations which remained inaccessible to their Rabbanite brethren.

1.2.2. The Karaites in the Austrian press and scholarly literature in the second half of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, when the Jewish problem and Talmudophobia became less topical than before, the public attitude towards the Galician Karaites became much less ecstatic than it had been previously. Favourable official and travel reports on the Karaites, which were had appeared so often immediately after the annexation of Galicia, became much less frequent after 1848 – most likely because of the fact that the official bodies stopped seeing in them a feasible alternative to the Talmudic Jews, and abandoned their earlier projects regarding the possible conversion of the Rabbanites to Karaite Judaism. Nevertheless, it is in this period, from the mid-nineteenth century to 1918, that a few other, much more detailed and descriptive accounts of the Karaites were published. The emergence of a new wave of curiosity with regard to the Karaites was probably caused by growing academic interest in the Karaites as one of the unique and picturesque ethnic minorities of Galicia. Among the scholars interested in the Karaites were not only Austrian but also Polish and Ruthenian men of letters.⁸⁴ Paradoxically enough, in addition to Christian scholars, Austrian *maskilim*, the leaders of the Jewish Enlightenment, enthusiastically tried to establish contacts with the local Karaites, to whom they often devoted considerable parts of their scholarly studies.⁸⁵

Perhaps the earliest scholarly report on the Austrian Karaites was issued in 1861

⁸⁴ For more information see ch. 4, §4.1.2.

⁸⁵ For more information see ch. 4, §4.2.4-§4.2.6.

by Johann Vinzenz Goehlert, the Viennese specialist in statistics.⁸⁶ Goehlert, apparently, did not want to use traditional clichés and did not compare the Karaites with other Jews. Nevertheless, he wrote a very positive characterisation of the Karaites under the influence of the authoritative weight of Austrian official reports and the writings of Russian scholars:

In all countries where they have found a home, this small ethnic group leads a peaceful, modest and respectable life, detached from all political turmoil. Everywhere and in every period they have earned the gentle care of the government and the love of the local people through their loyalty and probity, and especially through easy acceptance of the regional customs and traditions.⁸⁷

However, real academic interest in the Karaites began slightly later, at the end of the nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century, when the Karaites became the focus of a few anthropological, ethnographic, and linguistic studies. The Orientalist Jan (*vel* Johann) Grzegorzewski (1846/9-1922), one of the earliest students of the Galician dialect of the Karaim language, spent his last years in Halicz while studying the local Karaites.⁸⁸ An enthusiastic Turkophile, he highly praised the Karaites' diligence and honesty, and their fidelity to their traditions:

These Halicz Karaites, like other *Łach Karaiten* [i.e. Polish Karaites], are a peaceful, honest and industrious tribe. They are occupied mainly with agriculture or earn their bread as craftsmen and day labourers. In earlier times, however, they also conducted active trade with the Orient... They avoid all contact with the Jews.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ On Goehlert, *Hofkonzipist* and a member of a special committee for the *Revision der Volkszählungsvorschriften*, see Birgit Bolognese-Leuchtenmüller, *Bevölkerungsentwicklung und Berufsstruktur, Gesundheits- und Fürsorgewesen in Österreich 1750-1918* (Munich, 1978), 68, 178.

⁸⁷ Goehlert, "Karaiten," 598.

⁸⁸ Some time before his death, he returned to Lwów, where he died on 17 Nov. 1922 (Włodzimierz Zajączkowski, "Jan Grzegorzewski," *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* 9 (1960-1961), 95-97).

⁸⁹ Jan (Johann von) Grzegorzewski, "Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt in Galizien. Vokalharmonie in den entlehnten Wörtern der karaitischen Sprache in Halicz," *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 146 (Vienna, 1903): 2.

A similar favourable description of the Karaites was written by the anthropologist Witold Schreiber. His sober and scholarly account of the state of the Karaite community in Halicz, which served as the introduction to the main part of his anthropological study, was, nevertheless, based on a comparison between the Karaites and Rabbanites. In contrast to the latter, the Karaites were referred to as honest, open-minded, and diligent peasants.⁹⁰

In 1903 Halicz was visited by the Viennese journalist of Polish origin, Grzegorz Smólski. The main objective of his trip was to compose a report on the life of the local Karaite community. The traveller remembered the disbelief and even suspicion on the part of the local Karaites when he informed them that he had undertaken such a long trip (from Vienna to Halicz) in order to write a report about the Karaites. The author was warned several times that he “should not write anything bad about us [the Karaites]. We do not do anything bad to anybody.”⁹¹ Smólski found the Halicz Karaites to be loyal citizens of the Austrian empire, different from the Poles in terms of their religious affiliation, but similar in their quotidian life, language, and culture.⁹²

Interesting accounts of the Galician Karaite community in the 1910s-1920s appeared in a series of popular ethnographical and historical essays by Bohdan Janusz. Unfortunately, like many other Polish authors of that time, instead of providing his own impressions from contacts with the Karaites, Janusz often quoted *verbatim* Tadeusz Czacki's⁹³ phrases about their proverbial honesty, diligence, and non-criminal nature. This is perhaps why his general impression of the Karaite

⁹⁰ Witold Schreiber [Schreiber-Łuczyński, Witold], *Badania nad antropologią dzieci Chrześcijańskich, Żydowskich i Karaimskich w Galicyi* (Warsaw, 1910), 6; cf. idem, “Zur Anthropologie der Karaimkinder Galiziens,” *Archiv für Anthropologie* 9: 1-2 (1910).

⁹¹ Grzegorz Smólski, “U Karaimów w Haliczu,” *Naokoło Świata* 2 (1903): 564.

⁹² Ibid., 465-467, 482-484, 506-507, 522-523, 538-540, 546-548, 564-565.

⁹³ Tadeusz Czacki, “Rozprawa o Karaitach,” in his *Rozprawa o Żydach* (Wilno, 1807), 246-272.

community was also very positive.⁹⁴ Indeed, Czacki's important and pioneering study of Karaite history⁹⁵ became heavily abused by many Polish authors, who often simply cited Czacki and did not venture their own theories or hypotheses. It is worthwhile mentioning that German-speaking Austrian authors could not profit from Czacki's work due to the simple fact that there was (and still is) no complete translation of his *Essay on the Karaites* into any West European language.⁹⁶

After the demise of the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1918, local Polish journalists continued to exhibit the same tendency to excessively positive representation of the Karaites as contrasted with their Rabbanite neighbours – but from a different angle and under different circumstances.

1.3. *The Karaites and the royal family of Austria.*

Mordecai Sułtański, a Karaite from Volhynia, wrote with apparent derision about the fact that the Rabbanites used to boast that in 1571 their street in Prague had been visited by the Emperor Maximilian and his consort. He added that neither the Emperor nor his consort approached the Rabbanites and talked to them – and described in minute detail the formal visit of Nicholas I and his ministers to the Karaite community of Çufut-Qale (Chufut-Kale) in 1837.⁹⁷

The Karaites, a tiny minority within the Jewish minority, always needed the mighty hand of rulers of their lands to give them protection from their more

⁹⁴ Bohdan Janusz, "Dzieci Karaitów halickich," *Wszechświat* 8 (1911); idem, "Ostatni z Mohikanów galicyjskich," *Świat* 16 (Warszawa 1912): 8-9; idem, "Karaici i cmentarzysko ich," *Ziemia* 2 (1911): 3-7; idem, "Gmina karaicka w Haliczu," *Na ziemi naszej* 5 (Lwów 1911): 5; idem, "Z dziejów Karaitów galicyjskich," *Gazeta Kościelna* 31 (Lwów 1911): 383; idem, "Nieznany lud w Galicji," *Gazeta Ludowa* 6 (Lwów 1912): 10. These pre-war essays were later combined by the author into a separate brochure: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Kraków 1927) (quite critically reviewed by the young Karaite scholar A. Z-ski (Ananjasz Zajączkowski) in *MK* 1:4-5 (1928): 72-74).

⁹⁵ Czacki, "Rozprawa."

⁹⁶ For more information on Czacki, see Kizilov, *Karaites*, 53; Klier, *Russia Gathers Her Jews*, 46-49.

⁹⁷ Mordecai Sułtański, *Zekher Tsaddikim*, ed. Samuel Poznański (Warsaw, 1920), 122. In general, practically every important Karaite author left memoirs about his contacts with royal visitors – a topic which deserves a separate study.

numerous, and often hostile, non-Karaite neighbours. This is why the Karaites paid so much attention to every contact with members of the royal families of European countries. Indeed, in the nineteenth century the Crimean Karaites and their settlements in Gözleve (Eupatoria) and Çufut-Qale became one of the Crimea's most important tourist attractions – and practically every new Russian tsar visited the aforementioned places together with his family.⁹⁸ Every visitation by royal personages was usually a major event for the community – and the gifts given by the regal visitors and the plaques commemorating their stay were preserved even throughout Communist times.⁹⁹

Although the Galician Karaites enjoyed the same attention on the part of royal visitors as their Crimean brethren, a few encounters between the Crimean and Galician Karaites and the Austrian emperors deserve to be analysed here. The Austrian monarchs turned their attention to the Galician Karaites almost immediately after the First Partition of Poland in 1772. The benevolent treatment of the Karaites in the first years after the annexation of Galicia may be explained first of all by the direct interest of Maria Theresa and Joseph II in the Karaites as the “ideal” agricultural Jews of Austria, who were supposed to be used as an example for other Jews of the country. Both Maria Theresa and Joseph dedicated their personal royal attention to the Karaite case and even issued a few memoranda and decrees pertaining to the problem of the legal distinction between the Karaites and other Jews (see above, ch.1, §1.1.).

Joseph II would come across the Karaites once again a little later, in 1787, in Çufut-Qale, when he, together with the Russian Empress Catherine II, would visit the

⁹⁸ For an exact list of royal visitors to Çufut-Qale, see Solomon Beim, *Pamiat' o Çufut-Qale* (Odessa, 1862), 50-51; and later by Seraja Szapszał, *Karaimy i Çufut-Qale v Krymu* (n.p., n.d. [Simferopol' 1993], 25-26).

⁹⁹ On the monuments from Gözleve which were dedicated to the royal visitors, see Mikhail Kizilov, Dan Shapira, and Darya Vasyutinski, “Karaite Dedication Inscription from Gözleve / Eupatoria, the Crimea,” in *Karaites in Eastern Europe in the Last Generations. Proceedings of the First International Karaite Colloquium*, ed. Dan Shapira et al. (Jerusalem, 2008) (Hebrew; in print).

Crimea, a new acquisition of the Russian monarchy. Catherine, who arrived in the Crimea with her new favourite, did not venture to climb the mountainous stronghold inhabited by the Karaite community. Thus, the Austrian Emperor was, in fact, the first European visitor of royal lineage, who became personally acquainted with the last inhabitants of the castle, and even expressed his impressions in writing. Joseph II not only visited the fortress, but apparently received some information on Karaite matrimonial traditions and attitudes to marriage from one of the local Karaites. The Emperor left the following witty remark:

I have also seen a town next to Baktschisarai [i.e. Bahçesaray] which is inhabited exclusively by the Jews of Karaite sect; some of them are very rich merchants, other agriculturalists, but they hide their women like the Tatars. They have to content themselves with one woman until she becomes either ugly or weak-eyed; it is only in these two cases that they are allowed to marry another. If this law were introduced in Vienna many women would begin to wear glasses in order to get rid of their husbands.¹⁰⁰

In Çufut-Qale Joseph II most likely visited the synagogues and a house of a rich Karaite merchant.¹⁰¹ A special marble plaque with a text in Russian was placed at the entrance to the larger synagogue to commemorate Joseph's visit to the town.¹⁰² As we have seen in §1.1 many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century legal decrees of the

¹⁰⁰ Joseph II to Feldmarshall Lacy (written in Bahçesaray, 1 June 1787) (see the French original in *Joseph II. und Katharina von Russland*, ed. Alfred von Arneth (Vienna, 1869), 362; cf. Padover, *Revolutionary Emperor*, 258-259; Appendix 2.2).

¹⁰¹ [N.V.Berg], "Voennyi Krym. Korrespondencii N.V. Berga," ed. D.K. Pervykh (Vasil'eva) *Istoricheskoe nasledie* 11 (2005): 65. Later this house belonged to Solomon Beim (1817/19-1867), an important leader of the Crimean Karaite community. Only the walled aperture and foundations of this house have survived (see more in Kizilov, *Karaites*, 79-87).

¹⁰² The text of the dedicatory inscription reads as follows: "Возрадуется Израиль о создателе своем и сыны Сиона восторжествуют в честь великих царей и Августейших фамилий, удостоивших своим Высоким посещением древнее обиталище караимов! В приезде [sic] в Тавриду величественная государыня Императрица Екатерина II. [В] 1787г. посетил Чуфут-Кале и синагогу караимов Римский император Иосиф II..." (Tatiana Erinchek and Sergei Kal'fa-Kalif to Seraja Szapszał, 16 Sep. 1956: MS LMAB F.143, no. 247, fol. 2). The authors of this letter suggested to S. Szapszał that the plaque should be removed in order to avoid association with the Jews (its text mentions the words "Israel" and "synagogue"). Indeed, at some point later this plaque disappeared and its further fate remains a mystery.

Russian government regarding the Karaites conspicuously recall earlier Austrian decrees which appeared in the reigns of Joseph II and Maria Theresa. In spite of the fact that there is no written evidence of this, it is very tempting to suggest that after his visit Joseph II may have told the Russian Empress about the positive legal treatment of the Karaites in Austria – and proposed that she follow the pattern for the legal differentiation of the Karaites. Alternatively, the Russian administration may have simply followed the example of their Austrian colleagues, without involvement of royal supporters of the Karaite case.

In 1818 the Austrian Emperor Francis I¹⁰³ travelled in Galicia, from Kałusz to Stanisławów, i.e. in the immediate neighbourhood of Halicz. The Karaites decided to use this opportunity and to submit another petition requesting exemption from all sorts of additional duties related to the war. Abraham Leonowicz, the head of the Halicz community, managed to see the Emperor in person and discuss with him the Karaite issue. According to Leonowicz, Francis I accepted the petition, but gave no definite answer to his plea to deliver the community from the new taxation. Leonowicz mentioned that the Emperor had a very good opinion of the Karaites, but was unwilling to resolve their question, since it was not his personal decision, but a state matter.¹⁰⁴ Some time later Leonowicz received information that the Emperor personally supported their cause – and as a result the Karaites received another exemption from the additional taxation related to the war.¹⁰⁵

The next contact between the Karaites and the Austrian monarchs occurred much later, during the reign of Emperor Francis Joseph (1848-1916). In 1859 and 1869 he had exempted the Karaites from the military draft. According to R.Fahn, in

¹⁰³ Francis I (1768-1835), last Holy Roman emperor (1792-1806), first emperor of Austria as Francis I (1804-35), king of Bohemia and of Hungary (1792-1835).

¹⁰⁴ Abraham Leonowicz to A.Firkowicz, Halicz (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 2r).

¹⁰⁵ Abraham Leonowicz to A.Firkowicz, Halicz (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 2r).

1859 the Emperor himself examined the question of Karaite exemption from the draft and even conversed with a group of Karaite leaders, who were allowed to see the Emperor personally.¹⁰⁶ In 1871 the Emperor accepted another Karaite delegation, which consisted of the leader of the Galician community, hazzan Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz, and Abraham Firkowicz.¹⁰⁷ Firkowicz, the Crimean Karaite of Volhynian origin, was undoubtedly the most picturesque figure in the whole history of the Karaite movement.¹⁰⁸ In 1871, at the age of 85 (!), Abraham Firkowicz married a young Karaite woman named Shelomit, and started a long journey through the Karaite and Rabbanite communities of Europe, including those of Troki, Łuck, Halicz and Vienna. It seems that one of the main reasons for this journey was his wish to show the radiance of European life to his young wife, as well as his desire to clarify the situation with regard to the publication of his life's work, the book entitled *Avne Zikkaron* ("Memorial Stones").¹⁰⁹

At that moment the charismatic and energetic Karaite elder was in the full light of his fame and glory. His collections were bought for a colossal price by the Russian Imperial library and his name was widely (and somewhat notoriously) known in both the academic and non-academic world. The European press publicized many of his "sensational" discoveries in the field of Karaite and Jewish history. Firkowicz's fame and charisma may perhaps explain the fact that he managed to obtain permission to meet the ruler of one of the largest European countries, Emperor Francis Joseph.

¹⁰⁶ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 50. The Karaite embassy was headed by Joseph Leonowicz (hazzan from 1851 to 1867).

¹⁰⁷ The fact that Firkowicz was accompanied by Joseph Mordkowicz is mentioned by Fahn in his "Le-qorot," 55.

¹⁰⁸ Abraham ben Samuel Firkowicz (or Avraam Samuilovich Firkovich; a.k.a. *Even Reshef*; 1787-1874) was one of the most controversial figures in Karaite history. During his travels in the Crimea, Europe, the Caucasus, Egypt, and the Near East he gathered two manuscript collections, later sold to the Imperial library in St. Petersburg. Already during his life-time, and especially after his death, the veracity of his palaeographic and archaeological discoveries started to be seriously questioned. For more information and bibliography, see Dan Shapira, *Avraham Firkowicz in Istanbul (1830-1832). Paving the Way for Turkic Nationalism* (Ankara, 2003).

¹⁰⁹ Published a year later as Abraham Firkowicz, *Avne Zikkaron* (Wilno, 1872).

We are not sure about the reasons that prompted Firkowicz to seek an opportunity to meet the Emperor and his ministers in person. However, it is very likely that it was dictated by the necessity of obtaining new privileges for the Galician community. One should perhaps take into account the fact that Firkowicz was a citizen of Imperial Russia, where the legal status of the Karaites was by then equal to that of Christian believers and, consequently, a few degrees higher than that of the Rabbanite Jews. According to Reuven Fahn, Firkowicz wanted to secure a similar privileged status for the Galician community.¹¹⁰

There are a few romantic versions of Firkowicz's encounter with Francis Joseph. One, narrated by Firkowicz's Rabbanite secretary, biographer and (somewhat surprisingly) bitter opponent, Ephraim Deinard, mentions that Firkowicz received a very respectful welcome from "the important ministers of the Austrian Empire, first of all from His Majesty the Emperor (may God have mercy on him), who bowed his head before Firkowicz and asked for a blessing."¹¹¹ According to Firkowicz himself, he pronounced the Hebrew blessing for the Emperor and all the inhabitants of Austria, most likely in the presence of Francis Joseph himself. Moreover, he told the Emperor about the history of ancient settlement of the Karaites in the Crimea and in Halicz, and also about legal differences in the status of the Karaites and other Jews in Russia.¹¹² While Firkowicz indeed could pronounce a personal blessing for the Emperor, the whole story of Francis Joseph's bowing before the Karaite leader seems to be a romantic exaggeration.

¹¹⁰ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 55.

¹¹¹ Ephraim Deinard, *Toledot Even Reshef* (Warsaw, 1875), 18-19.

¹¹² See Firkowicz's draft of "The blessing with which I blessed the great Kaiser Emperor Francis Joseph," Vienna, 1871; Hebrew (NLR F.946, op. 1, no. 294). Cf. also NLR F.946, op.1, no. 898, fol. 1r.

A more detailed version of Firkowicz's meeting with the Emperor is narrated by the Troki Karaite, Nisan-Jonathan ben Simcha Moszkowicz, in the introduction to "Avne Zikkaron":

... the Minister of internal affairs,¹¹³ lord Beust [באייסט] of the Austrian Empire, kindly spoke to his lord, the king and emperor Francis Joseph about his [Firkowicz's] Karaite brethren in the holy community of Halicz, and procured from him [Francis Joseph] a favour that the Karaites of Halicz would not be taken as soldiers to the army, and that it is only in wartime that they would assist the needs of the army without weapons. And *Even Reshef* [i.e. Firkowicz] stood close to the minister in front of the lord-emperor, and asked another favour from him: that the aforementioned brethren of his would also be liberated from all sorts of duties. And Lord Beust, whilst noticing that our lord and teacher Even Reshef found mercy in the eyes of the emperor, made arrangements to fulfil the aforementioned request of his and gave him his portrait as a true sign in memory of their meeting, and also asked from him [from Firkowicz] his portrait in return...¹¹⁴

Thus, according to this version, due to Firkowicz's intercession the Galician community was exempted from some additional duties.

As a result of this meeting in Vienna, in 1871, at the request of the minister Beust (or the emperor himself¹¹⁵), Firkowicz was photographed for the second time in his life. As was the case with many other Jewish and Christian thinkers of that time, the Karaite patriarch was rather critical with regard to photography as violating biblical prescriptions. Later, the drawing made from this photograph, which was published on the title page of Firkowicz's most famous book, "Avne Zikkaron," made

¹¹³ These three words were written in Russian in Hebrew lettering: מיניסטר וונוטרעניך דיעל. The minister mentioned here was undoubtedly Friedrich Ferdinand Graf von Beust (1809-1886), a famous Saxon and Austrian politician, who served as premier (1853-66), foreign minister (1866), prime minister (1867), and the only *Reichskanzler* in the history of Austria (1867-1871).

¹¹⁴ Foreword to Firkowicz, *Avne Zikkaron*, on recto of the 2nd title page.

¹¹⁵ This is according to the twentieth century Karaite Orientalist Ananjasz Zajączkowski: "Firkowicz, Abraham," *Polski Słownik Biograficzny* 6 (1948): 473.

his noble Oriental appearance known to the whole academic world.¹¹⁶ Thus, the encounter of the Volhynian Karaite with the Austrian Emperor apparently resulted in the granting of a few new privileges to the Galician community on the one hand, and in the creation of Firkowicz's most famous portrait, on the other.

After his visit to Austria, Firkowicz apparently tried to use the Galician case as an example in negotiations concerning the recruitment of Karaites to the Russian army. In 1872 he received from Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz a copy (קופייה) of the Emperor's patent (פטענט) concerning the exemption of the Galician Karaites from military service under arms.¹¹⁷ We may assume that Firkowicz needed a copy of the Austrian patent in order to present it to the Russian officials as an example of the positive solution of the Karaite problem in Austria. At that time Firkowicz, together with the Odessa Karaite Isaac Beim, was in St. Petersburg, where he lobbied for another exemption of the Russian Karaites from service in the army.¹¹⁸ It seems that this time Firkowicz and Beim's efforts were not successful: after the adoption of the Law on compulsory military service (1873), the Karaites lost their privilege of being exempt from recruitment to the Russian Army. From this time onwards many Russian Karaites entered military units of the Tsarist army and became distinguished officers.

In 1872 as well, Firkowicz sent Mordkowicz a letter of gratitude (*ktav ha-todah*) for the Kaiser. Mordkowicz showed it to an official in the *Bezirksamt*, who suggested sending it back to Firkowicz because, in his opinion, the letter did not contain the requisite number of honorary formulas for a letter addressed to the Emperor. Nevertheless, the same official expressed the opinion that as soon as Firkowicz edited the text of the letter, Mordkowicz should make a Hebrew and Polish translation and

¹¹⁶ See Illustrations, fig. 9.2.

¹¹⁷ NLR F.946, op. 1, no. 675, fol. 1r. Only a reference to this document has survived.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

send it to the editors (רעדאקציע) of a newspaper in Lwów for publication.¹¹⁹ It seems, however, that this project was not accomplished.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

Chapter 2. The Karaites in Austrian Galicia, Their History and Culture: the Community as Seen from Within

2.1. Halicz

2.1.1. Outline of the history of the community from 1772 to 1918.

*Diese Stadt war einst ein Sitz für Könige; nun ist dieselbe so armselig, daß sie viel richtiger ein Judennest genannt werden könnte.*¹

There were two main centres of the Karaite community in Galicia from 1772 to 1918: Halicz and Kukizów. A few scattered Karaite families and individuals were also documented in such settlements of the area as the towns of Lwów, Stanisławów, Żółkiew, Sambor, Tyśmienice, and Brzeżany, and in the villages of Załukiew, Żyrawa, Dorohów, Konczaki, Dubowcy, Kolczyn, and Bóbrka.² Already at the end of the eighteenth century some Karaites were mentioned as merchants living in such important centres of Habsburg Austria as Vienna and Prague.³ The community of Kukizów ceased to exist a short while after 1831 and all of its members moved either to Łuck (Volhynia) or to Halicz and Załukiew (Galicia). Thus, after 1831 the Karaite community of Halicz became the main and, practically, the only centre of the community.

In the medieval period Halicz (located ca.120 km south-east from Lwów) was

¹ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 108.

² Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 443; AAN MWRiOP 1466, fol. 50; Schreiber, *Badania*, 5-6; Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119.

³ Julius Fürst, *Geschichte des Karäerthums* [vol.3:] *von 1575 bis 1865 der gewöhnlichen Zeitrechnung. Eine kurze Darstellung seiner Entwicklung, Lehre und Literatur mit den dazu gehörigen Quellenanweisen* (Leipzig, 1869), 135.

the capital of the mighty Ruthenian duchy which gave its name to the whole region.⁴ At the time of the Austrian annexation of Galicia (1772), Halicz was a typical Ruthenian provincial town, and also a *shtetl* with a large Jewish community. Soon after the First Partition of Poland, Halicz was able to regain at least a part of its former administrative importance: it became the main town (*Hauptstadt*) of the Halicz circuit during the first *Verwaltungseinteilung* of Galicia into six circuits.⁵ Nevertheless, small and underdeveloped Halicz could hardly fulfil the duties of an administrative centre, and in 1775 the town was transformed into a *Distrikthauptstadt* (main district town) in the *Stanislauer Kreis*. This, however, was also not the last administrative innovation accepted during the reign of Joseph II. In 1782 and later, in March 1784, the status of Halicz was changed again – and this time it became an ordinary provincial town of the *Stanislauer Kreis*.⁶

A decree of 28 August 1787 ordered each father (or each guardian) of a Jewish family living in Austria to adopt a *German* family name, which would be given to all members of his family and would be used permanently and hereditarily.⁷ In contrast to the Galician Rabbanite Jews, who started to receive predominantly Germanic family names, the Karaite surnames were Polonised derivatives of traditional Hebrew names. Thus, at the end of the eighteenth century each Karaite received a surname after his/her father's name; this family name was usually transmitted to later

⁴ Pol. *Halicz*, Germ. *Halitsch*, Russ. *Galich*, Ukr. *Halych*. Among the Karaites and Rabbanites there was apparently no convention as to how to write this place name in Hebrew; one can come across such different spellings as העליטש, העליטש, האליץ et al. The Karaim form was *Halits/Helits* because of the fact that among the Galician-Volhynian Karaites the letter “tsadi” was usually pronounced as “ts” (e.g. Alexander Mardkowicz's poem in Karaim about Halicz was entitled *Halic* [pronounced as *Halits*] (Łuck, 1937)); cf. also Ashkenazic Heb. *Helicz*, *Halic*, *Helic* (“Halicz, Family of Printers,” *EJ* 7 (1971), 1189-191)).

⁵ Glassl, *Das österreichische Einrichtungswerk*, 82. This early *Kreis Halicz* consisted of three districts: Zaleszczyki, Tyśmienice, and Halicz ([Kratter], *Briefe*, 138). According to the *Carte nouvelle de Royames de Galizie et Lodomerie*, there was one more district, that of Kolomea (Kołomyja) (Fras, *Galicja*, 20-21).

⁶ Grodziski, *Historia*, 162-163; Glassl, *Das österreichische Einrichtungswerk*, 82-83.

⁷ Grodziski, “The Jewish Question,” 66.

generations of a family.

Most typical were such surnames as *Nowachowicz* (from “Nowach” – a Polonised form of Heb. “Noah”), *Eszwowicz* (from “Eszwa/Yesu’ah”), *Leonowicz* (from “Levi / Leon”), *Zarachowicz*, *Ickowicz*, *Mordkowicz*, *S(z)ulimowicz*, *Abrahamowicz* et alia – all of them, perhaps without a single exception, derivatives of Hebrew names with the Polish ending “-icz.” Surprisingly, some of the family names reflected not the Polish, but the Polish-Yiddish pronunciation of the Hebrew names (e.g. *Icko* instead of Polish “Izaak,” *Mordko* instead of “Mordechaj,” *Szulim* instead of “Shalom” etc.).⁸ All these family names were given to the Karaites at the end of the eighteenth century, most likely by the local Austrian officials, who did not really care about the differences between Karaite, Yiddish, and Polish pronunciations of Hebrew. Nevertheless, it seems that the Karaites themselves never objected to these surnames.

This feature, namely, the usage of traditional Hebrew family names differentiated the Galician Karaites from their Volhynian, Lithuanian, and Crimean brethren, among whom one could usually find Turkic or Slavic names and surnames. First names, which until the beginning of the twentieth century were exclusively Hebrew, later started to be used together with their Europeanised equivalents (Abraham=Adolph, Ester=Stera/Stefania, Moses=Monio/Mundek/Edmund/Zygmunt, Ruchama=Janina, Rebecca=Lina/Regina etc.). The Hebrew variant (Heb. “shem ha-qodesh”) was usually used within the community, whereas the Europeanised equivalents (Heb. “qinnui”) were employed when dealing with the wider non-Karaite environment.⁹

According to official reports from the end of the eighteenth century, most

⁸ Grzegorzewski, “Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt,” 48; cf. Fahn “Le-qorot,” 48, ft.1.

⁹ Anna Sulimowicz, “Imiona Karaimów z Haliczu,” *Awazymyz* 1 (8) (2004): 3-8. A similar tradition of the co-existence of religious and secular names was also typical of the local Rabbanite Jews.

Galician Karaites were engaged in agriculture and in carting trade (*Fuhrwesen*).¹⁰ Some Karaites possessed their own lands, some rented them from other land-owners or directly from the city administration.¹¹ According to the census of 1857, out of forty Karaite families five were actively engaged in agriculture, whereas 25 families lived from *Grund- und Hausbesitz*.¹² It is very likely, however, that in addition to owning their land and house property these 25 families were also engaged in agriculture. The Karaites who lived next to the Dniester river soon started to occupy various positions related to river transport. The Eszwowicz family leased a ferry from Halicz to the other side of the Dniester. At the beginning of the nineteenth century this position was occupied by the Nowachowicze, a Karaite family from Kukizów.¹³ In the mid-nineteenth century the local Karaites were rafting corn and timber down to Odessa. In return they received salt, tobacco, and southern fruits.¹⁴ The Halicz Karaites also carried on a salt trade with Podolia and some other parts of Ukraine.¹⁵ From the second half of the nineteenth century some Karaites, who apparently managed to receive a proper secular education, were working as lawyers and scribes at Galician courts of justice. Some went for their education as far as Kraków, Lwów and Stanisławów; some worked not only in Halicz, but also in such adjacent towns as Buczacz, Bursztyn, Brzeżany and Kołomyja.¹⁶ At the end of the nineteenth century, according to Reuven Fahn, most of the Karaites, in contrast to the rest of the local Jews, were still actively engaged in agriculture, and possessed their own land, horses, cattle, sheep, and fowl. More than half worked as carpenters and waggoners, two as

¹⁰ Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291.

¹¹ Stöger, *Darstellung*, vol.1, 104.

¹² Goehlert, "Karaiten," 602.

¹³ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 13, ft.31.

¹⁴ Janusz, *Karaici*, 69.

¹⁵ Wolf, "Karaiten," 95; NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1631, fol. 2v.

¹⁶ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 50, 56; Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*, 29, 47, 51; Smólski, "U Karaimów," 539-540; Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 130.

blacksmiths; five worked as meat traders, two as shoemakers, and two as tailors.¹⁷

In spite of the fact that crossing the Russo-Austrian border from 1772 to 1918 evidently presented a considerable problem, the Galician Karaites continued to maintain close contacts with their Karaite brethren living in Russia, especially with the Karaite community of Łuck. Sharing the same dialect of the Karaim language, this community was closest to them not only geographically, but also culturally and linguistically. Three of the Łuck hazzanim during the period from 1772 to 1918 were of Galician origin.¹⁸ The members of both communities frequently travelled to each other and often had common financial projects.¹⁹

Natural disasters were a constant danger to the prosperity of the community. Especially harmful were conflagrations, which gutted Halicz from the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries. These frequent fires were largely caused by the fact that most of the buildings belonging to the community members were made of wood. Sources have preserved data about some of the most devastating conflagrations. One of them, which took place in 1830, destroyed not only the homes of the Karaites, but also their wooden synagogue, together with a number of precious manuscripts, the *aron ha-qodesh* (a.k.a “Holy Ark/Ark of the Torah”), and Torah scrolls.²⁰ Another devastating conflagration took place in 1866. The fire damaged most of the houses, and the community members “remained naked and impoverished, for they did not have bread to eat and clothes to wear.” Moreover, as the source has it, about this time there was also a famine in Galicia, so the Karaites had to purchase food from Hungary and other countries.²¹ As was usual in such cases, the poor Galician community

¹⁷ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 130.

¹⁸ “Ribbiŕ, kajsyŕ ettiler Łuckada baŕlap burunhu jarymyndan XIX izjiŕnyn,” *KA* 5 (1932): 16.

¹⁹ E.g. NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.1698; NLR F.946, op.1, no. 889; no. 809; no. 1718.

²⁰ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 13.

²¹ See the letter of Joshua-Joseph b. Moses Mordkowicz to the Karaite community of Gözleve (Eupatoria) of 1866 (GAARK F.241, op.1, no. 1864, fol. 2r).

received financial help from the more prosperous Crimean and South-Russian Karaite communities.²² Equally disastrous were waves of epidemics (especially cholera), which swept through Galicia in 1831,²³ 1847/8, and 1914-1918.

As we have seen in §1.1.3 in 1869 the Karaites of Austria were exempted from service under arms. In 1871 they were visited by the famous Karaite leader and scholar from the Crimea, Abraham Firkovich, who introduced some important innovations in the religious and everyday life of the community (see more in ch.4, §4.2.5). With wider entrance of the Karaites into Austrian society in the second half of the nineteenth century, many of them received a secular European education. According to some eyewitness accounts, at the end of the nineteenth century the level of religious education and knowledge of Hebrew, especially among representatives of the younger generation, deteriorated considerably. At that time the Karaite community was divided between the “traditionalists,” who studied literature in Hebrew and scrupulously observed religious tradition, and the “secularists,” who wore clothing similar to that of their Slavic neighbours and remained rather ignorant regarding questions of faith and religious education.²⁴

In 1913, a short while before the beginning of World War I, a terrible disaster worsened the not very prosperous state of the community. A new conflagration devastated a Karaite quarter. According to the estimates of the members of the community, only four houses remained unscathed.²⁵ Two Russian Karaite periodicals of that time quickly reacted to this deplorable event and published public appeals

²² Altogether 14 communities donated money to help the Galicians to improve their position (ibid., fol.4v).

²³ Abraham Leonowicz mentioned that his brother Simcha and a few other members of the community died of cholera in 1831 (A.Leonowicz to Joseph-Solomon Łucki, 1831/2; Hebrew: NLR F.946, op.1, no. 899, fol. 1).

²⁴ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

²⁵ See the precise list of houses, their owners, and estimates of the damages suffered during the war in AAN MWRiOP 1466, fols.20-21, 26. Cf. Appendix 2.4.

suggesting help for the impoverished Galician community.²⁶ Practically every new issue of the periodicals published lists of those who financially supported the community in need.²⁷

And then, after the devastating fire, came the war. In August 1914 Halicz was occupied by the Russian army. When the Russian forces were withdrawn, a cholera epidemic began.²⁸ Because of the epidemic, the population of the town was evacuated after the recapture of Halicz by the Austrians (July, 1915). It was in this period, when the Karaite inhabitants left their residential quarter, that Austrian soldiers sacked the synagogue and dismantled many of the houses in order to make ditches and encampments. According to Zarach Zarachowicz, only one Karaite house remained intact.²⁹ At this point in its history we leave the community to return to the catastrophic impact of World War I and details regarding the community in the twentieth century in chapters 5-7 (on the participation of Karaite soldiers in the First World War see ch.1, §1.1.3).

2.1.2. Demographic state of the community and the problem of mixed marriages.

Thanks to the benevolent treatment of the Karaites by the Austrian administration, there was a certain demographic growth within the community from the end of the eighteenth to the first decades of the nineteenth century. From approximately 150 Karaites immediately after the Austrian annexation of Galicia, the community grew to ca.250 souls in 51 families in the first quarter of the nineteenth century.³⁰ In 1843

²⁶ See *KS* 6 (1914): 15; “Karaimy g. Galicha,” *KS* 9-10 (1914): 24.

²⁷ “Sbor v pol’zu pogorel’tsev g. Galich,” *KS* 7-8 (1914): 20-22; “Dobrovol’noe pozhertvovanie,” *KS* 7-8 (1914): 23-24; “Dobrovol’noe pozhertvovanie,” *KS* 9-10 (1914): 24.

²⁸ Janina Eszwowicz, “Halyts’ka karaïms’ka hromada v XX st,” in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 4.

²⁹ Zarach Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” *MK* 1 (1924): 27-28; Z.Z. [Zarach Zarachowicz], “Ze statystyki Karaimów w Haliczu,” *MK* 1 (1924): 32-33.

³⁰ According to the census of 1817 (Goehlert, “Karaiten,” 601).

there were 254 Karaites in Galicia.³¹ The statistics gathered by Zarach Zarachowicz on the basis of the community's records show that in the period from 1830 to 1860 the number of births exceeded the number of deaths (182 compared with 153).³² In the period from 1861 to 1891 the community continued to grow, but at a much slower pace (183 births compared with 168 deaths).³³

From 1892 to 1923 the community began to diminish (103 births compared with 133 deaths).³⁴ According to the statistical data of Jan Grzegorzewski, in 1896 the Karaite community of Halicz consisted of 192 souls in 57 families, including the Galicians staying at that moment in the Crimea, Troki, Łuck, and Istanbul.³⁵ In 1900 there were only 167 Karaites compared with 1,450 Rabbanites in Halicz, which means that at that time the Karaite community had diminished to the same number of people as immediately after the Austrian annexation of 1772.³⁶

Having summarised the numerical strength of the community from 1772 to 1918, it is worthwhile to discuss the reasons for the lack of demographic growth of the community in the Austrian period of its history. In contrast to most other ethnic minorities of the country, which experienced an unprecedented demographic explosion in the course of the nineteenth century, the Karaite community did not increase at all. Four of the Karaite hazzanim from the second half of the nineteenth century died without posterity. At the same time such Karaite families as Józefowicze and Solomonowicze ceased to exist – after the end of the nineteenth century their

³¹ Schreiber, *Badania*, 5.

³² Z.Z., "Ze statystyki," 32-33.

³³ Ibid. Cf. the rapid natural increase of Ashkenazic Jewry in the same period (Arthur Rupp, *The Jewish Fate and Future*, transl. E.W. Dickes (Westport, 1940), 76).

³⁴ Z.Z., "Ze statystyki," 32-33.

³⁵ Grzegorzewski, "Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt," 1. Fahn added that 45 of these families lived in Halicz, and twelve in Zahukiew and two other adjacent villages (Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119).

³⁶ Janusz, *Karaici*, 52. The whole population of Halicz of that time was ca. 5,000 inhabitants. Thus, the Jewish (Rabbanite and Karaite) community constituted about one third of the *Stadtbevölkerung*.

names are found only on tombstone inscriptions.³⁷ Fahn also mentioned that the gender structure of the Karaite community was highly disproportional, and men considerably outnumbered women.³⁸

The local Hassidic Jews explained the demographic decline of the Karaite community by a supernatural factor: the Karaites were cursed by one of the Hassidic Rabbis, Meir of Przemyślany (Ukr. Peremyshliany).³⁹ This mystical explanation, however, is hardly satisfactory. In my opinion, it was largely the strictness of Karaite marriage laws (and willingness to observe them) and the remote geographic location of the community that did not allow the influx of fresh blood, which caused the demographic stagnation of the Galician Karaite qehilah. Nevertheless, even in that period some Galician Karaites apparently managed to marry their brethren living outside Austria.⁴⁰

The situation undoubtedly became much worse in the 1830s, when the Galician Karaites had to leave Kukizów and were then concentrated in one little town, i.e. in Halicz. It is in this period that the problem of finding prospective wives/husbands became, it seems, one of the most serious problems in the internal life of the community. According to a Crimean Karaite author, before World War I the Galician community was “writhing in the helpless convulsions of a death-agony whilst being detached from the Karaite metropolis.”⁴¹ At the beginning of the twentieth century some Galician Karaites started leaving Halicz for the Crimea in order to get married

³⁷ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 57.

³⁸ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119. According to Johann Goehlert this may be explained by the participation of physically weak Karaite women in hard agricultural work (Goehlert, “Karaiten,” 601).

³⁹ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119.

⁴⁰ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 757-758, 1350-1361 (no.161: a letter from Abraham b. Mordecai of Poniewież to Mordecai b. Nisan of Kukizów (1783)); NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1693; NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2877.

⁴¹ L..., “Odin gakhm dlia vsekh karaimov,” *KS* 9-10 (1914): 2.

there. Most of them did not return to their ancestral home.⁴²

In spite of the fact that the Karaites had to observe strict marriage laws, which did not allow unions between close relatives, it seems that at some point virtually all members of the community became interrelated. Marriages between relatives undoubtedly also contributed to the demographic decline of the community. According to a local Rabbanite informant, the lack of pretty Karaite women and the difficult laws of divorce forced many Karaites to live in illegitimate unions with non-Karaites. In his opinion, this was one of the reasons why there were so many old spinsters and bachelors among the Karaites.⁴³

One of the logical questions to ask would be whether such a closed religious community, whose members were often related to each other, showed any symptoms of physical degradation. Even though such a suggestion sounds highly probable, we do not possess any precise data regarding this problem. Anthropologists who studied the local community at the beginning of the twentieth century and in the 1930s did not provide any additional information in this regard either.⁴⁴

Permission to contract mixed marriages with neighbouring non-Karaites (Rabbanite Jews and Slavs) could have probably improved the demographic situation of the Karaite community. The community could also have been enlarged by allowing proselytes to enter the community. Nevertheless, the Karaite spiritual leaders of Galicia were too conservative to permit such drastic measures. Moreover, such radical reforms would not have met the approval of the Crimean Karaite community – which did not experience any particular demographic problems until the end of World War

⁴² Schreiber, *Badania*, 5-6.

⁴³ Reuven Fahn, "Aus dem Leben der Karaiten," *Ost und West* 2 (1912): 140. This part of Fahn's narrative is missing in the later Hebrew editions of his works.

⁴⁴ Schreiber, *Badania*, 1-6 and passim; Schreiber, "Zur Anthropologie;" Bohdan Janusz, "Dzieci Karaitów halickich (według pomiarów antropologicznych d-ra W.Schreibera)," *Wszechświat* 30:8 (1911): 118-121; Corrado Gini, "I Caraimi di Polonia e Lituania," *Genus* (Roma, 1936).

II.

I have been able to locate only one case of conversion to Karaism, which was registered in Halicz in 1907. Surprisingly, the proselyte was a British citizen, Florence Pauline Voltaire-Pererova (née Child). According to the Halicz record books, on 17 April 1907 she converted to the Karaite faith from the Anglican religion (Russ. “pereshla iz Anglikanskogo veroispovedaniia v karaimskoe”). Her conversion to Karaism was officially registered by the hazzan Shalom Nowachowicz. Afterward, however, this newly converted Karaite believer left Halicz and never returned there again.⁴⁵ Her conversion appears to have been motivated by the aim of obtaining permission from the Troki *hakham*⁴⁶ to be married to Gedalia Feruz, a Karaite from the Crimea. The Troki hakham, Isaac-Boaz (Bogusław) Firkowicz, registered their marriage in Troki on 15 August 1907. The Crimean hakham, Samuel Panpulov, was apparently very dissatisfied when he received news of this rather scandalous marriage. Nevertheless, it seems that the marriage was considered legal even after his official enquiry.⁴⁷ In the 1920s, when the demographic problem became even more acute, there were a few other cases of conversion to Karaism and mixed marriages between the Galician Karaites and local Poles (see ch.5, §5.1).

In addition to natural reasons for the community's decline (mortality, participation in military actions, casualties, etc.), there existed another serious factor that considerably reduced the community. The strictness of religious laws and the cultural and ethnic isolationism of the community suggested to many of its members another way to solve the problem: conversion to a different religion. There was no Muslim community in Halicz, and the Rabbanites were not particularly keen on

⁴⁵ GAARK F.241, op.1, no. 1180, fol. 3r (Russian; a translation from German and Latin).

⁴⁶ On this term, see more below, §2.1.3.

⁴⁷ Ibid. For the full text of one of the documents related to this interesting case, see Oleg Belyi, “Nekotorye dokumenty o karaimskoi obshchine Galicha v fonde Tavricheskogo i Odesskogo Karaimskogo Dukhovnogo pravleniia GAARK,” in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 125-130.

accepting Karaites into their community (see more in ch.4, §4.2.3). Therefore, Christianity, in either its Catholic or Orthodox variety, was the only choice that remained. According to Fahn, the lack of brides and, so to speak, the narrowness of the local community, forced many of its members to leave and convert to Christianity (usually to Catholicism).⁴⁸ Such a proselyte was supposed to sever all his ties with the Karaite qehilah and was considered a Karaite no more – neither by the Gentiles, nor by his former brethren-in-faith. In exchange, he gained the opportunity to leave Halicz, get married and start a new life as a member of Christian society. Conversion to Christianity also was a chance to improve one's social status and receive real promotion in a workplace in any official institution of the country.

It seems that cases of Karaite conversion to Christianity were never publicly advertised, which is why we have very scant information on the treatment of Karaite converts to Christianity by their former brethren-in-faith. Nevertheless, record books of the Halicz community contain the names of about twenty Karaites who converted to Christianity during the period from the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century.⁴⁹ Cases of conversion became much more numerous after World War I, with further integration of the Karaites into Polish society.⁵⁰

2.1.3. *Structure of the community*

The structure of the Karaite community of Halicz was very similar to that of other East European Karaite communities. As we shall see, most positions within the Karaite communities in Europe (except for the office of the *hazzan*) had practically the same meaning as those of their Rabbanite brethren. In addition to traditional

⁴⁸ Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177.

⁴⁹ There is a sign of a cross near the names of such converts (see a copy of the Karaite record books from Halicz in the Yurchenko MSS).

⁵⁰ Especially significant was a mass conversion to Orthodox Christianity by Crimean Karaites who emigrated to France after 1917.

Jewish terminology used to denote spiritual and administrative positions within the community, in colloquial speech the Karaites frequently used Karaim equivalents of Hebrew terms.

The duties of the spiritual head of the local community (Heb. *qehilah*; GVKar. *dzymat*⁵¹) were fulfilled by the hazzan. The position of the hazzan in Karaite communities roughly corresponds to the office of the rabbi in Talmudic qehilot. In Rabbanite communities, however, the hazzan was only a cantor in a synagogue. The Karaite hazzan was not only the religious head of the qehilah, but also the main authority in legal and administrative matters. He normally also possessed the titles of *rosh ha-qahal* (Heb. “head of the community”), *ha-nagid* (“the leader,” usually recognised by the state authorities), *av beit din* (“head of the religious court”), and *shofet* (normally the same as “judge”; but here, rather, in the sense of Pol. *wójt* or Heb. *shtadlan* – mediator or lobbyist, the head of the community responsible for representing the community to non-Karaite authorities).⁵² In most other Karaite communities there were usually two hazzanim: senior and junior (*hazzan ha-gadol* / *ha-qatan* in Hebrew; *ulu* / *küçük hazzan* in Turkic languages). In Halicz these hazzanim were called *hazzan ha-rosh* (=head hazzan) and *hazzan ha-mishneh* (=deputy hazzan).⁵³ Some documents also mention the office of the *mithazzan* (=hazzan in training).⁵⁴

In Karaite and Rabbanite communities the term *hakham* (=sage, wise man) was generally used as an honorary title, especially for elder members of the community

⁵¹ From Arab. *jema'at*; cf. Turk. *cemaat*.

⁵² E.g. the hazzan Abraham Leonowicz, who was presented in one of the later MSS as *ha-hazzan ve-ha-shofet ve-av beit din... ha-rosh ve-ha-nagid* (Bernhard Munkácsi, “Karäisch-tatarische Hymnen aus Polen,” *Keleti Szemle* 10:3 (1909): 187, ft. 2).

⁵³ See “Taqqanot Even Reshef le-qahal ha-qara'im be-Halits bi-medinat Galitsiya,” in Adolf Jellinek, *Abraham Firkowitsch, das religiöse Oberhaupt der Karäer: ein Gedenkblatt* (Vienna, 1875), 13.

⁵⁴ GAARK F.241, op.1, no. 1864, fol. 2v.

distinguished for their religious knowledge.⁵⁵ After 1839, though, the Russian Karaites started using the term *hakham* to denote the highest Karaite authority in Eastern Europe. The Karaite *hakhamim*, under whose jurisdiction were all the Karaite communities and their leaders, *hazzanim* in Eastern Europe, were administrative rather than spiritual leaders. Simcha Babowicz, who was appointed as the first East European “administrative” *hakham* in 1839, was in fact a wealthy and influential Crimean merchant hardly knowledgeable in religious matters.⁵⁶ In the 1850s, because of numerous ideological and financial controversies between the southern and western Karaite communities living in imperial Russia, the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites decided to elect their own leader *hakham*. Thus, from this period on there were already two *hakhamim* in Eastern Europe: the Odessa and Taurida *hakham* (under whose jurisdiction were the Karaites of the Crimea, Russia, and Ukraine), and the Troki *hakham* (Volhynia and Lithuania).

It seems that the Galician Karaites, the members of the only East European Karaite community that did not live in Russia, remained rather independent from the authority of both the Taurida and Troki *hakhamim*. This is why we have only a few Galician cases in the archives of the Karaite boards of administration of these regions.⁵⁷ The independence of the Galicians from the Crimea and Troki also might explain why the term *hakham* apparently did not have any additional administrative or political meaning in Halicz. Furthermore, it also continued to be interchangeable with the term *hazzan*.

At the time of Abraham Firkowicz’s visit to Halicz in 1871 the structure of the community was as follows: The head of the community, Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz,

⁵⁵ Among other honorary terms were *maskil* (=wise, enlightened one), *rav*, *morenu* and *rabbenu* (all of them may be translated as “(our) teacher/rabbi”).

⁵⁶ Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, 45.

⁵⁷ See the catalogues of GAARK F.241 (documents pertaining to the Taurida and Odessa Karaite spiritual consistory); MS LMAB F.301 (documents of the Lithuanian Karaite community).

was referred to as the *hakham ha-rosh ve-av beit din* (Heb. “the chief hakham and the head of the religious court”). He apparently fulfilled the role of the main religious and judicial authority in the community. Next in the communal hierarchy was Levi Leonowicz, whose position was indicated as the *hazzan ha-rosh ve-ha-dayyan* (Heb. “the chief hazzan and the member of the court of law”). After him followed Zarach Leonowicz, referred to as the *hazzan ha-mishneh ve-ha-dayyan* (Heb. “the deputy hazzan and the member of the court of law”). Both of them were hazzanim and judges, but their authority was less important than that of Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz. Three other distinguished members of the community were indicated as the *parnasim* (Heb. “leaders, important figures; literally: “breadwinners/providers”) of the community. One of them, Mordecai Leonowicz, bore the title of *rosh ha-qahal* (Heb. “head of the community”). Perhaps he was the main administrative leader of the community.⁵⁸

Financial matters of the Karaite and Rabbanite communities were normally administered by the *gabbai* (“treasurer,” originally a charity collector); however, I was unable to find any document referring to the existence of *gabbayim* in the community of Halicz. The teacher (Heb. *melamed*; GVKar. *iwretiwci*) was responsible for the education of children, whereas the duties of the beadle/custodian (Heb. *shammash*) involved the upkeep of the synagogue (*kenesa*). The *ochuwcu* (GVKar. “reader”) combined the duties of *ba'al qeri'ah* (lit. “master of reading”) with those of a custodian *shammash*. The community also had its own *shohet* (“ritual

⁵⁸ “Taqqanot Even Reshef,” 13. It is quite likely that these three Leonowicze were remote relatives (see Appendix 1.5). It is not entirely clear, however, whether the structure of the Galician community was indeed so elaborate and complicated as was indicated in this document. The community might have just been showing off before Firkowicz or, alternatively, was trying to imitate the complicated structure of the Crimean community, with the main hakham and his two subordinate hazzanim. In most other documents of this time Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz is referred to simply as the *hazzan*, not as the *hakham ha-rosh*.

slaughterer”) and a *mohel* (“circumciser”).⁵⁹ In some cases, however, we may assume that the hazzan could fulfil the duties of a slaughterer and circumciser as well.

2.1.4. *The hazzanim of Halicz and their importance for the life of the community.*

As the leaders of the community, the hazzanim usually were, at the same time, the community’s most important theologians, poets, pedagogues, administrative figures, and copyists of manuscripts. They also usually composed *qinot* (Trauerlieder/lamentations)⁶⁰ and *targumim* (translations of the Bible into vernacular languages). Because of the generally poor financial state of the community, in addition to their religious duties Galician hazzanim often worked in the fields as simple farmers. Here I would like to concentrate on the “internal” communal activity of the hazzanim. Their contacts with the surrounding Slavic and Rabbanite communities will be discussed in Chapter 4.

The hazzanim of Halicz were largely represented by scions of two clans – that of Joseph ha-Mashbir (d.1700) and that of Abraham Leonowicz (d.1851). In fact, however, it seems that these two dynasties were closely interrelated: Abraham Leonowicz himself, on his mother’s side, was a descendant of Joshua, Joseph ha-Mashbir’s brother.⁶¹ Simcha ben Joshua-Jacob Leonowicz (hazzan from 1894 to 1900, the grandson of Abraham Leonowicz) is referred to on his tombstone inscription as the scion of Joseph ha-Mashbir’s dynasty, from the family of *ha-Rodi*.⁶²

⁵⁹ H. Wachsmann, “Halitsch, die Stadt der Karäer,” *Der Israelit* 78:4 (1937): 13; Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177.

⁶⁰ *Qinot* were normally composed in Hebrew. Among all of the numerous *qinot* available to him, Z.Zarachowicz managed to find only three in Karaim – those dedicated to the most important leaders of the community (Zarach Zarachowicz, “Ic kynä,” *KA* 10 (1936): 3-6; original copies of these three *qinot* with Hebrew headings are kept among the Yurchenko MSS).

⁶¹ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 47. In one of his MS treatises Leonowicz mentioned that he was of “the family of the Rodis, who always were the eyes of the Jewish congregations” (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 163/5, fol. 1r).

⁶² Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaim’s’ke kladovyshche*, 74-75. Nevertheless, he inherited Mashbir’s lineage only on his mother’s side (Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 46).

Representatives of other families (Nowachowicze, Mordkowicze, Zacharjasiewiczze, Zarachowicze, Abrahamowicze) also sometimes fulfilled the duties of the hazzanim.

We do not possess enough information on the first Karaite hazzanim immediately after the Austrian annexation of Galicia. Moses ben Samuel *ha-Rodi* (i.e. from Mashbir's dynasty; hazzan from 1765 to *ante* 1778) and Joshua ben Mordecai Mordkowicz (hazzan from *ante* 1778-1796⁶³) are known to us mostly from their tombstone inscriptions, documented by Fahn before World War I.⁶⁴ The next hazzan was Samuel ben Moses ha-Rodi (hazzan from 1796-1801), who was the son of Moses ben Samuel ha-Rodi. He is known not only from his tombstone inscription,⁶⁵ but also as a copyist of a highly important historical (or, rather, pseudo-historical) chronicle, which was destined to become the most important source on the medieval history of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites.⁶⁶

His successor, Shalom ben Zachariah Zacharjasiewicz (1765/1766-1813; a.k.a. "rav Shalom ha-Helitsi") became hazzan in 1802 and stayed in his office until 1810. Zacharjasiewicz was perhaps the first Karaite leader in Galicia who received such particular attention on the part of his Christian contemporaries. In 1803 Halicz was visited by the Austrian traveller Joseph Rohrer, who found the Karaites to be the most interesting attraction of this otherwise dull and provincial Galician town (see more in §1.2.1). He met Zacharjasiewicz only a few weeks after the latter's appointment to the

⁶³ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 756, 1351. Z. Zarachowicz is certainly mistaken when writing that Joshua b. Mordecai Mordkowicz was hazzan only from 1792 to 1796 (Zarach Zarachowicz, "Łuwachy hazzanłarnyn Halicte," *KA* 8 (1935): 23).

⁶⁴ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 45-46. Moses ben Samuel is called there *ha-Hozeh* (=Seer), whereas Joshua b. Mordecai was termed *ha-Qadosh* (here in the sense of "Saint"; in most other cases the epithet *Qadosh* is used to designate a person who was murdered). Neither of their tombstones has survived. In 1805 Joseph, the son of Moses b. Samuel, copied a part of MS Strasburg 48 (Samuel Poznański, *Beiträge zur karaitischen Handschriften- und Bücherkunde*, pt.1: *Karäische Kopisten und Besitzer von Handschriften* (Frankfurt a.M, 1918), 14, no.83). See also a draft of a letter to Joshua b. Mordecai in Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 1361-1362.

⁶⁵ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 46.

⁶⁶ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 581; see also his letter to his brother, Joseph b. Moses Moszkowicz of Łuck, written in Halicz in the 1790s (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 984). For details see below, ch. 4, § 4.1.2.

office of hazzan, and had a lengthy conversation with him concerning the customs and religious views of the Karaites. The traveller left a vivid and emotional description of Zacharjasiewicz's appearance:

Zulim Zachariewicz [*sic*] is a young man of 37; however, he looks as old as if he had at least 57 years on his back, which nature probably has bent so much that it was only with difficulty that the good Karaite was able to look at me from below with his large honest eyes. This crooked, small man with his completely yellow face hardly reaches the height of my thighs. When I met him, he was wearing a blue, long, completely closed robe lined with black fur, with a large Polish cap; furthermore, he had a staff, which was longer than himself, and also very clean boots, which one is not accustomed to see on our dirty Jews.⁶⁷

Zacharjasiewicz, it seems, produced a very positive impression on the traveller, who apparently could not find such a pleasant interlocutor among the local Rabbanite Jews. Nevertheless, Rohrer certainly did not approve of some of the Karaite religious traditions (especially their funeral practices).

The author of a few grammatical and exegetical treatises and also of numerous *piyyutim* (poems) and *qinot* in Hebrew and Karaim (!), Zacharjasiewicz was also known as a copyist of important Karaite manuscripts. According to several quotations that have survived from his writings, Zacharjasiewicz clearly understood the Karaites as a part of the “people of Israel,” and saw teaching Hebrew to the young Karaites as his main task.⁶⁸ He was a distinguished pedagogue, who dedicated most of his time to the teaching of the Hebrew language and religious tenets. It is of interest that his wife, Salomea Zacharjasiewicz, was also well educated in religious lore and Hebrew – a

⁶⁷ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 110. Cf. also the drawing by F. Weber “Wir schieden aus der Gegend des Dniesters und des Gottesackers der Karaimen,” depicting Rohrer and Zacharjasiewicz (*ibid.*; see also Illustrations, fig. 9.1).

⁶⁸ Karaucu, “Unutkan Ribbimiz,” *KA* 4 (1932): 16.

phenomenon that was quite rare in Karaite society of that time.⁶⁹ It seems that it was largely due to Zacharjasiewicz's self-sacrificing activity that there was such a high level of religious education in the Galician community in the first half of the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, his pedagogical achievements were forgotten soon after his death. Moreover, by some historical paradox, Zacharjasiewicz's merits were later ascribed to his successor in the hazzan's office, that is, to Abraham Leonowicz.⁷⁰ He died in 1813, a few years after Rohrer's visit. It seems that after his death the state of the religious education of children considerably deteriorated.⁷¹

Zacharjasiewicz's student and successor, Abraham ben Levi Leonowicz (hazzan from 1810 to 1851),⁷² was undoubtedly the most charismatic figure in the history of the Galician Karaites in the nineteenth century. The leader of the community over the course of more than forty years, Abraham Leonowicz happened to head the community at a time of important changes in the political and cultural life of Austria. The Karaite leader also had to respond to such challenges of modernity as the development of contemporary sciences, Jewish emancipation, and the spread of secular education. According to Reuven Fahn, Abraham Leonowicz was almost as important for the Karaite community of his time, as was Mashbir in the seventeenth century.⁷³ This is perhaps why one of the later documents called him *Avraham ha-Qadosh* ("saint, holy").⁷⁴

⁶⁹ Karaucu, "Unutkan Ribbimiz," *KA* 3 (1932): 20. To my knowledge, she was the only Karaite woman who played an important role in the life of the Galician Karaite community in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The importance of women's contribution to community life started growing after 1918.

⁷⁰ Karaucu, "Unutkan Ribbimiz," *KA* 4 (1932): 16.

⁷¹ Zarachowicz, "Ic kynu," 3-4; Karaucu, "Unutkan Ribbimiz," *KA* 4 (1932): 15.

⁷² Leonowicz's contacts with the Galician Russophiles are discussed in ch.4, §4.1.2; his participation in the restoration of the synagogue in ch.2, §2.1.5; his reforms in funeral rites in ch. 3, § 3.1.7).

⁷³ Fahn "Le-qorot," 47.

⁷⁴ Joshua-Joseph b. Moses Mordkowicz to the Karaite community of Gözleve; Hebrew, 1866 (GAARK, F.241, op.1, no.1864, fol.2v).

It was Leonowicz who had to represent the community to the Austrian administration in the first half of the nineteenth century. While in the hazzan's office, he was obliged to undertake a few trips to Vienna in order to discuss important community matters with Austrian officials.⁷⁵ In addition to the duties of the hazzan, Leonowicz was a senior magistrate in the local town council. Moreover, according to later Karaite sources, his father, Levi Leonowicz, was the founder of the town magistrate in Halicz.⁷⁶

Abraham Leonowicz is also known as a great patron of the religious and cultural life of the local community. His role as the first romantic "historiographer" of the Galician community seems to be less known. During Leonowicz's lifetime the Galician Karaite community was "discovered" by local Christian and Rabbanite scholars, who often travelled to Halicz in order to satisfy their academic curiosity. As the leader of the community, it was often Leonowicz's responsibility to respond to their enquiries. In doing so, he created the original version of the history of the Karaites' arrival in Galicia – alas, based on romantic and rather unreliable legendary traditions (for details see ch.4, §4.1.2). In 1846, after reading Rabbanite publications containing critiques of Abraham Firkowicz's epigraphic discoveries, he sent a few detailed enquiries to Volhynian and Crimean Karaite scholars relating to the funeral practices of the East European Karaites. These enquiries show Leonowicz's interest in the history of Karaite settlement in Eastern Europe, in the Khazars, and in the legendary Jewish missionary, Isaac Sangari.⁷⁷ For some time his addressees were unwilling to reply, but after about a year he received a response from Judah Magas,

⁷⁵ For the first time already in 1805, i.e. before his being elected hazzan (Zarach Zarachowicz, "Przyczynki do dziejów gminy karaimskiej w Haliczu. Z dokumentów przeszłości," fols.6-7 (the Yurchenko MSS)).

⁷⁶ Jan Grzegorzewski, drafts entitled „Udział w życiu publicznym i stosunkach społeczeństwa miejskiego” (AN PAN, K III-6, no. 16).

⁷⁷ Ibid. Isaac Sangari is said to be a missionary who converted the nomadic Khazars to Judaism in the eighth century A.D.

the hazzan of Łuck, which provided Leonowicz with exhaustive information on Firkowicz's discoveries, as well as with historical data on the Khazars, Sangari, Çufut-Qale and the history of the Crimean Karaites.⁷⁸

Abraham Leonowicz's death on 28 January 1851 was a great loss to the community's religious and cultural life. Over the course of the next two years six Karaite children were named "Abraham" out of respect for the memory of the former head of the community.⁷⁹

The next hazzan of the community was Joseph Leonowicz (1794-1867, hazzan from 1851 to 1867), the son of Abraham Leonowicz. He continued his father's policy of sustaining close contacts with Rabbanite *maskilim*.⁸⁰ He seems to be the first Karaite leader to occupy an important public office: according to his own account, he was a member of the Halicz town council.⁸¹ Leonowicz's position in society became even more impressive in 1859, after his trip to Vienna, where he had a personal meeting with the Emperor Francis Joseph.⁸² Leonowicz's greatest achievement was probably the publication of a four-volume *siddur* (prayer book) intended exclusively for the use of the Galician Karaite community.⁸³ Leonowicz was still alive in 1866, at the time of another major conflagration in Halicz. The letter requesting the help of the Crimean Karaites referred to him as the *mithazzan* (=hazzan in training), which suggests that at this time he was already sharing his duties with Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz.⁸⁴

⁷⁸ Judah Magas to Abraham Leonowicz, Łuck, after 1847 (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 951). This letter also contains references to the Majeliss and Derbent documents – perhaps the most famous of Firkovich's forgeries (see Shapira, "Remarks," 131-180).

⁷⁹ Sulimowicz, "Imiona Karaimów," 4.

⁸⁰ See more in ch. 4, § 4.2.4.

⁸¹ "Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom," *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 81.

⁸² See more in ch. 1, § 1.3.

⁸³ For details see ch. 3, § 3.2.1.

⁸⁴ Joshua-Joseph b. Moses Mordkowicz to the Karaite community of Gözleve, 1866 (GAARK, F.241, op.1, no.1864, fol.2v.).

Leonowicz's successor, Joshua-Joseph ben Moses Mordkowicz (b. Halicz, 1802; hazzan in Kukizów in the 1820s; hazzan in Halicz 1867-1884; d. Halicz, 1884), was a student of Abraham Leonowicz and a nephew of an important Karaite sage from Kukizów, Joseph-Solomon Łucki.⁸⁵ According to Fahn, Mordkowicz was a scion of the famous seventeenth-century Karaite scholar, Mordecai ben Nisan of Kukizów.⁸⁶ On his tombstone inscription he is referred to as the "Mashbir" (Deliverer of bread), the title which before him was bestowed only upon Joseph ha-Mashbir, the most authoritative leader of the community in the seventeenth century.⁸⁷

Mordkowicz was perhaps the most renowned nineteenth-century Karaite scribe, a copyist of numerous Karaite manuscripts. His manuscripts represent a beautiful example of Karaite calligraphic skill. Mordkowicz himself made ink for his manuscripts, selected the best sorts of paper, and even made high-quality leather bindings.⁸⁸ The Polish Turkologist Tadeusz Kowalski, who visited most of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite communities in the 1920s, mentioned that it is only due to Mordkowicz's unparalleled activity in the field of copying manuscripts that the community of Halicz possessed the largest collection of handwritten Karaitica in Europe. In Halicz the scholar saw numerous handwritten prayer-books, targumim, collections of religious and secular poetry, eulogies and miscellaneous treatises – all

⁸⁵ Zarach Zarachowicz, "Josef Mordkowicz (1802-1884) (W 40-tą rocznicę zgonu)," *MK* 1:2 (1925): 20. This article, composed by a twentieth-century Galician Karaite intellectual, for some reason ignores Mordkowicz's full Hebrew name – Joshua-Joseph – and calls him only "Josef." Mordkowicz's seal, which was used by him to seal his letters, bears the Latin inscription "Josephus Mordkowicz" (GAARK, F.241, op.1, no. 1864, fol. 6r, an envelope). Perhaps, the full name "Joshua-Joseph" was used by Mordkowicz in Hebrew documents, whereas abridged form – Joseph – when dealing with the Gentile world.

⁸⁶ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 53.

⁸⁷ In the book of Gen. 42: 6 Joseph son of Jacob is called *ha-Mashbir* (a word of thank goes to Alfred Eidlisz for this and other advice related to the content of this study). Mordkowicz's tomb is one of the most impressive monuments in the local cemetery, with a lengthy Hebrew epitaph and a relief depicting two lions holding the star of David (Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*, 20-21).

⁸⁸ Zarachowicz, "Josef Mordkowicz," 21.

of them copied by Mordkowicz in the nineteenth century.⁸⁹ According to Zarach Zarachowicz, practically every Karaite family in Halicz and Łuck possessed books copied by Mordkowicz.⁹⁰

Unfortunately, it seems that most of these precious manuscripts, which were kept in Halicz and Łuck, disappeared during World War II.⁹¹ Nevertheless, many large European collections of Hebrew manuscripts managed to preserve books copied by this Karaite leader. The Bodleian library of Oxford, for example, has a copy of *Sefer ha-Mivhar* by Aaron ben Joseph with commentaries by Mordecai ben Nisan Kukizów, which was copied by Mordkowicz in 1826.⁹² The beauty of this manuscript produced such a strong impression upon Adolf Neubauer that he decided to publish a facsimile of one of its pages among other very impressive Hebrew MSS in the Bodleian Library.⁹³ Some of Mordkowicz's manuscripts were kept in Vienna before World War II.⁹⁴

His achievements in translation are highly important. Mordkowicz was the first to make a complete translation of the whole Hebrew Bible into the Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language.⁹⁵ It is considered that it was he who

⁸⁹ Tadeusz Kowalski, *Karaimische Texte im Dialekt von Troki* (Kraków, 1929), xxviii, 286. In Halicz the local Karaites used a special instrument for imprinting lines on paper (Józef Sulimowicz, "Mistar i halicko-karaimskie surały," *Roczniki Biblioteczne* 1:4 (1968): 37-49).

⁹⁰ Zarachowicz, "Josef Mordkowicz," 21-22.

⁹¹ During my research trips to Halicz I was able to locate only one prayer-book and a few letters which were written by Mordkowicz (*Seder ha-tefillot*, copied apparently by Joshua Joseph Mordkowicz, n.p., n.d. the Yurchenko MSS; see Illustrations, fig. 5.3).

⁹² Bod. MS Reggio 4, title page and fol.265v; cf. Adolf Neubauer, *Catalogue of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* [vol.1] (Oxford, 1886), 47, no.245). See also pt. 2 of the *Appiryon 'Asa Lo* by Solomon b. Aharon Troki copied by Mordkowicz in 1830 (Bod. MS Reggio 37; cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue*, 190, no.892).

⁹³ Adolf Neubauer, *Facsimiles of Hebrew Manuscripts in the Bodleian Library* (Oxford, 1886), pl. 37. Adolf Neubauer (1831-1907), the author of several valuable studies on the East European Karaites, was sublibrarian at the Bodleian Library and reader in Rabbinic Hebrew at Oxford.

⁹⁴ Two copies of *Ets hayyim* by Aharon ben Elijah and *Iggeret derekh ets hayyim* by Kaleb Afendopulo (Vienna, Hebr.22 and 79; cf. Arthur Zacharias Schwarz, *Die hebräischen Handschriften der Nationalbibliothek in Wien* (Leipzig, 1925), 140-141, no.132; Samuel Poznański, "Karäische Kopisten und Besitzer von Handschriften," *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie* 19 (1916): 90). These manuscripts were copied by Mordkowicz in 1824-1825, that is, during his stay in Kukizów.

⁹⁵ Ibid. Cf. his Karaim translation of the hymn for *Yom Kippur* by Aaron b. Joseph (Grzegorzewski, "Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt," 65, 73).

unified the system of transliteration of Galician Karaim into Hebrew characters.⁹⁶ In 1871 the Austrian Emperor Francis Joseph received Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz in Vienna, together with the Crimean Karaite Abraham Firkowicz.⁹⁷ Until his very last days Mordkowicz continued copying manuscripts and teaching children.

After Mordkowicz's death in 1884 his office was occupied by Zarach ben Samuel Leonowicz (1829(?)-1894; hazzan from 1884 to 1894). In addition to his religious duties, Leonowicz was the only Karaite lawyer in the region. Zarach Leonowicz is said to have come so close to his Rabbanite surroundings that he thought about converting to Talmudic Judaism.⁹⁸ Despite his close contacts with the Rabbanites, it seems that at this time relations between the Karaites and Rabbanites started to deteriorate.⁹⁹

Another scion of Abraham Leonowicz, Simcha ben Joshua-Jacob Leonowicz, served as the hazzan in Łuck from 1871 to 1876,¹⁰⁰ and as the hazzan in Halicz from 1894 to 1900. In spite of the fact that in his time most Karaite youths started attending Polish schools, he continued teaching Karaite religious law and Hebrew in his *beit ha-midrash* (=religious school; in GVKar. usually simply *midrasz*) in Halicz. Like his predecessors, while emphasising the necessity of studying the Karaite religious tradition, he enthusiastically read books by Rabbanite scholars. At the end of the 1890s Leonowicz socialized with Reuven Fahn, who portrayed him as a learned leader of the community, who knew the works of Maimonides and other Jewish

⁹⁶ Tadeusz Kowalski, "Z późniejszych kart," *MK* 2:3-4 (1930-1931): 13. Before Mordkowicz there was no accepted system of the transliteration of phonetic peculiarities of GVKar into Hebrew letters.

⁹⁷ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 55. For more details see ch.1, §1.3.

⁹⁸ Reuven Fahn, "Maskilei Yisra'el ve-hokhmei miqra," in his *Kitve Reuven Fahn*, pt.1: *Sefer ha-Qera'im*, b.1 (Lwów, 1929), 120; idem, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177. Nevertheless, Fahn himself was uncertain as to the veracity of this story. See Zarach Leonowicz's tombstone inscription in Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*, 78-79, no.76.

⁹⁹ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 56. See his tombstone inscription in *ibid.*

¹⁰⁰ "Ribbiłer, kajsyłar ettiler Łuckada baśłap burunhu jarymyndan XIX izjilnyn," *KA* 5 (1932): 16. See Simcha Leonowicz's letters to A.Firkowicz from Łuck (1872) (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 710) and a poem dedicated to A.Firkowicz (Łuck, 1871; NLR F.946, op.1, no. 241).

philosophers almost “by heart.”¹⁰¹ Fahn’s acquaintance with Leonowicz is also reflected in his Hebrew fiction. The main character of Fahn’s novel, “From the Life of the Karaites,” a certain visitor to Halicz (undoubtedly Fahn himself), meets an unnamed Karaite hakham in the local Karaite synagogue. They have a lengthy and friendly conversation in Yiddish and Hebrew that reveals quite a lot about the historical and religious views of the Karaite intelligentsia of that time.¹⁰² It is very likely that this conversation, in fact, depicted a real dialogue between Fahn and Leonowicz at the end of the 1890s.

A short while before his death, Leonowicz composed his own tombstone inscription. There he characterized himself as the last scion of Mashbir’s dynasty, and provided a full list of his ancestors, starting from the end of the seventeenth century.¹⁰³ Thus, Simcha Leonowicz became the last representative of both the Leonowicz and Mashbir dynasties. After Leonowicz’s death a new Karaite family came to the fore. The next hazzan was Shalom (Szałom/Salom) Nowachowicz, son of Joseph and Sarah Nowachowicz, a family of Kukizów emigrants (26.01.1849-9.06.1922; hazzan from 1900-1922). He was perhaps the first Galician hazzan to receive his religious education in the Crimea.¹⁰⁴ He lived with his family not in Halicz, but in the adjacent village of Załukiew. In order to fulfil his religious duties, he walked every day from Załukiew to Halicz in the morning and returned back to his village at the end of the day.¹⁰⁵

In 1913 and 1914, after the conflagration, Nowachowicz managed to organize

¹⁰¹ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 130.

¹⁰² Reuven Fahn, “Me-Hayye ha-Qera’im,” in his *Kitve Reuven Fahn*, pt.1: *Sefer ha-Qera’im*, b.2: *Me-Hayye ha-Qera’im* (Lwów, 1929), 149-151.

¹⁰³ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 57. Cf. Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms’ke kladovyshche*, 74-75. This tombstone, with a relief depicting hazzan’s hands in priestly blessing, two lions, and the *keter torah* (=Torah crown), is one of the most interesting monuments in the cemetery. Especially striking is the unusual design of its inscription. From early twentieth-century photos it is evident that this monument was originally made in polychrome style (Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce*, 47).

¹⁰⁴ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 539, 547. See his photo in Illustrations, fig. 9.5.

¹⁰⁵ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 57.

financial help from Russia and partially restored the damaged synagogue and Karaite houses. He was also the leader of the community during the catastrophic period of World War I, the cholera epidemic, Petlura's invasion and the revolutionary events in Ukraine from 1917 to 1920. In 1922, shortly before his death, Nowachowicz resigned from the duties of hazzan and appointed Isaac Abrahamowicz as his successor. For more information on the interwar Halicz hazzanim see Chapter 5, §5.2).

2.1.5. Historical monuments.

The "ghetto" on Karaite Street.

Already in the sixteenth century the Karaite quarter of the town was located on Karaite Street, one of the longest streets in Halicz, situated along the Dniester river, in the district called *Zaparkanie*. The first reference to Karaite Street occurs in the census of 1767, where the existence of the two Jewish synagogues is mentioned: that of the Rabbanites on *Wał Miejski* (Pol. "town wall"), and a Karaite synagogue on *Karaimska ulica* (Pol. "Karaite street").¹⁰⁶

According to the memoirs of Zarach Zarachowicz, the atmosphere of this street differed drastically from that of other parts of Halicz: it was very clean and tidy; only Karaim was spoken there; and one could often hear there the sounds of Karaite prayers.¹⁰⁷ Grzegorz Smólski (1903) found Karaite Street to be too rural, without any traces of town life.¹⁰⁸ Samuel Mordkowicz told Smólski about a tradition according to which the original name of the street was *Złota ulica* (Pol. "Golden Street"). According to the legend, in long-forgotten prosperous times the street was named

¹⁰⁶ AGAD Lustracje dz. XVIII, no. 62. Lustracja Starostwa Halickiego, fol.15. See a topographic plan of Halicz in Illustrations, fig. 2.1; cf. pre-WWI photos of Karaite Street in Illustrations, fig. 2.2 and 2.3.

¹⁰⁷ Zarach Zarachowicz, "Listy z Halicza," *MK* 1 (1924): 26.

¹⁰⁸ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 538-539.

“Golden” because of the fact that the beautiful and rich Karaite women were dressed all in gold.¹⁰⁹

According to most sources and my own visual observations, the Karaite houses were not particularly different from those of their Slavic neighbours. They were usually built of wood; only some of the twentieth-century Karaite houses were built of stone. They were one storey high, usually with an attic and a basement. The entrance was situated at the side of the house; Karaite *mezuzot* (see ch.3, §3.1.3) were sometimes affixed to the door-posts. A few families usually shared each house; at the beginning of the twentieth century some Karaite landlords rented their houses to non-Karaites.¹¹⁰

Some Karaites also lived in the village of Załukiew, located a few hundred metres from the Karaite quarter of Halicz. In fact, there was no strict border between these two adjacent settlements: in spite of the fact that the synagogue was situated in Halicz, the cemetery was in Załukiew; the Karaites living in Załukiew were often registered as Karaites of Halicz; the well-to-do Karaites owned houses in Halicz and land in Załukiew, etc. A section of Załukiew, where the Karaites had their houses, is still called by the local Ukrainian population “Karaite corner” (Ukr. *Karaïms'kyi kut*).¹¹¹ According to Ivan Yurchenko, there was also a “Karaite corner” (i.e. land owned by the Karaites) near the Karaite epidemic cemetery in Halicz, whereas the quarter adjacent to Karaite Street was called in Ukrainian “Arslanivka” – after the famous hazzan Abraham Leonowicz.¹¹²

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., 546.

¹¹⁰ At the beginning of the twentieth century some Karaite landlords were renting rooms to Rabbanite Jews (Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 523, 538. For a detailed description of the houses, see also Janusz, *Karaici*, 75-76. Cf. Illustrations, fig. 2.3 and 2.4.

¹¹¹ I received this information from one of the inhabitants of the village during the meeting of the “Davnii Halych” Historical Reserve (Halicz, 25 Apr. 2005).

¹¹² Private communication (Halicz, Apr. 2005). In the Turkic languages *arslan* means “lion” – an apparent reference to the hazzan’s surname, which was associated with Polish *lew* (lion).

“Kensa / kenesa” – the Karaite synagogue.

In general, the concentration of Jewish quarters around their synagogues may be noted in the social as well as in the material life of the Jews of Europe and the countries of the East. The Karaite synagogue of Halicz was also located in the centre of the Karaite quarter, in the middle of Karaite Street. Practically all East European Karaite sources written in Hebrew use the traditional Hebrew term *beit ha-knesset* (translated into English as “synagogue”) to designate the Karaite houses of prayer. Nevertheless, East European Karaites often used the term *kenesa / kenasa* (sing.; pl. *kenesalar / kenasalar*) as a colloquial substitute for the official and literary *beit ha-knesset*. According to Dan Shapira, the word *kenesa*, and its more literary equivalent *kenasa*, were borrowed by the Turkic languages of the East European Karaites (Tatar in the Crimea, and Karaim in Poland-Lithuania) from Arabic. Arabic, in its turn, borrowed it from Aramaic.¹¹³ To my knowledge, the earliest written usage of the term *kenesa* for the designation of a Karaite house of prayer is to be found in the poem by the Volhynian poet Joseph ben Joshua (ca.1648).¹¹⁴

It seems that in Galicia the term *kenesa* was usually abridged to a shortened version *kensa*. Already in 1903 Grzegorz Smólski mentioned that the Karaites Halicz called their house of prayer *kensa*.¹¹⁵ In 1906 Jan Grzegorzewski wrote down a most interesting text in Galician Karaim where this term is mentioned three times, also in the shortened form: *kensa-nyn* (Gen.; “of the kensa”); *kensa-da* (Loc., “in the kensa”); *kensa-ga* (Dat. “to the kensa”).¹¹⁶ Nevertheless, in my study I am going to use a more

¹¹³ Kizilov, *Karaites*, 182.

¹¹⁴ The poet mentioned that “weren ettiłer kahałlarny da kenesałarny” [The communities and the synagogues were destroyed] (“Kart sifcekler,” *KA* 2 (4) (1932): 20).

¹¹⁵ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 546.

¹¹⁶ Grzegorzewski, “Caraimica. Język Łach-Karaitów,” 273-274.

literary variant of this term: *kenesa*.¹¹⁷

Unlike in the Crimea, where the local Jewish population built their houses of prayer from stone, the early Karaite and Rabbanite synagogues of Poland and Lithuania were usually made of timber. The earliest Karaite synagogues in Halicz and Kukizów were also made of wood. In spite of the fact that the oldest reference to the existence of a wooden Karaite synagogue in Halicz dates back to 1767,¹¹⁸ we may assume that this building was erected approximately in the sixteenth century. In 1830 it was destroyed by a severe conflagration. Unfortunately, the impoverished community could not find sufficient funds to build a new house of prayer. The local hazzan, Abraham Leonowicz, decided to try to find financial support in the rich Karaite communities of Russia. In 1831/2 Leonowicz sent several letters to the Crimea containing requests to help the Galician community with construction of a new synagogue.¹¹⁹ According to Fahn, while visiting Vienna and other European cities, Leonowicz observed some of their historical monuments, which also had to undergo the process of restoration. Consequently, he decided that the new synagogue should also be designed in European fashion and built out of stone, not of wood as before.¹²⁰

Indeed, the wealthy Crimean and Odessa Karaites decided to fulfil the Biblical duty of giving *tsedaqa* (=alms) to the poor and financed construction of the new synagogue in Halicz. In 1834 the Crimean Karaites sent the sum of 320 “Russian rubles in silver coins called *karbovantsy*” (רובלי כסף מעות רוסיא הנקראים קרבוואנצ'י) for

¹¹⁷ Cf. *KRPS*, 304; *Karaj sez-bitigi*, 41.

¹¹⁸ AGAD Lustracje dz. XVIII, no. 62. Lustracja Starostwa Halickiego, fol. 15. The document says: “Szkół Dwie Żydowska y Karaimska Z drewa budowane” (=Two synagogues, a Jewish and a Karaite one, built of wood).

¹¹⁹ NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2698. The name of the scribe of these letters is not indicated, but one may suggest that it was Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz. Both letters contain lengthy appraisals of the Crimean hakham Simcha Babowicz and two beautiful ornaments (fols.1r, 4r). Cf. illustrations, fig. 5.4 and 5.5.

¹²⁰ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 49.

the construction of the synagogue. They specifically emphasized that the building should be made out of stone (לבנין בית הכנסת מן אבנים) – apparently the sponsors did not want to invest their money in another short-lived wooden structure. The money was given to the Odessa *gevir* Solomon ben Isaac Ickowicz,¹²¹ who sent it to the Rabbanite maskil Daniel Hartenstein of Brody. The latter, in turn, transferred the money to the community.¹²²

Construction of the new stone synagogue began soon after the delivery of money and was finished in 1836. It was erected on the site of the old Halicz synagogue, in a style similar to that of the nineteenth-century Crimean and south Ukrainian Karaite and Rabbanite synagogues.¹²³ Unfortunately, in 1913, a short while before World War I, the synagogue again suffered heavy damage from a new conflagration.¹²⁴ Thanks to financial support from other Karaite communities,¹²⁵ the Karaites soon managed to repair the building. The *aron ha-qodesh* (=Ark of the Torah/Torah closet) of the renovated synagogue was made on 2 July 1914 in Stanisławów by a local carver.¹²⁶ Regrettably, after this renovation the synagogue did not remain intact. During World War I Russian and Austrian soldiers sacked the synagogue so that, according to eyewitness testimony, “only the walls of the shrine remained.”¹²⁷ This is why only a few pre-war photos and reports by travellers allow a reconstruction of the inner and outer appearance of the building.

¹²¹ We may assume that he was a brother of Samuel ben Isaac Ickowicz of Halicz (see his tombstone in Yurchenko et al., *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*, 128-129, no.117). It is also most probable that he was the father of Isaac *ha-Bachor* ben Solomon Ickowicz, the editor of the Vienna Karaite *siddur* (see ch. 3, § 3.2).

¹²² NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1654. Confirmation of the receipt of 320 silver rubles for the construction of a new synagogue in Halicz, 1834 (written by Abraham b. Levi Leonowicz and signed by 11 members of the community).

¹²³ See Illustrations, fig. 3.1.

¹²⁴ According to the information published in *KS*, “the upper part” (i.e., perhaps, the roof and women’s gallery) was burned down (*KS* 6 (1914): 15).

¹²⁵ Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 27.

¹²⁶ Viktor (David) Tiriya, “Sokhranenie religioznykh traditsii karaimov Galicha na rubezhe XX-XXI vv.,” in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 82. Most likely, this master was a Rabbanite. See the photo of this *aron ha-qodesh* in Illustrations, figs. 3.5. and 3.6.

¹²⁷ AAN MWRiOP 1466, fols. 18-19.

The architectural style and decoration of the Karaite synagogues of Halicz and Kukizów were highly similar to those of the Rabbanite houses of prayer of this area. There were two entrances to the building – one for men and the other for women. Women were supposed to pray in a separate gallery called *ezrat nashim* in Hebrew.¹²⁸ According to Grzegorz Smólski, the building looked rather insignificant from the outside, but its interior decoration was quite impressive:

The walls had rows of painted tablets with Hebrew inscriptions, covered with silk curtains (*parochet*) made of various fabrics, among them brocades with gold embroideries. Two seven-branched candelabra stand before the altar, *hechal*,¹²⁹ and two bronze candlesticks hang from above. The altar consists of two beautifully decorated plaques with inscriptions.¹³⁰

The interior decoration of the building also produced a strong impression upon Reuven Fahn who described its ceiling, which had the twelve signs of the Zodiac and quotations from the books of the Prophets. Its walls had quotations from the Torah and the prayer “Yehi Ratson”.¹³¹ All the aforementioned Hebrew inscriptions and Biblical quotations were painted by young Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz, future hazzan of the community.¹³² D.F. saw a quotation from Isaiah on the entrance to the building and, according to his own assertion, a thirteenth-century Torah scroll inside.¹³³ Bohdan Janusz, who described in detail the synagogue’s external appearance,

¹²⁸ This is according to the ground plan of the synagogue reconstructed by Ivan Yurchenko (unpublished).

¹²⁹ A corruption of the Heb. *heikhal*.

¹³⁰ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 546. Cf. this description with pre-WWI photos in Illustrations, figs. 3.3 and 3.4.

¹³¹ Fahn, “Aus dem Leben,” 135-136; idem, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177.

¹³² Zarachowicz, “Josef Mordkowicz,” 22.

¹³³ D.F. [Reuven Fahn?], “Pis’mo iz Galitsii (ot nashego korrespondenta),” *KZh* 2 (1911): 73-75, esp. 74. Perhaps the author was mistaken concerning the age of this Torah scroll: thirteenth-century scrolls could hardly have survived the devastating conflagrations of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. A number of conspicuous parallels between this report and early publications by Reuven Fahn strongly suggest that it was Fahn who tried to conceal his identity under the initials “D.F.” In fact, “D.F.” is, most likely, a corruption of “R.F.,” Reuven Fahn’s initials (in Hebrew, handwritten “resh” and “dalet” are easily confused).

mentioned that on the inside, the walls of the building were covered by brocade curtains (Pol. *makaty*) with Hebrew inscriptions and ornamented embroidery in silk and gold.¹³⁴

At the end of the nineteenth century there were as many as 23 Torah scrolls kept in the Karaite synagogue of Halicz.¹³⁵ This number is disproportionately large for such a small community as that of Halicz. A few Rabbanite sources reported that the East European Karaites, who were much poorer than their Talmudic brethren, used to purchase from the latter so-called *posul* (=invalid) Torah scrolls and prayer-books.¹³⁶ These were certainly much cheaper than proper Torah scrolls, but according to religious standards one could not use them for spiritual purposes. According to Wachsmann, the Galician Karaites sometimes bought such “invalid” Torah scrolls from their Rabbanite neighbours.¹³⁷ On the later destiny of the synagogue see Chapter 7, §7.1.

Cemetery

The cemetery of the Halicz Karaites, today consisting of about two hundred monuments, is situated on the bank of the Dniester river, in the territory of the village Załukiew (Ukr. “Zalukva”).¹³⁸ There are a few factors which make this cemetery very different from most other Karaite cemeteries in Eastern Europe. On the one hand, the

¹³⁴ These curtains were even displayed at the ethnographic exhibitions in Lwów and Vienna (Janusz, *Karaici*, 81-82; Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 26). As valuable objects, all of them were taken away by Russian and Austrian soldiers during WWI (AAN MWRiOP 1466, fols.18-19). Nevertheless, some specimens of Galician Karaite embroideries may be found in the ethnographic collection of MKIK (see esp. the *kapporet* (a covering for a Torah scroll) of Hanna ha-Rabbanit, wife of Levi, now on display at MKIK; see Illustrations, fig. 8.1.).

¹³⁵ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140. See photos of the Torah scrolls from Halicz which have survived until today: Illustrations, figs. 5.1 and 5.2.

¹³⁶ Friedrich Albrecht Augusti, *Gründliche Nachrichten von denen Karäiten: ihren Ursprung, Glaubenslehren, Sitten und Kirchen-Gebräuchen* (Erfurt, 1752), 22.

¹³⁷ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13.

¹³⁸ A twenty minute walk from the Halicz Karaite quarter across a stone bridge over the Dniester and a highly precarious wobbly wooden bridge suspended over the Łukiew river (Ukr. *Lukva*). See the ground plan of the cemetery by Ivan Yurchenko in Illustrations, fig. 4.1. Cf. the drawing by F.Weber (Illustrations, fig.4.2).

local community managed to preserve specific features of the East European Karaite funeral tradition. On the other, the design of the tombstones in this cemetery was strongly influenced by the traditions of the surrounding Rabbanites.

In accordance with Karaite religious tradition, the front parts of the tombstones in Halicz face south (for an explanation, see ch.3, §3.1.1). Moreover, eulogies are used in the epitaphs; these are quite rare for Ashkenazic inscriptions, but typical of the Karaite cemeteries in the Crimea.¹³⁹ The local Karaites also used a combination of the letters “yud-hey” and “yud-vav” to indicate the numbers 15 and 16, and also the letters “yud-hey” as an abbreviation for the name of God. This was usually avoided by the Rabbanite Jews because of the prohibition against taking God’s name in vain.¹⁴⁰

The architectural design of the memorial stones and the style of the epitaphs, however, clearly show the strong influence of Rabbanite tradition upon the funeral practices of the local Karaites. On the tombstones of this cemetery one can see lengthy Hebrew eulogies and blessings, depictions of animals, trees of life and flowers, Stars of David, hands of *kohanim* in priestly blessing, broken candles, shelves with books, *menorot*, Crowns of the Torah and of the Good Name.¹⁴¹ All these symbols, which are so typical of the Rabbanite cemeteries of the area, are highly unusual for the ascetic Karaite necropolises in Eastern Europe, which are, as a rule, devoid of any symbolic depictions and ornamentation.¹⁴² Today the Karaite cemetery of Halicz is the only Karaite cemetery in Eastern Europe with such ornate and sophisticated decorations: two other cemeteries of similar architectural style, those of

¹³⁹ Michael Nosonovsky, *Hebrew Epitaphs and Inscriptions from Ukraine and Former Soviet Union* (Washington, 2006), 169.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Some of these symbols originate in the *Mishna Avot* 4:13, which is not recognized by the Karaites as a sacred text (*ibid.*). See photos and drawings of Halicz Karaite tombstones in Illustrations, figs. 4.3-4.6.

¹⁴² Cf. Illustrations, figs. 4.7, 4.9.

Łuck and Kukizów,¹⁴³ were entirely destroyed during Soviet times. This striking typological similarity between the Rabbanite and Karaite gravestones in Galicia may be explained only by the close contacts between the two communities and the Karaites' hiring of Rabbanite carvers and morticians to perform funeral rituals.¹⁴⁴ This similarity is evident not only in tombstone carvings and reliefs but also in other samples of Karaite art such as illuminated miniatures, ornaments, drawings, embossings, and needle work.¹⁴⁵

In spite of the fact that the Karaite community existed in Halicz at least from the sixteenth century, the majority of the extant tombstone monuments belong to the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In the twentieth century, especially during the Soviet period, traditional Hebrew epitaphs were replaced with inscriptions in Polish, Ukrainian, and Karaim,¹⁴⁶ in Cyrillic and Latin characters. Most of the epitaphs, however, were written in Hebrew.

Anyone interested in making use of the tombstone inscriptions from this cemetery will encounter a very serious methodological problem: how sincere and objective were the epitaphs and to what extent might they be used for historical research? Unfortunately, it seems that most of the tombstone inscriptions were made

¹⁴³ Unfortunately, we possess virtually no data on the Karaite cemetery of Łuck (it was completely destroyed in the 1970s and was not documented). Nevertheless, the similarity of the cultural, linguistic and religious traditions of the Galician and Volhynian community strongly suggests that the architectural style of the Karaite cemetery in Łuck was similar to the one in Halicz. On Kukizów cemetery see ch. 2, § 2.2.2.

¹⁴⁴ Cf. the similarity between the Karaite tombstones from Halicz and those of the Podolian and Galician Rabbanites in Nosonovsky, *Hebrew Epitaphs*, esp. 141-154; Boris Khaimovich, "Reznoi dekor evreiskikh nadgrobnii Ukrainy," in *Istoriia evreev na Ukraine i v Belorussii*, ed. V. Dymshits (St. Petersburg, 1994), 83-106; Zinovii Chechik, *Matsevy* (Tula, 2005); Illustrations, figs. 4.6 and 4.8. Ivan Yurchenko found tombs with identifying marks of local carvers who were not members of the Karaite community (Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaim's'ke kladovyshche*, 15, figs. 3-5). During our visit to the Halicz Ashkenazic cemetery (8.05.2002), Ivan Yurchenko showed me a tomb which was excavated by him in 2001. The decoration of this monument was an exact copy of one of the tombstones in the local Karaite cemetery. It seems that both monuments were made by the same carver, who was, undoubtedly, of Rabbanite origin. See more in ch. 3, § 3.1.7.

¹⁴⁵ See Illustrations, figs. 5.1, 5.3-5, 6.9, 8.1, 8.4, 8.5.

¹⁴⁶ See the only comparatively lengthy inscription in Karaim in Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaim's'ke kladovyshche*, 182-183, no. 193.

according to certain stereotypical conventions, and the texts of the epitaphs often tend to be rather repetitive. They usually consist of a few parts: an introduction, which expresses sorrow at the death of a member of the community; a middle part, which enumerates the deeds and positive qualities of the deceased; a conclusion, which contains the date of the death and the name of the person who sponsored the erection of the tombstone monument. Moreover, the epitaphs often tend to be excessively positive in their evaluation of the personal and moral qualities of the deceased: most men are referred to as “educated, enlightened, influential, and venerable,” whereas most women – as “chaste, pious, and virtuous.”¹⁴⁷ It seems that the style of the Galician Karaite epitaphs, which was influenced by the Galician Ashkenazic tradition, was especially flowery and imprecise. The Karaite tombstone inscriptions in Troki seem to be much more succinct,¹⁴⁸ whereas the Crimean ones are more individually designed, often with a number of precise historical details.¹⁴⁹ Having said this, it is worthwhile mentioning that some of the Galician tombstone texts, nevertheless, provide readers with important historical information which is often not reflected in any other source. They also contain information on the structure of the local Karaite community, the professions of its members, their families, duration of life, and many other important details.

Until the recent publication of the full catalogue of the local cemetery,¹⁵⁰ Reuven Fahn made the only serious study of the cemetery. Fahn’s study is highly

¹⁴⁷ For more information on the conventions in Hebrew tombstone inscriptions in Eastern Europe, see Mikhail Nosonovskii, *Hebrew Epigraphic Monuments from Eastern Europe* (Boston, 2002); idem, “Zaviazannye v uzle zhizni:” k poetike evreiskikh epitafii,” in his *“He, who separates between the Holy and Secular”: Hebrew, Yiddish, sacred and secular in the traditional Jewish culture* (New York, 2005), 271-298.

¹⁴⁸ Golda Akhiezer, Ilya Dvorkin, “Ktovot ha-Matsevot mi-Batei ha-‘Almin be-Lita,” *Pe’amim* 98-99 (2004): 225-260.

¹⁴⁹ *Studies in a Karaite Community: The Report of the Epigraphic Expedition of the Ben-Zvi Institute to the Jewish-Karaite Cemetery of Çufut-Qal’eh, the Crimea*, ed. Dan Shapira (Jerusalem, 2008 (in print)).

¹⁵⁰ Yurchenko et al. , *Karaïms’ke kladovyshche* (reviewed in Mikhail Kizilov, “Vor dem Vergessen bewahren – Neue Forschungen zu den Karäern Ostgaliziens (Ukraine),” *Judaica* 4 (2003): 299-304).

important because of the fact that Fahn visited the cemetery before the two world wars. This is why he managed to document the texts of the tombstone inscriptions which have not survived. According to Fahn, the earliest tombstone inscription of the cemetery, that of the hazzan Joseph ben Samuel ha-Mashbir, dates back to 1700.¹⁵¹ Therefore, we may assume that the earlier sixteenth- and seventeenth-century cemetery was located in a different place, or, alternatively, that the tombstones from this period did not survive to the time of Fahn's visit to the cemetery. Unfortunately, the cemetery was partly destroyed in the course of the two world wars. This is why early eighteenth-century tombs, including that of Joseph ha-Mashbir, have disappeared. Today, the earliest extant tombs date back to the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁵²

In addition to this larger cemetery in Załukiew, there was also a small epidemic burial ground in Halicz, on the slope of the Castle hill not far from Karaite Street. It was used as a burial place for those members of the community who died of cholera from 1915 to 1917, during the First World War. Karaites were still visiting this cemetery in the 1930s and 1940s.¹⁵³ Unfortunately, not a single tombstone from this cemetery has survived until today.¹⁵⁴

2.2. *Kukizów.*

2.2.1. *Outline of history*

¹⁵¹ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 40-41.

¹⁵² Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*, 12, 66-67, 219; nos. 20, 60.

¹⁵³ This is according to Janina Eszwowicz, Ada Zarachowicz, and L. Shugurova (Eszwowicz) (Halicz). There were seventeen Karaites, who died of cholera in this period; some of them were buried in the epidemic cemetery, some in Załukiew (Ivan Yurchenko, Natalya Yurchenko, "Epidemichne kladovyshche karaïms'koï hromady Halycha," in *Zberezhennia ta vykorystannia kul'turnoi spadshchyny Ukraïny: problemy ta perspektyvy* (Halych, 2004), 183, ft. 7.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, 180.

Kukizów, another historical seat of the Galician Karaites, was located in the vicinity of Lwów, next to the town of Jaryczów. Established already in the late medieval period, Kukizów was supposed to become a new summer residence of John/Jan III Sobieski (1624-1696; king from 1674). The earliest Karaite inhabitants settled there in 1688-1692 as important merchants specializing in the horse trade.¹⁵⁵ John III Sobieski, who is known as a great patron and supporter of the Polish Jews, decided to turn Kukizów into his summer residence and gave the town a new name, *Krasny Ostrow* (=Beautiful island / forest). In Karaite documents this new name of the town was normally rendered as *Yafeh Ya'ar* (Heb. "Beautiful forest").¹⁵⁶ After Jan Sobieski's death, however, the project of turning the settlement into the "Beautiful Island," the summer residence of Polish kings, was neglected, and the previous name, Kukizów, returned.

Kukizów lost its former importance by the eighteenth century.¹⁵⁷ In Austrian times the town became even less significant, and the Karaite community began abandoning remote and inconvenient Kukizów, located far from other centres of Karaite learning and culture. Nevertheless, from the end of the eighteenth to the beginning of the nineteenth century the intellectual life of the Karaite community was apparently still thriving. Local Karaite intellectuals were composing exegetical and astronomical treatises, copying manuscripts, and exchanging correspondence with other Karaite savants from various East European Karaite communities. In 1774 one of the local hazzanim, Mordecai ben Nisan,¹⁵⁸ wrote an astronomical work entitled

¹⁵⁵ See the edict of Jan Casimir of 15 Apr. 1692 in Bałaban, "Karaici," 28.

¹⁵⁶ Mordecai ben Nisan, "Dod Mordecai," in *Dod Mordecai* (Vienna, 1830), introduction, unnumbered p.6. In archaic Polish the word "ostrow" meant "terra circumflua graminosa aut silvosa / wyspa na rzece lub jeziorze porośnięta drzewami / kawałek pola między łąkami a rowami," i.e. island (or land) between rivers or lakes covered with forest (*Słownik polszczyzny XVI wieku*, vol. 22 (Wrocław-Warsaw-Kraków, 1994), 221-222). Cf. also the Galician town "Chorny Ostrov" (Ukr. "Black Island") in the vicinity of Żydaczów.

¹⁵⁷ On the map of the 1770s it is indicated with the sign "ville ordinaire" (Fras, *Galicja*, 20-21).

¹⁵⁸ In order not to be confused with his famous grandfather and namesake, who was murdered in 1709,

Yad ha-Shem.¹⁵⁹ In the 1780s he composed a most interesting calendrical book, entitled *Be'er Sheva*. There he proposed an absolutely new theory for the religious calendar. According to this theory, each month should consist of thirty days, thus reverting almost to a solar year. Needless to say, such an unprecedented and novel approach was not accepted.¹⁶⁰ Interestingly enough, at about the same time a similar “rational” calendar with each month consisting of 30 days was accepted by the French revolutionaries – which, however, seems to be a pure coincidence. Because of the fact that the original Karaite religious calendar was based on such a delicate and subjective method as the actual observation of the moon, calendar controversies were a commonplace of Karaite communal life in Eastern Europe in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Mordecai ben Nisan’s calendar theory was only one example of numerous competing calendrical and astronomical theories circulating in Karaite society of that time.¹⁶¹

Mordecai’s son, David (1777-1855), one of the most famous nineteenth-century Karaite men of letters, was hazzan of Kukizów until 1822. While being known in Galicia as David Mordkowicz (i.e. “David, son of Mordecai”), after his emigration to the Crimea he received the nickname “Kukizów/Kukizowi” (=of Kukizów). In later literature he is known as “David Kokizov.”

Despite the aforementioned intellectual renaissance of the community in the early nineteenth century, the whole Karaite qehilah suddenly left Kukizów only a few years later, leaving behind their houses, cemetery, and the synagogue. Unfortunately,

he was often called Mordecai ben Nisan II.

¹⁵⁹ David Maggid, “Reshit davar,” in David ben Mordecai Kukizów, *Tsemah David*, ed. D. Maggid (St. Petersburg, 1897), xiii; cf. Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el,” 85.

¹⁶⁰ Only a critique of this theory has survived (Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 471-472). See also a letter from Mordecai b. Nisan II and Abraham b. Simcha of Kukizów to Shalom b. Samuel and Moses b. Samuel *ha-Rodi* (hazzan of Halicz), 1771 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2871). The authors of the letter complain about the bad financial situation in Kukizów.

¹⁶¹ It seems that it is only after the posthumous publication of Isaac b. Solomon’s *Or ha-Levanah* (Zhitomir, 1872) that the East European Karaites adopted a unified calendrical system (Miller, *Karaite Separatism*, 17-19).

published sources do not provide precise data with regard to the exact time and reasons for the disintegration of the community, which happened in the early 1830s.¹⁶² Only hitherto unpublished sources from the Firkowicz archival collection in St. Petersburg may provide some insight into the problem.

According to Mordecai Sułtański, after the annexation of Galicia, the Austrian Emperor (Joseph II?) gave Kukizów as a present to one of his ministers (Heb. “le-ehad me-sarav”), apparently, for his private ownership. The minister, in his turn, handed it over to one of his officials (or assistants/deputies; Heb. “le-ehad me-ha-seganim;” Sułtański also called him by the Russian term “pomeshchik,” i.e. “a landowner”), who bought most of the property and lands in Kukizów. He also apparently appropriated Karaite lands and started banishing the Karaites from the town.¹⁶³ These problems started not later than in the second decade of the nineteenth century. Already in 1813 hazzan David Kukizów complained that certain “enemies” (perhaps, the aforementioned minister’s official) were seizing their lands.¹⁶⁴

The situation became much worse in 1821/2. The tiny community (reduced to seven families – i.e. about 35 individuals) was suffering from additional duties and taxes. By that time, the Karaites were in deep monetary debt to the aforementioned official, from whom they had often borrowed money.¹⁶⁵ In Hebrew documents this official is called *parits*. This word has two meanings in Hebrew: on the one hand, “a landowner,” and “a tyrant/oppressor,” on the other. In this case, *parits* certainly

¹⁶² Previous students of this problem have suggested that the community ceased to exist after 1822 (Mann, 589); ca. 1828 (Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 38, ft. 2); in 1831 (Janusz, *Karaici*, 83; idem, “Karaici i cmentarzysko,” 85) or in 1840 (Majkowski, “Wiadomość,” 101).

¹⁶³ Sułtański, *Zekher Tsaddiqim*, 118. For a complete text, see Appendix 3.1.

¹⁶⁴ David b. Mordecai Kukizów to Joseph b. Moses Moszkowicz of Łuck (1813) (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2876, fol. 4r). He wrote about these events in more detail in a letter to Mordecai Sułtański (the letter has not survived). This is probably how Sułtański obtained the information that he later included in his *Zekher Tsaddiqim*.

¹⁶⁵ The letter from the community of Kukizów to the Russian Karaite communities; Hebrew, Kukizów, 1822, scribe Levi ben Abraham (Evr.II A, no. 1720, fol. 1v).

corresponded to both meanings of the word. Because of their large debt, the Karaites had to pledge him the most precious thing the community possessed – their wooden synagogue. At some point, having received no money from the Karaites, the *parits* decided to seal the synagogue. In addition, he evicted the Karaites from their houses and sealed them as well. Moreover, he ordered that several Karaites should be detained in the local prison for a period of two weeks. At the same time there came a decision from notaries that the value of the synagogue and the Karaites' houses did not exceed two thirds of the whole sum of their debt. The imprisoned Karaites pleaded for their release and permission to send two men to other Karaite communities to collect money. The *parits* gave them three months to do this – and in addition raised the debt to three hundred *adummim Holland* (=Dutch guldens/florins). The impoverished community was in such terrible need that the Karaites had to ask people to give them bread to feed their children.¹⁶⁶ In the end, the community decided to send two representatives, Shalom ben Noah¹⁶⁷ and Nisan ben Mordecai to Łuck to collect money.¹⁶⁸

There is no data on how the Karaites of Kukizów managed to pay the debt, but apparently the Russian Karaites did support the community and provided money. It may be deduced from a letter written in Kukizów in May-June 1822 that the conflict with the landowner was somehow settled.¹⁶⁹

In passing, it is important to mention that such unfavourable and humiliating dealings with the Kukizów community seem to contradict the general pattern of

¹⁶⁶ Ibid. The main addressee was undoubtedly the Crimean hakham Simcha Babowicz.

¹⁶⁷ Called in the document “ba'al ha-hov” (=the owner of the debt). It was he who became indebted to the landowner before 1822.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid. Fol.2r contains an additional note by Abraham Firkowicz, which was written upon the arrival of the two aforementioned Karaites in Łuck. It states that there they received 58 gold pieces and a horse.

¹⁶⁹ NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1822. The letter from the community of Kukizów to the Russian Karaite communities (Hebrew; Kukizów, May-June, 1822).

benevolent treatment of the Karaites in nineteenth-century Austria and Russia. Nevertheless, careful analysis of archival and published sources shows that in spite of the general positive attitude to the Karaites on the part of the state, there were a few other episodes when the Karaites were maltreated by local landlords, especially in the Russian part of partitioned Poland. Indeed, in the first years after the partitions of Poland (1772, 1793, and 1795) and Russian annexation of the Crimea (1783), there was a series of incidents when the Karaites were deprived of their lands and exiled from their traditional settlements. Thus, in 1792/3 a Tatar landlord, Adil bey Balatukov, expelled the Karaites from Mangup (the Crimea);¹⁷⁰ local landowners also appropriated Karaite lands in Nowe Miasto (Russian Lithuania)¹⁷¹ and Łuck (Volhynia).¹⁷² Unfortunately, the whole story of the oppression of the Kukizów community is known to us only from Karaite sources, which are not detailed enough to provide us with more information on the nature and development of the conflict between the Karaite community and the landowner/*parits*. It seems, however, that this conflict was of a purely economic character: the local community simply was not able to pay its debt – and there was no additional ideological background.

In 1822, apparently as a consequence of the aforementioned conflict, only four *ba'lei batim* (=householders; i.e. about 20 individuals) remained in the town; the rest

¹⁷⁰ Mikhail Kizilov, "K istorii karaimskoj obshchiny Mangupa," *Vestnik EUM* 7 (2002): 113-122; Dan Shapira, "Pesn' o Mangupe 1793 goda," *Vestnik EUM* 7 (2002): 283-294; idem, "A Karaim Poem in Crimean-Tatar from Mangup," in *Turkish-Jewish Encounters*, ed. Mehmet Tütüncü (Haarlem, 2001), 87.

¹⁷¹ The Karaites of Nowe Miasto were driven out of their land property in 1826. As a consequence, many were forced to emigrate to Poniewież (MS LMAB F.301, no. 276, fols. 4-5; a draft of the complaint written by Gabriel Firkowicz in 1854; Russian; cf. NLR F.946, op.9 (Polish documents), no. 288).

¹⁷² At the end of the eighteenth century Count Stefan Olizar appropriated the so-called "Karaite fields" in the vicinity of Łuck (Sułtański, *Zekher Tsaddiqim*, 119-120). It is even more interesting that at some point Olizar was seriously planning to re-settle the community of Łuck in the town of Korostyszów near Żytomierz/Zhitomir. This project was never realized ("Z dziejów rozwoju gminy karaimskiej w Łucku," *KA* 10 (1936): 16-19).

emigrated to Halicz and Łuck. Moreover, David Kukizów, a highly educated intellectual, also expressed his wish to leave the half-abandoned provincial town and compared himself in Kukizów to “a bird in a cage.”¹⁷³ Indeed, in 1822 he left the town¹⁷⁴ and a new hazzan, young Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz, was appointed in his stead. He was destined to be the last hazzan of the community.¹⁷⁵ In spite of the fact that the community was apparently withering away, a few families still did not want to leave Kukizów. They clung to their land and house property, attended services in the synagogue and took care of the local Karaite cemetery.

In 1831, however, the state of the community declined even further. In this year a major conflagration gutted the whole of Kukizów during the night. Luckily, it did not spread as far as Karaite Street and the synagogue. However, the general economic situation in the town worsened significantly.¹⁷⁶ Altogether, only about 37 houses remained in Kukizów and many local Rabbanites and Christians became homeless. The Karaites, when in need of money, used to borrow it from the local Rabbanites. This time the Rabbanites could not lend the Karaites any money because of their own financial straits. Mordkowicz tried to borrow 300 silver rubles from a certain

¹⁷³ NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1822, fol. 2r.

¹⁷⁴ Maggid, “Reshit davar,” xiv. David Kukizów continued his contacts with the Galician Karaites after his emigration to the Crimea as well (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, nos. 938 and 1816). In the Crimea David b. Mordecai finally achieved both the scholarly and the financial recognition of which he had dreamt. Even before he left Kukizów, he was obsessed with the idea of printing Karaite manuscripts (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, nos. 1822-1823). He realized his dream in Eupatoria (Gözleve), where he published many classical Karaite writings (as well as his own) in the local Karaite printing house (see more in Maggid, “Reshit davar,” i-xviii (this publication served as the basis for Zarach Zarachowicz, “Uruwu jaryk ełtwicłernin,” *KA* 9 (1936): 3-6); cf. Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el,” 85-86; Bałaban, “Karaici,” 32).

¹⁷⁵ During his stay in Kukizów from 1824 to 1830/1 Mordkowicz copied a few important manuscripts (Bod. MS Reggio 4 and 37 (Neubauer, *Catalogue*, 47, no. 245; 190, no. 892); Schwarz, *Hebräischen Handschriften*, 140).

¹⁷⁶ Therefore, later Karaite authors, who stated that the fire had devastated most Karaite houses, were wrong (Zarachowicz, “Josef Mordkowicz,” 21). Equally fictitious seems to be Alexander Mardkowicz’s story about his grandfather, Nisan, the last Karaite keeper of the local synagogue-kenese. According to Mardkowicz, he was poisoned by his fellow-Karaites, who wanted to move the Ark of the Torah from Kukizów to Halicz. More interesting is the fact that Mardkowicz claimed to be a descendant of Nisan b. Mordecai, brother of David Kukizów, a scion of the famous Karaite scholar Mordecai b. Nisan Kukizów ([Alexander Mardkowicz], “Zeretłerinde Kukizownun,” *KA* 5 (1932), 11-16). This is why many of Mardkowicz’s writings are signed by the double name: Mardkowicz-Kokizow.

Abraham ben Moses (most likely a wealthy Russian Rabbanite), but was apparently not successful in his plea.¹⁷⁷

The last Karaite document coming from Kukizów dates back to the period immediately after the fire of 1831.¹⁷⁸ Thus, we may assume that soon after the fire of 1831 the community decided to leave the town. The main factors that determined this decision were mentioned above: confiscation of their land and the general economic situation in the town after the conflagration. In spite of the lack of written evidence confirming this hypothesis, it may be suggested that there was one more factor that prompted the community to leave Kukizów: the epidemic of cholera which swept through Galicia in 1831. We may cautiously suggest that Abraham ben Noah, who died in 1831, could have been one of the victims of this epidemic.¹⁷⁹

Some authors have proposed that there were other factors: the very small size of the community and the difficulty in finding spouses;¹⁸⁰ the desire to avoid the danger of possible assimilation with local Christians.¹⁸¹ Such a danger indeed existed, and it is very likely that some of the local Karaites may have accepted Christianity in order to avoid emigration. In 1843 the keeper of the synagogue was a baptised Karaite married to a local Polish woman.¹⁸² He was, perhaps, the only Karaite who remained in Kukizów after 1831. It seems that, in general, Kukizów never managed to regain its former importance back after the devastating conflagration of 1831, and afterward remained a small and insignificant Galician village. In addition to the local Slavic

¹⁷⁷ NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.1631. Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz to Abraham b. Moses (Kukizów, 1831).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ In the same year this epidemic took the lives of a few members of the Karaite community of Halicz.

¹⁸⁰ Majkowski, "Wiadomość," 104.

¹⁸¹ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 38.

¹⁸² He was still able to read Hebrew, however (Majkowski, "Wiadomość," 104). In the 1830s the presence of the synagogue keeper in Kukizów was also mentioned by Sułtański, who, though, did not say anything about the latter's conversion to Christianity (Sułtański, *Zekher Tsaddiqim*, 118).

population, a small Rabbanite community remained in Kukizów until the beginning of the Second World War.¹⁸³

2.2.2. *Historical monuments: synagogue and cemetery*

The presence of the Karaite population in Kukizów was reflected in the toponymy of the town. The meadows and fields owned by the Karaites were called “Podkaraimszczyzna” (Pol. “[an area] near the Karaite quarter”). In the town itself there was a Karaite Street (Pol. “ulica Karaicka”; “Karaj oramy” in Karaim) and a Karaite market (Pol. “rynek Karaicki”).¹⁸⁴ The Karaite cemetery was called by the local population “karaimszczyzna” (=Karaite area) or “okopisko karaimskie” (=Karaite cemetery).¹⁸⁵

Construction of the wooden synagogue in Kukizów started in 1689.¹⁸⁶ It was completed, however, only in 1711, almost two decades after the arrival of the Karaites in Kukizów.¹⁸⁷ According to a traveller’s description of 1843, it was a compact building similar to the Talmudic synagogues of the region, with impressive ornamentation and numerous biblical quotations painted inside the synagogue. After the emigration of the community from Kukizów in 1831, the Karaites did not want to sell the building to anybody, except for the local Talmudic Jews, who did not buy it out of contempt for the Karaites.¹⁸⁸ In spite of the fact that the synagogue was burnt down during a conflagration in the second half of the nineteenth century, the local Slavic population did not use the site it once occupied. According to a Polish author

¹⁸³ Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy*, 48; *Khurbn Jaryczów bay Lemberg. Sefer Zikkaron le-qedoshei Jaryczów u-sevivoteha*, ed. Mordecai Gerstl (New York, 1948).

¹⁸⁴ [Mardkowicz], “Zeretlerinde,” 12; Janusz, *Karaici*, 83.

¹⁸⁵ Bohdan Janusz, “Karaici i cmentarzysko,” 6. During the field expedition in Kukizów in May, 2002, I met local inhabitants who called the place a “Tatar” or “Karaim” cemetery.

¹⁸⁶ See NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.1609 (a Hebrew verse on the construction of the synagogue in Kukizów by Abraham b. Simcha *Hazaq* [=the Strong], 1689).

¹⁸⁷ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 1272, ft.656.

¹⁸⁸ S. z Galicji, “Synagoga Karaitów,” 328.

of the 1930s, this was done out of veneration for this once holy place.¹⁸⁹ In the late 1930s parts of Kukizów's *aron ha-qodesh* were kept in the Muzeum Pokuckie in Stanisławów. The same source informs us that a prayer book from Kukizów, which contained records and historical notes, was kept in the 1930s in Halicz.¹⁹⁰ Unfortunately, the later destiny of this unique source is unknown.

The Karaite cemetery of Kukizów was located in the southern part of the town, on the western side of the road to Jaryczów. A few photos of tombstones from this cemetery, which were taken before the beginning of World War I, suggest that the style of its monuments was highly similar to that of the Karaite and Ashkenazic cemeteries in Halicz and the surrounding area. As in Halicz, the tombstones of the Kukizów cemetery contained lengthy Hebrew epitaphs, depictions of kohen's hands in priestly blessing, ornaments, flowers and other traditional Jewish symbols. Only two epitaphs from the cemetery have been documented: that of Avraham ben Noah ha-Zaqen "Babat" (1831)¹⁹¹ and that of Debora Łobanos (d.1711), the wife of Abraham ben Samuel Łobanos, the first shofet of the Kukizów community.¹⁹² These two monuments seem to delineate the chronological framework of the existence of this cemetery – from the early eighteenth century until 1831, when the community left Kukizów. Seven tombstones were still seen by visitors to the cemetery at the

¹⁸⁹ Majkowski, "Wiadomość," 102.

¹⁹⁰ Majkowski, "Wiadomość," 101-102, ft. 7; [Leon Szulimowicz], "Karaimi Haliccy opiekunowi swemu królowi Janowi III-mu w hołdzie," *MK* 10 (1934): 120.

¹⁹¹ Janusz, *Karaici*, 84-85, fig. 15; idem, "Karaici i cmentarzysko," 5-6; Illustrations, fig. 4.10. „Babat”, which was mistakenly understood by Janusz as a surname, is in fact an abbreviation “n-b-t” which stands for *nafsho be-tov talin* (Heb. “his soul [covered] by good dew”).

¹⁹² [Mardkowicz], "Zeretlerinde," 11-16; MS LMAB F.143, no.1231; Illustrations, fig. 4.11. The common opinion that Debora was the wife of Samuel Łobanowski (Łobanos) ([Mardkowicz], "Zeretlerinde," 12; Majkowski, "Wiadomość," 102) is wrong. The name of Debora's husband clearly reads "Abraham". He is mentioned as the first head of the Kukizów community in the charter of Jan Casimir of 15 Sep. 1692 (Bałaban, "Karaici," 28; see more on him in Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 1528 (index)).

beginning of the twentieth century, but only four in the 1930s.¹⁹³ The cemetery was finally destroyed in the Soviet period, in the 1960s.

2.3. *Lwów-Lemberg and its role in the life of the Galician Karaites from 1772 to 1918*

From the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century some Karaites worked and studied in Lwów, the capital city of Galicia. The sentiment of the Karaites with regard to Lemberg-Lwów, the former seat of their medieval community, is attested in a few contemporary sources. Majer Bałaban (1877-1942/3), a famous Jewish scholar from Lwów, mentioned (with reference to the information obtained from the city elders) that in Austrian times Galician Karaites were still coming to the Karaite graveyard of Lwów to take care of the graves of their ancestors. The scholar himself tried to make excavations in the territory supposedly belonging to the old Karaite cemetery of Lwów in 1914, but was not able to find anything apart from small fragments of the tombs with practically illegible inscriptions.¹⁹⁴ According to Jan Grzegorzewski's notes this cemetery was located on Brusilowska Street. In 1914-1915 a part of this cemetery was illegally occupied by the local Christians and Rabbanites.¹⁹⁵

Among the Karaites of the region there was a notion that somewhere in Lwów there must be some medieval archival data attesting to the early existence of the community in the region, and to their rights concerning the possession of land. At some point after 1772 the Karaites of Łuck, who were deprived of their privileges and lands (the so-called *pola Karaimowskie* – Pol. “Karaite fields”), were willing to travel to Lwów in order to find their charters preserved in the local archive. They needed

¹⁹³ Janusz, “Karaici i cmentarzysko,” 6; Illustrations, fig. 4.14.

¹⁹⁴ Bałaban, “Karaici,” 16, ft.1; idem, *Żydzi lwowscy na przełomie XVIgo i XVIIgo wieku* (Lwów, 1906), 6-7.

¹⁹⁵ AN PAN, K III-6, no.16.

these documents to prove their rights to the Polish landlords who forced them off the land. Nevertheless, they did not attempt this because of the fear that the documents had already been transferred to Vienna.¹⁹⁶ In a few places in his historical chronicle the Karaite sage Mordecai Sultański left a rather unreliable reference to the effect that there indeed were Karaite charters kept “in the archive, which is in the country of Lodomeria, in the big city called Lwów in the Polish language and Lemberg in German, under the number fifteen.”¹⁹⁷ Sultański also mentioned that the Karaites possessed extracts from some texts, which were copied by them on 8 December 1267.¹⁹⁸ However, this statement can hardly be trusted: the earliest document preserved in the Lwów archives at that time dates back to 1351.¹⁹⁹ This may be a corrupted reference to the Kalisz charter of 1264 given by King Bolesław Pobożny (the Pious) to the Jews living in his domain.

In the nineteenth century this corrupted reference to the purported archival data from Lwów was often used by the Lithuanian Karaites in their legal struggle with the tsarist administration. They cited it as a proof of their ancient rights to settlement in Poland dating back to the thirteenth century. Moreover, while quoting Sultański *verbatim*, they did not indicate his work as a source of information, pretending that Sultański’s questionable text concerning the settlement of the Karaites by Vitold in the thirteenth century was a direct quotation from the Lwów archives.²⁰⁰

¹⁹⁶ This story was documented by Sultański in 1838 (Sultański, *Zekher Tsaddiqim*, 119-120).

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 110; cf. *ibid.*, 113, 120.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹⁹ Denis Zubritskii, *Kritiko-istoricheskiya povest' vremennykh let Chervonoi ili Galitskoi Rusi*, trans. from Polish Osip Bodianskii (Moscow, 1845), 134.

²⁰⁰ NLR F.946, op.1, no. 1053, fol. 15v (Polish translation of the fragments of M.Sultański’s *Zekher Tsaddiqim* presented as a copy of an archival document from Lwów); NLR F.946, op.1, no. 1048, fol. 2v (Russian translation of the same with the heading: “This copy is obtained from the city of Lwów, from the document kept in the chancellery of the same city”).

Chapter 3. The Galician Karaites, Their Religious Customs and Traditions: the Community as Seen from an Ethnographic Perspective.

3.1. Religio-ethnographic customs and traditions.

At the beginning of the twentieth century Reuven Fahn, the Galician Rabbanite, characterized the difference between the Karaite and Talmudic religious traditions in the following way:

They [the Karaites] have the Torah, but they do not follow all of the commandments [*mitsvot*]. Their prayer book is written in the Holy language [*lashon ha-qodesh*, i.e. Hebrew], but their prayers and some passages [*psuqim*] are different. They say the traditional *qeriat shema* during the prayer, but no *shemoneh esreh*.¹ They have a *mezuzah* on the door-post, but do not put on phylacteries [*tefillin*]. They wear a four cornered mantle [*arba'a kenafot*; a.k.a. *tallit*], but do not wrap themselves in the *tallit* [*gadol*]. Their fringes [*tsitsit*] consist of seven strings. They strictly observe women's menstrual impurity [*tum'at niddah*], but without purification in a ritual bath [*tahorah miqveh*]. Pork is forbidden, but meat with milk is allowed. Circumcision [is performed], but without *peri'ah*.² New year [is celebrated], but without a ram's horn [*shofar*].³ A hut of boughs [is made] for the Feast of Ingathering [*hag ha-asif*], but without fruits of goodly trees and branches of palm trees.⁴ They celebrate Purim, but do not celebrate Hanukkah, and have many other strange customs.⁵

Even this short passage, which Fahn ascribed to a certain Rabbanite inhabitant

¹ The traditional Rabbanite prayer (*tefillat arvit*) is comprised of three basic parts: *qeriat shema*, *shemoneh esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions), and *birkhot qeriat shema* (the blessings before and after *qeriat shema*). See also Percy Selvin Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy and Its Relation to Synagogue Worship* (Manchester, 1957), 51-114.

² *Peri'ah* – tearing by the operator's finger of the underlying mucous membrane (Nathan Schur, *The Karaite Encyclopedia* (Vienna, 1995), 70). For more details concerning the *berit milah* (circumcision) among the modern Karaites see *An Introduction to Karaite Judaism: A Guide to Karaite Observance, Theology, and History*, ed. Yosef Yaron, Avraham Qanai, Joe Pessah, Yosef El-Gamil (New York, 2001), 203-206.

³ In Karaite tradition the holiday of the New Year is called *Yom Teru'ah* (=day of trumpeting/shouting) (Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 115-119). For an explanation of why the Karaites do not use a ram's horn, see excerpts from Aaron ben Elijah in Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology* (New Haven, 1952), 172-174.

⁴ I.e. without *etrog* and *lulab* (see more in Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 120-126; cf. excerpts from Aaron ben Elijah in Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, 178-189).

⁵ Fahn, "Me-Hayye," 146; Cf. also Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

of Halicz, shows to what extent Karaite religious practice differed from traditional Judaism, and how strange and unfamiliar it seemed in the eyes of Rabbanite observers. Most Christian authors, however, usually were of the opinion that the Karaite religious tradition was in general much more sober than that of the Rabbanite Jews, free from various superstitions, such as a belief in the power of talismans and the transmigration of souls, which were typical of the Ashkenazim.⁶

One Polish-Austrian journalist, Grzegorz Smólski, was interested to know more about the specificity of the Karaite religion, and asked Samuel Eszwowicz, a Karaite inhabitant of Halicz, for more details. The latter explained to the journalist that the difference was mainly in the Karaites' literal understanding of the biblical commands, whereas the Rabbanites allowed themselves distortions of the words of the Scripture. This is why Eszwowicz considered the Rabbanites' kindling of fire on the Sabbath or the complete prohibition of mixing milk and meat to be utter nonsense.⁷

Indeed, the main difference between the religious doctrine of the Karaite and that of the Rabbanite Jews is found in the Karaites' negation of the binding authority of the Talmud and their recognition of the *TaNaKh* as the only true source of religious law. In addition, the Karaites do not recognize Rabbinic practices such as affixing *mezuzot* to door posts,⁸ wearing *tefillin*, and ritual bath (*miqveh*).⁹ There were also a number of other differences in the sphere of the calendar, as well as in dietary, purity and marriage laws, rights of inheritance, the ceremony of circumcision, etc. While describing the religious views and practices of the local community, I will discuss

⁶ Ebenezer Henderson, *Biblical Researches and Travels in Russia* (London, 1826), 322.

⁷ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 523. The Karaites interpret literally the biblical prohibition: "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in his mother's milk" (Ex. 23:19 and 34:26; Deut. 14:21) and consider that one is allowed to consume milk products with meat.

⁸ For the usage of *mezuzot* in Halicz see §3.1.3.

⁹ Simple ritual cleansing was and still is used by the Karaites. It is only the Rabbinic requirements for the rite and structure of ritual cleansing, requiring a specific structure (i.e., the *miqveh* itself) that Karaites object to.

only those which were specific exclusively to the Galician Karaites.¹⁰ Some of these practices, as will be seen, differed not only from the Rabbanite, but also from the Crimean Karaite tradition.

3.1.1. *Synagogues and manner of praying.*

As has been noted (see §2.1.5), the architectural design, style, and decoration of the Galician Karaite and Rabbanite synagogues and tombstones were almost identical. Nevertheless, there was one important distinction which differentiated Karaite synagogues and tombstones from those of their Rabbanite brethren. According to a general Jewish tradition, the worshipper should turn his face towards Jerusalem while praying.¹¹ In conformity with this principle the *aron ha-qodesh* (=Ark of the Torah/Torah closet) of a synagogue and the front part of a gravestone should be oriented in the direction of Jerusalem. There is, however, a considerable difference between the East European Karaite and the Rabbanite interpretations of the geographic location of this holy city: according to the Karaite tradition, Jerusalem is located in the south, whereas in the Early Modern Ashkenazic tradition it is in the east.¹² This is why the Karaite synagogue of Halicz and the front parts of the gravestones in the local cemetery faced south, whereas the Torah closets of the Rabbanite synagogues were normally oriented to the east.

Since the thirteenth century, the accepted Karaite practice was to pray twice

¹⁰ There is a vast amount of literature dedicated to the specificity of the Karaite religious tradition and its difference from Rabbanite practices. For an introduction, see Daniel J. Lasker, "Karaite Judaism," *The Encyclopedia of Judaism* 4:1 (Leiden-Boston, 2003), 1807-1821; Leon Nemoy, "Karaites," *EJ* 10 (1971): 762-785; *Introduction to Karaite Judaism*; Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*.

¹¹ I Kings 8:44; Daniel 6:10.

¹² The Karaites in the Near East had a different understanding of this principle. For a discussion see Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 30-32. It seems that in Łuck the Karaite synagogue and, possibly, the graves were oriented east, not south (Józef Smoliński, "Karaimi i bożnica ich w Łucku," *Ziemia* 3 (1912): 39). It seems that the principle of facing the east was brought by the forefathers of the Ashkenazim from Spain. This is attested to by the fact that the earliest Rabbanite synagogues in Europe also faced south, as did those of the Karaites (I am indebted to Prof. Dan Shapira for this and many other comments regarding the contents of this chapter).

daily, in the morning and in the evening.¹³ There were considerable differences between the Karaite and Rabbanite liturgy and manner of prayer. Because of the fact that Karaite prayers were supposed to be performed either in a standing or a kneeling position, there were no chairs inside the Halicz synagogue, only reading-stands for the books (Germ. “Ständer”).¹⁴ Only elders were allowed to be seated during the prayers.¹⁵ According to the literal interpretation of Exodus 3:5, the Karaites in the Near East and the Crimea took off their shoes before entering a synagogue. In the Karaite communities of Galicia, however, this tradition was not followed – perhaps, either because of the influence of the Rabbanite tradition or because of the cold climate.¹⁶ The Galician Karaites also did not practise the bathing of hands and feet, obligatory in the Crimea and the Near East.¹⁷ Nevertheless, anyone entering the Karaite synagogue of Halicz was supposed to be properly dressed and ritually clean. On entering the synagogue, Fahn was requested to leave his cane at the entrance and button his coat in order not to offend the place.¹⁸ According to him, the Karaites entered the synagogue with their heads bowed in order to concentrate their thoughts on the mourning for Jerusalem.¹⁹ Fahn also described in detail the Karaite manner of praying, which included such gestures as falling to the ground and kneeling down.²⁰ The Karaites’ liturgy, their Sephardic pronunciation of Hebrew, and their ecstatic

¹³ Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 3.

¹⁴ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13.

¹⁵ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

¹⁶ In nineteenth century Galicia, Volhynia, and Lithuania this custom was not practised. Nevertheless, in the seventeenth century the Karaites of Troki entered their synagogues barefoot (see Gustav Peringer-Lilieblad’s letter of 1690 published in Simon Szyszman (Şışman), “Gustaf Peringers Mission bei den Karäern,” *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft* 102 (1952): 215-228, esp. 226). Thus, one may assume that the early Karaite settlers in Galicia, Volhynia, and Lithuania were following a custom which they had brought from the East.

¹⁷ Based on Exod. 30:21. In the nineteenth century the Karaites of Troki washed their hands (not their feet!) before entering the synagogue. The Crimeans, similarly, stopped washing their feet before entering the synagogue sometime in the second half of the nineteenth century. For a discussion, see Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 37, ft.2; Kizilov, *Karaites*, 185-186, ft. 599.

¹⁸ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 148.

¹⁹ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177.

²⁰ For details, see pictures and explanations in *An Introduction to Karaite Judaism*, 121-126.

manner of reading prayers²¹ seemed to him, a Rabbanite visitor, most exotic and strange.²²

The Galician Karaites, as well as other East European Karaites, celebrated most of the traditional Jewish holidays apart from Hanukkah, which was not recognised by them because it was a post-biblical holiday.²³ The Karaites normally did not accept the concept of the *minyan* (literally – “number”; usually interpreted in the sense of “ten people” – the minimal congregation necessary for public worship).²⁴ According to the Karaite tradition, even the presence of two or three believers is enough to begin worship. For the small Karaite community of Halicz, the rejection of this principle was highly useful: according to eyewitness accounts from the beginning of the twentieth century, the number of Karaites who came to the synagogue to pray was often less than ten people.²⁵ Nevertheless, the principle of the necessity of having at least ten people for worship was preserved during the liturgical service on the eve before the rite of circumcision (GVKar. *mijałovyj kece*).²⁶ It is of interest that Abraham Firkowicz, who tried to introduce the concept of the *minyan* among the Samaritans and the Troki Karaite community,²⁷ did not attempt to do so during his stay in Halicz in 1871. Perhaps he realized that the local community was not numerous enough to constitute a *minyan* for every prayer.

The Karaites were not supposed to accept the teaching of the Qabbalah and other mystical interpretations of the Bible widespread among the Rabbanites. Nevertheless, in Volhynia and Galicia at least from the seventeenth century most of

²¹ Esp. the so-called *haramat qol* (=raising the voice) (cf. Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 28-29).

²² Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 148.

²³ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

²⁴ Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 6-7. The seventeenth-century Troki Karaites, surprisingly, maintained the *minyan* (Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 593).

²⁵ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 148.

²⁶ Grzegorzewski, “Caraimica,” 273, ft. 1, 294, ft. 4.

²⁷ Tapani Harviainen, Haseeb Shehadeh, Harry Halén, “The Samaritan and Karaim Commitment to Minyan, Abraham Firkovich, and the Poor of Trakai,” *Studia Orientalia* 82 (1997): 85-98.

the Karaite intellectuals studied the Qabbalah. One of them, Simcha-Isaac Łucki, even composed a few Qabbalistic treatises.²⁸ At least two of the Galician hazzanim, Aaron ben Samuel ha-Ro'eh (hazzan until 1685) and Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz (hazzan from 1867-1884) were quite knowledgeable in Qabbalah and gematria.²⁹ We may also assume that many other Galician Karaite intellectuals studied the Qabbalah in the nineteenth and even in the twentieth centuries.

3.1.2. Prayer mantles (*tallitot*).

In compliance with Num. 15:38-40, all Jews are supposed to attach fringes or tassels (*tsitsit*) at the ends of their four-cornered garments. Such garments were common in biblical times, and the commandment (*mitsvah*) to wear *tsitsit* was supposed to be a daily reminder to the Jews about the commandments of God. To fulfil this *mitsvah* adult Jewish men are supposed to wear a four-cornered shawl (*tallit gadol* or “large tallit”) during morning prayer. Strictly observant Jewish men usually also wear the so-called *tallit qatan* (“small tallit”) – a four-cornered garment worn under the clothes, with the *tsitsit* hanging out so that they can be seen. The *tallit qatan* is usually worn all day long, whereas the *tallit gadol* – during morning services only. The tallit may be made of any textile material, but not of wool and linen mixed because of the Biblical prescription that forbids such combinations in any clothing.³⁰

²⁸ Daniel J. Lasker, “The Life and Works of Simhah Isaac Lutski – A Preliminary Intellectual Profile of an Eighteenth-Century Volhynian Karaite,” in *Karaites in Eastern Europe in the Last Generations. Proceedings of the First International Karaite Colloquium*, ed. Dan Shapira et al. (Jerusalem, 2008) (in print)); idem, “Simhah Isaac Łucki: mequbal qarai ben ha-meah ha-18,” in *Shefa Tal. Studies in Jewish Thought and Culture, Presented to Bracha Sack*, ed. Zeev Gries, et al. (Beer Sheva, 2004), 171-189; cf. Paul Fenton, “De quelques attitudes Qaraïtes envers la Qabbale,” *Revue des Études Juives* 142 (1983): 5-19.

²⁹ It is evident from Mordkowicz’s comments to the Bodleian MS Reggio 37, fols. 191-193; on Aaron ha-Ro’eh’s interest in the Qabbalah see Z. Zarachowicz to S. Szapszał, Russian, Halicz 22 June 1947 (MS LMAB F.143, no. 724, fol. 1r).

³⁰ Lev. 19:19; Deut. 22:11. See Illustrations, figs. 8.2 and 8.3.

Among the Karaites the duty of wearing the *tallit gadol* during prayer was binding for both men and women. The Karaites in the Near East and the Crimea did not wear the *tallit qatan*, only the *tallit gadol*, which was worn above the garments.³¹ In Galicia, however, the Karaites wore both types of *tallit*, with four fringes. Unlike the strands of Rabbanite fringes, which were made of eight strings (known as *kaful shemoneh*), the strands of the Karaite *tsitsit* in Galicia consisted of seven strings, six white and one light blue (*tekhelet*).³² Six strings were supposed to symbolize weekdays, and the *tekhelet* – the Sabbath.³³ Abraham Firkowicz, during his visit to Halicz in 1871, stressed the fact that the whole Galician community, from elders to youngsters, strictly observed the *mitsvah* of wearing *tsitsit* every day.³⁴ The pious Galician community evidently stood in highly favourable contrast to that of Troki, which was visited by Firkowicz in the same year. There the Karaite patriarch needed to issue a special regulation to introduce the obligatory wearing of *tsitsit*. The members of the Troki community did sign this *taqqanah* (regulation), but it does not seem that they followed it afterwards.³⁵

3.1.3. Doorpost amulets (*mezuzot*).

³¹ Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 272; Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 48-50. In nineteenth-century Łuck the Karaites wore some sort of mixture of larger and smaller *tallit* with *tsitsit* (Henderson, *Biblical Researches*, 325).

³² Fahn, "Me-Hayye," 148. A highly interesting Halicz hazzan's robe, similar to a *tallit qatan* is now on the display at MKIK.

³³ Solomon ben Abraham Troki, "Appiryon 'Asah Lo," in Adolf Neubauer, *Aus der Petersburger Bibliothek. Beiträge und Documente zur Geschichte des Karäerthums und der karäischen Literatur* (Leipzig, 1866), 19 (Hebrew part of the book); cf. also the dialogue between the teacher and the student in Simcha Łucki's "Eilon Moreh" (Golda Akhiezer, Daniel Lasker, "Sefer Eilon Moreh: Qatekhis le-hinukh qarai me-ha-me'ah ha-18," *Dor le-Dor* 27 (2006): 20, questions 3-4).

³⁴ "Taqqanot Even Reshef," 15.

³⁵ Tapani Harviainen, "Abraham Firkovich as Collector of Dispersed Minorities and Their Manuscripts in the Light of His Archive in St. Petersburg," *Jewish Studies* 39 (1999): 103. It is unclear why Harviainen stated in this article that the wearing of *tsitsit* and some other practices "obviously were not followed by Karaites in Lithuania" (*ibid.*). During the time of Solomon ben Aaron of Troki (seventeenth/eighteenth centuries) members of the local community certainly did wear *tsitsit* and maintained *minyān* (Solomon b. Abraham Troki, "Appiryon 'Asah Lo," 19; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 593).

A *mezuzah* (doorpost amulet) is a rectangular piece of parchment containing two small fragments from the Torah (Deut. 6:4-9 and 11:13-21), which is rolled up, inserted into a wooden or metal case or tube and then affixed to the upper part of the right-hand door-posts of rooms and houses occupied by Jews. The obligation of the mezuzah is said to be derived from the words: "And thou shalt write them on the doorposts of thy house and within thy gates." In medieval times mezuzot had the reputation of possessing a protective power, especially against evil spirits. The use of mezuzot is a purely Rabbanite tradition practically alien to the Karaites. The early modern and nineteenth-century Crimean and Lithuanian Karaites did not follow the mitzvah of affixing mezuzot at all. In the Near East the local Karaites affixed to their door-posts short version of the Ten Commandments.³⁶

In Halicz and Łuck, however, at least from the nineteenth century on, the local Karaites did affix mezuzot to the door-posts of their houses.³⁷ The late Ms. Janina Eszwowicz, the former head of the Karaite community of Halicz, informed me that there was a mezuzah affixed to the door-post of her house.³⁸ Today this mezuzah is on display among other objects in the Museum of Karaite History and Culture in Halicz.

3.1.4. *Birth of a child and the rite of circumcision.*

The Karaite rite of circumcision (*berit milah*) also differed considerably from that of the Rabbanites.³⁹ Jan Grzegorzewski, at the beginning of the twentieth century, published a most interesting text in *Karaim* concerning the Galician Karaite rite of circumcision. According to this text, the walls of the house where a child was born,

³⁶ Lasker, "Karaite Judaism," 1814; Emanuela Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti tra etnia e religione* (Roma, 1984), fig.5.

³⁷ Fahn, "Me-Hayye," 148; Abraham Gottlober, *Biqqoret le-toldot ha-qara'im* (Wilno, 1865), 13; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 685.

³⁸ Private communication, June, 2003.

³⁹ For details see Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 70; Emanuela Trevisan Semi, "La circoncisione nel Caraismo," *Henoch* 4 (1982): 65-82; eadem, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 95-114; "Taqqanot Even Reshef," 7-8.

the space above his cradle, and the curtains covering the cradle were to be hung with special folios containing fragments of the psalms of David written by the hazzan especially for this occasion. The circumcision (called in the text *mile* or *khatna*) takes place on the seventh day, in the synagogue. The father comes with the *kum* and *kuma* (Slavic terms to denote the godfather and godmother of one's child) and "two young men called *sołowij kumlar*" (GVKar. *bachurlar indelgen sołowij kumlar*⁴⁰). The child is carried by the *kuma*, who gives him to one of the *sołowij kumlar*, and then he gives him to the other *sołowij kum*. The hazzan (called in the text *rebi*) performs the procedure of circumcision with a special razor, called *iligic* in Karaim,⁴¹ which is kept inside the synagogue and is used only for circumcision. After the circumcision is done, the hazzan takes a drop of the child's blood on his finger and smears the child's forehead with it. Afterwards he blesses the child with the priestly blessing. In addition, he also blesses *serbet*,⁴² which is tasted afterwards by all those present during the ceremony.

The mother of a child remains ritually impure (*murdar*) for six weeks after the birth of a boy, and twelve after a girl's birth. When the required time has passed, the mother takes a bath and goes to the synagogue (*kensa*) to be blessed by the hazzan. Afterwards they go to the cemetery, the mother following the hazzan. The hazzan circumbulates the cemetery while pronouncing formulas of eternal peace for the dead. The mother "measures" the cemetery with a thread that she holds in her hands. The congregation follows her and winds the thread back on to the spool. Later they make a

⁴⁰ A curious mixture of Hebrew, Turkic and Slavic words. The father (*ata*) is also called in the text *bałabait* (a corruption of Heb. *ba'al ha-bayit* [the owner of the house]). Aurelia Traczyk calls the "kumlar" – *kum-ata* (godfather) and *kuma-mama* (godmother) (Aurelia Kamila Traczyk, "Obrzędowość i obyczaje u Karaimów," in *Karaimi. III Pieniężnieńskie spotkania z religiami (Materiały z sessii naukowej)*, ed. A. Dubiński (Pieniężno, 1987), 69).

⁴¹ Sometimes this ceremony was performed with special ritual scissors (see Illustrations, fig. 8.6).

⁴² *Sherbet* (GVKar. *serbet*; Persian *sharbat*, from Arabic *šarba* "drink") in the Middle East a beverage of sweetened, diluted fruit juice. According to Grzegorzewski, the Galician Karaites made their *serbet* out of honey and raisins (Grzegorzewski, "Caraimica," 295).

candle-wick out of this thread and the candle is lighted in the synagogue.⁴³ Ms Janina Eszwowicz informed me that children were not allowed to take part in this ceremony, only the hazzan and the female members of the community. They were supposed to circumbulate the cemetery three times while holding the thread. The thread itself had to be made of flax and only by a female Karaite (private communication, Halicz, May, 2002).

Grzegorzewski noted that there was a similar rite among the local Rabbanites, save that according to the Rabbanite tradition, the cemetery was “measured” by a stockinet of fabric. Later this fabric was given to the poor for their dresses.⁴⁴ Such “measuring” of a cemetery by a stockinet of fabric was common also in many other Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. It was usually done in the superstitious belief that if a cemetery’s borders were measured, it would not grow beyond those borders, and, consequently, new graves would not appear and people would not die.

3.1.5. *Passover and making of unleavened bread.*

One of the most important Jewish holidays is Passover, the festival commemorating the deliverance of Israel’s first-born from God’s judgement wrought on the Egyptians (Ex. 12:12-13; Ex. 13:2, 12), and also the wondrous liberation of the Jews from Egyptian bondage (Ex. 12:14-17). In Hebrew it is commonly called *Pesakh* or *Hag ha-Matsot* (=the Festival of Unleavened Bread).⁴⁵

In the 1920s Zarach Zarachowicz sent to T.Kowalski a detailed description of the Galician Karaite tradition of making *matsot* (unleavened bread) and reciting the

⁴³ Ibid., 273-274.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 274.

⁴⁵ Lev. 23, however, seems to distinguish between *Pesakh*, which is set for the fourteenth day of the month, and *Hag ha-Matsot*, appointed for the fifteenth day.

Passover *haggadah* (here: a “narration,” or “recital”).⁴⁶ As is evident from this text, the Karaite manner of celebrating Passover was quite similar to that of their Ashkenazic neighbours.⁴⁷ Nevertheless, there were some important differences in terminology and in the manner of making unleavened bread. Passover itself is called in this text *chydzy maccałarnyn* (a Karaim translation of Heb. *Hag ha-Matsot*) or *chydzy pesachnyn*.⁴⁸ Unleavened bread is called *maccałar* (Heb. *matsah* + Turk. pl. suff. *lar*) and *kiejnynty etmek* (GVKar. “bread of misery”).⁴⁹ Dough for the unleavened bread was made on a special table called *talkie*.⁵⁰ The bread itself was decorated with various ornaments, which were made with small wooden knives called *cemewic(ler)*. When the matsah was ready to be put into the oven (the Karaites used the Slavic loanword *piec*), women threw a small piece of dough (called *maccacyk malachka* – “a small matsah for an angel”) into the fire. In addition to the aforementioned *matsot* made of flour, water, milk, and eggs, every Karaite householder made four special *maccałar* called also *micwotnikler* (Heb. pl. *mitsvot* (duties) + Slav. suff. *nik* + Turk. pl. suff. *lar*). These *maccałar* did not have any ornaments, only the inscriptions לחם עני (=*bread of poverty/misery, amen*) and מצה ומרור עני (=*matsah and bitter herbs, amen*).⁵¹ According to Kowalski, Halicz Karaite *maccałar* were very similar to those of the local Rabbanites, of large size, decorated with traditional Jewish symbols such

⁴⁶ Z. Zarachowicz to T. Kowalski (10 Jan 1929, Halicz, GVKar) (AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:2, fols. 76-77).

⁴⁷ For more on the differences between the Karaite and Rabbanite Passover traditions, see Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 227-228; Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, 196-209. For a description of the Karaite Passover in Poland and Lithuania today, see Emanuela Trevisan Semi, “The Pasha Karaite Meal and the Process of Transformation of Contemporary Lithuanian Karaism,” in *Nemzetiseg-Identitas* (Debrecen, 1991): 398-402; Michał Jaroszyński, “Święto Chydzy Tymbyłarnyn,” *Awazymyz* 1 (4) (2000): 14; Traczyk, “Obrzędowość i obyczaje,” 65-66.

⁴⁸ Cf. modern Kar. “Chydzy Tymbyłarnyn” (from *tymbył* – another Karaim name of the matsah). Nevertheless, as Ms. Eszwowicz informed me, in Halicz matsah was always called only matsah (private communication, May, 2002).

⁴⁹ The Karaim equivalent of Heb. *lechem 'ani* (Deut. 16:3).

⁵⁰ In the Troki dialect – *talky*. According to Kowalski, this term is of Turkic origin (Tadeusz Kowalski, “Przyczynki do etnografii i dialektologii karaimej,” *RO* 5 (1927): 206-209). Cf. Russian “toloch’/rastalkivat’ testo” (=to knead dough).

⁵¹ Kowalski, “Przyczynki do etnografii,” 221-229. For the Troki Passover tradition see *ibid.*, 201-212.

as fish, menorot, and some animals.⁵²

3.1.6. *Observance of the Sabbath.*

One very distinctive practice, which distinguished the Karaites from the Rabbanite Jews was their rigorous and strict observance of the Sabbath. Biblical prescriptions regarding the Sabbath were confirmed and further elaborated by Anan ben David, the founder of the proto-Karaite movement, in the eighth century A.D.⁵³ In spite of the fact that biblical prescriptions put a strict ban on kindling of fire on the Sabbath, Rabbanite Jews found many ways to circumvent this law. This is why from late medieval to early modern times, this originally puritan and strict weekly celebration became a merry feast with wine-drinking, singing, warm food and lights kindled by Gentile servants (or by the Jews themselves on the day preceding the Sabbath, i.e. before sunset on Friday).⁵⁴ Menahem Bashyatzi, an important fifteenth century Byzantine Karaite philosopher and exegete, also tried to permit the kindling of Sabbath candles and lights. This innovation was accepted only in some Karaite communities (e.g. in Constantinople and in Troki) during the philosopher's lifetime.⁵⁵ In Halicz, however, the community remained as rigorous with regard to observance of the Sabbath as in Anan ben David's times. On the Sabbath, Karaite houses and the synagogue remained dark and unheated – which was rather uncomfortable in view of the cold Galician winters. Food was not warmed either. This strict adherence to the biblical precepts produced a strong impression upon Joseph Rohrer:

⁵² AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:1, fol. 36.

⁵³ Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, 17-18.

⁵⁴ E.g. Rohrer's description of the Jewish Sabbath in Lwów in his *Versuch*, 149-150.

⁵⁵ Mann. *Texts and Studies*, 684. See more on the Crimean Karaites' strictness in observation of the Sabbath in Kizilov, *Karaites*, 117-118.

On the Sabbath a Karaite does not kindle a light either at home or in the synagogue... Regardless of how dark it is in his synagogue at the beginning and for the duration of the Sabbath, he still lights no candle. No matter how cold the winter frost may be, a Karaite still does not allow any fire to be lit in his oven or in a fireplace.⁵⁶

According to Fahn, at the end of the nineteenth century, at the time of the winter frosts the Karaites could ask Gentiles to heat their houses.⁵⁷ On the Sabbath the Karaites were supposed to come to the synagogue three times for prayers. On that day a special prayer was sung and seven Karaites would come to the Torah scroll for the Sabbath portion of the weekly reading. Only on the Sabbath did Karaite women dress themselves in their most expensive clothes, sometimes even with gold embroidery.⁵⁸ A glass of wine was blessed by the hazzan in the synagogue at the end of the Sabbath, and each Karaite blessed wine in his own house after the synagogue service.⁵⁹

3.1.7. Funeral Rites

According to traditional Jewish law, anyone willingly or unwillingly coming into contact with a corpse, or entering a house in which there is a body, becomes *tame'* (=ritually impure) for seven days. Moreover, every open vessel inside such a house becomes impure.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, in post-Temple times, in most Jewish communities, these regulations were either suspended or considerably relaxed. Medieval Karaite leaders considered that the rules governing this form of ritual uncleanness should be suspended because the Jewish nation was in Exile. Later Karaite thinkers, however,

⁵⁶ Rohrer, *Versuch*, 149. Cf. D.F., "Pis'mo iz Galitsii," 74. Testimonies regarding the strict observance of the Sabbath by the Halicz Karaites in the nineteenth century contradict the statement of Mordecai ben Nisan Kukizów who mentioned that the Karaites of Poland and Lithuania had been kindling candles on the Sabbath in the seventeenth century (Mordecai ben Nisan, "*Dod Mordechai*," 15a). Perhaps this was the situation in Kukizów, which was originally inhabited by emigrants from Troki, where the kindling of fire had been allowed.

⁵⁷ Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ See Numbers 19:14-16; Haggai 2:13.

were dissatisfied with this view and considered the prescriptions concerning ritual uncleanness of the dead (Heb. *tum'at ha-met*) to be binding even in post-Temple times.⁶¹ Thus, in order not to incur the state of impurity, later Karaites tried to avoid any contact with the dead, and hired non-Karaites to perform the burial. Because of the fact that this strict rule and the necessity to hire non-Karaite morticians caused many financial difficulties, the Karaites of the Near East endeavoured to abolish this regulation already in the fourteenth century. At that time, though, these attempts were not crowned with success.⁶² According to John Covel, the English chaplain in Constantinople, the local Karaite community was hiring Rabbanite morticians to bury their dead during the second half of the seventeenth century. Nevertheless, by that time the Karaites were allowed to perform burials themselves in case “the Rab[banites] out of peevishnesse will not assist them.”⁶³ It seems that by the end of the eighteenth century (and certainly in the first half of the nineteenth century) the Karaites of the Crimea and Turkey had already been allowed to enter a house in which there was a dead body, as well as to perform the burial themselves.⁶⁴ In the Karaite communities of Lithuania, however, regulations concerning *tum'at ha-met* were considered binding at least until the beginning of the nineteenth century.⁶⁵

In Karaite Galicia prescriptions concerning ritual impurity of the dead were observed in an especially strict and rigorous manner. According to the local tradition, the Galician Karaites were not allowed to be present during the death of their relatives. A Karaite who, by accident, happened to witness the death of his relative, was supposed to run immediately to the Dniester, which was situated next to the

⁶¹ For a discussion, see Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 40-44.

⁶² Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 593, ft.50.

⁶³ J. van den Berg, “John Covel’s Letter on the Karaites (1677),” in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by J. van den Berg and E. van der Wall (Dordrecht, 1988), 140.

⁶⁴ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 760, 1372.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 593, ft. 50, 1370-1372, no. 165 (a letter from Abraham b. Mordecai of Poniewież to Simcha b. Joseph of Gözleve (1784)). Cf. Akhiezer, Dvorkin, “Ktovot ha-Matsevot,” 233-234.

Karaite quarter of Halicz, and dive into the water as deeply as possible in order to wash away the impurity.⁶⁶ The room of the deceased also had to be purified – and the walls were supposed to be scraped and washed.⁶⁷ This is why the Karaites of Halicz, as soon as they noticed the symptoms of approaching death in any of their relatives, usually simply left the house in order to avoid contact with the ritually impure dead body. The Austrian traveller Joseph Rohrer was shocked when he discovered this ritual practice among otherwise rational and “enlightened” Karaites. In his opinion, this tradition inevitably led to a number of people being buried as *Scheintodte* (Germ. “appearing to be dead”) instead of being properly treated or cured medically.⁶⁸

In view of these practices, there was an obvious problem: Who would bury the dead if any contact with a corpse results in such a severe violation of purity laws? For this purpose, dying Karaites were overseen by local Rabbanites, members of the so-called *hevra qaddishah* (“holy confraternity”, in Early Modern period the term referring to a group of morticians who take upon themselves the task of burial of deceased members of the community). Rabbanite morticians were also hired to carry out all the other funeral procedures, such as washing the body of the deceased, carrying the coffin, and performing the interment itself. Karaite relatives of the deceased were allowed to observe the burial only through the cemetery’s fence.⁶⁹ Burials usually took place not more than 24 hours after the death, and the price paid to the *hevra qaddishah* for performing the whole ritual varied between two and four ducats. This price was very high and even the Jewish newspaper *Der Freund* rebuked

⁶⁶ Perhaps in conformity with prescriptions of medieval Karaite sages (Goldberg, *Karaite Liturgy*, 42). It seems that in addition to the Galicians, this rigorous tradition of purification by running water was practised only by the Karaites of Hit (modern Iraq). Even in the mid-twentieth century, members of the Hit community used to immerse themselves in the Euphrates twice a day, before the morning and evening prayers (Simon Szyszman, “Une Visite au Caire,” *Vetus Testamentum* 4:2 (1954): 203-204). Thus, their tradition was still very different from that of the Galicians.

⁶⁷ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 111-113.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 112.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 111-112.

the local Rabbanite hevra qaddishah for demanding too much money from the Karaites.⁷⁰

The problem of carrying out the funeral procedure is reflected in a highly interesting Karaite tale. According to this tale, three pious Karaite merchants from Halicz were away from home, in the market town of Rozdol in the vicinity of Lwów, when one of them, Isaac ben Samuel, died of cholera. Being forbidden by religious law to carry out funerals by themselves, and having no possibility to transfer Isaac back to Halicz, the Karaites had to ask the local Rabbanite hevrah qaddishah to see to the arrangement of it. After some discussion, the local rabbis agreed to bury Isaac in the Rabbanite cemetery on the condition that the Karaite had to be interred outside the cemetery's fence.⁷¹

Because of a conflict with Rabbanite morticians in the mid-nineteenth century, the funeral rites were radically altered. According to Fahn, this conflict took place in 1848, after the death of Samuel ben Levi Leonowicz, the important leader of the community and the brother of the hazzan Abraham Leonowicz.⁷² In the course of the burial, the Rabbanite hevra qaddishah somehow insulted the honour of the deceased. The sources do not specify how they did it, but we may assume that the morticians did not observe all of the necessary funeral rituals. In one of his earlier reports Fahn remarked that Rabbanite morticians, in fact, always desecrated the bodies of dead Karaites as some sort of weird "revenge."⁷³ For some reason this phrase is absent in his later publications.

The Karaites, who somehow found out that the honour of the deceased had been

⁷⁰ D.F., "Pis'mo," 74-75.

⁷¹ Reuven Fahn, *Me-aggadot ha-gera'im* (Vienna, n.d.), 6-8; idem, *Legenden der Karaiten* (Vienna-Warsaw-New-York, 1921), 14-20.

⁷² See his tombstone inscription (Fahn, "Le-qorot," 49, ft.1). In his earlier publication Fahn mistakenly stated that this conflict took place in 1840/1 (Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140).

⁷³ Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

insulted, informed the hazzan. Faced with this problem, Leonowicz was forced to change the religious law. He issued a special taqqanah which permitted the Karaites to inter their dead by themselves. The number of those performing the procedure was not supposed to exceed two persons.⁷⁴ It seems that initially it was not easy for the Karaites to perform this ritual. In order to avoid the impurity of contact with the dead, it was decided that each coffin would have a layer of cotton-wool inside, so that while carrying the coffin to the cemetery, the Karaite morticians would be separated from the body by an additional layer.⁷⁵ Nevertheless, even after this procedure was instituted, the Karaite morticians were supposed to purify themselves with water.⁷⁶ The Karaites usually placed candles at the head and at the feet of a deceased person; their number was supposed to be in accordance with the age of the deceased. The funeral procession was headed by men, followed by the coffin-bearers, and only then by women.⁷⁷

It seems that in the nineteenth century similar changes to the funeral procedure, which allowed the Karaites to perform burials themselves, were accepted in other East European Karaite communities as well.⁷⁸ By the 1920s the Halicz Karaites, apparently under the influence of their Rabbanite neighbours, had developed a tradition of celebrating the so-called *elgen-kinler* (Yidd. *Yortsait*, i.e. a commemoration day) with long and solemn funeral repasts – something that their rigorist eighteenth-century ancestors could hardly have approved.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ Fahn, "Le-qorot," 49; idem, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140. According to one of Fahn's early articles, it was from the Crimea that the Galicians received permission to change their funeral rite (idem, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177).

⁷⁵ I.e. to carry the dead *be-aron tokh aron* (Heb. "in a coffin within a coffin") (Fahn, "Le-qorot," 49, ft.2).

⁷⁶ Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Cf. the funeral rite of the nineteenth- and twentieth-century Israeli, Lithuanian and Crimean Karaite communities in Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 141-174; Traczyk, "Obrzędowość," 73; Kizilov, *Karaites*, 122-123. We possess virtually no data on the funeral rite of the Karaites of Volhynia and Kukizów.

⁷⁹ Jan Grzegorzewski, draft entitled „Pogrzeb” (AN PAN, K III-6, no. 16).

3.1.8. Marriage laws

Traditional Judaism regards marriage as a religious duty. There are considerable differences between Karaite and Rabbanite marriage practices. First of all, the Karaites have different laws of incest. Thus, for example, even a husband's and wife's remote relatives are forbidden to marry each other. Moreover, a marriage between an uncle and a niece (and a marriage between cousins), which is allowed by Rabbanite Judaism, is not permitted in Karaism as relations between an aunt and a nephew are forbidden in the Bible.⁸⁰ In spite of the fact that in many places mixed marriages between Karaites and Rabbanites were allowed, there constantly arose some legal complications, since the Karaite marriage contract (*ketubbah*) and divorce writ (*get*) differed considerably from that of the Talmudic Jews.⁸¹

A highly detailed description of a Karaite wedding in Halicz was left by Reuven Fahn. The author mentions that such weddings took place very rarely – and always attracted much attention in the small town of Halicz. Karaite Street, usually still and empty, was hectic and full of people on a wedding day. Among those who attended the ceremony were not only Karaites, but also local Ashkenazim and Christians. The Karaites delayed the beginning of a marriage ceremony until very late, when most non-Karaites had already left. According to Fahn, the wedding clothes were called *letnike*, whereas *shoshvinim* were called *kum* and *kuma*.⁸² The ceremony was performed under the *huppah* – the wedding canopy – which represents God's

⁸⁰ Lasker, "Karaite Judaism," 1813; Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 143-144, 170, esp.242-244; see also excerpts from Anan ben David in Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, 18-19.

⁸¹ Lasker, "Karaite Judaism," 1815-1816. In Halicz mixed Rabbanite-Karaite marriages were generally forbidden (see more in § 4.2.3 and § 5.1).

⁸² Heb. *shoshvin* / *shoshvinah* – best man / female companion of a bride. In GVKar. usually *sosbin/sosbinlar* (see the description of Z.Zarachowicz's marriage from Dec. 1929: I.Abrahamowicz to S.Szapszał, Polish and Hebrew; Halicz, 22 Dec.1929 in MS LMAB F.142, no. 172a, fols. 14-15). On *kum/kuma* see above.

presence, shelter and protection. The whole ceremony, including benedictions and bridal songs, was in Hebrew, and only the marriage contract itself (Heb. *ketubbah* or *shetar*⁸³ *ketubbah*) was read in Karaim. Before the reading of the marriage contract, the hazzan bestrewed the heads of the bride and bridegroom with ashes and oats (ashes as a symbol of sorrow for the destruction of the Temple, and oats as a symbol of fertility).⁸⁴ The groom was often allowed to make the so-called *shabbat hatan*, which means that he was allowed to read the Sabbath portion from the Torah to the congregation before the beginning of the wedding.⁸⁵

In spite of the fact that the marriage ceremony of the Galician Karaites (as described in these sources) seems to be highly similar to that of the Rabbanite Jews, the local Ashkenazim often found this ceremony to be too primitive. As one of the Rabbanite inhabitants of Halicz informed Joseph Rohrer, the Karaite marriage rite was too plain to be called a proper religious ceremony: “kann man das Religion heißen [?]; so paar einfache Worte!”⁸⁶

3.1.9. Superstitious beliefs.

As has been mentioned, it was generally assumed that the Karaite religious tradition was less susceptible to superstitious beliefs, which were widespread among the Rabbanite Jews. Nevertheless, sources have preserved data concerning some of the Karaite superstitions. According to Ms Janina Eszwowicz, the Karaites normally did not give a name of a still living relative to a new-born child – so that this new-born

⁸³ In GVKar. pronounced also as *setar*; in archaic English *starr* (=credit agreement). See Halicz Karaite *ketubbot* in the Yurchenko MSS.

⁸⁴ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 220-223; idem, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177; idem, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140. Cf. MS LMAB F. 142, no. 172a, fols. 14-15.

⁸⁵ MS LMAB F.142, no. 172a, fols. 14-15. Cf. the Karaite wedding rite in other countries of the world: Beim, *Pamiat’*, 63-81; Tadeusz Kowalski, “Pieśni obrzędowe w narzeczu Karaimów z Trok,” *RO* 3 (1925): 216-254; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 754-755; Nemoy, *Karaite Anthology*, 274-312; by modern Karaite authors (with caution): Traczyk, “Obrzędowość,” 69-72 and Emilia Lebedeva, *Svad’by* (Simferopol’, 2003), 13-53.

⁸⁶ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 116.

child would not push his elder relative into the other world.⁸⁷ In the first half of the twentieth century the famous Polish Orientalist of Galician Karaite origin, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, recorded a few stories and oral traditions told to him by his uncle, hazzan Isaac Abrahamowicz (see on him §5.2). According to Isaac Abrahamowicz, at a certain point (possibly in the seventeenth century, before the arrival of Joseph ha-Mashbir), the community of Halicz was in such a state of religious ignorance that on the holiday of *Yom Kippur* they used to organize races to a figure made of dough. The person who touched the figure first would enjoy the atonement of his sins.⁸⁸ While the local Karaites might certainly have had this sort of irreverent belief related to the Day of Atonement, it seems very unlikely that oral data concerning practices of this type, dating back to the seventeenth century, could have been preserved.

3.2. *The Crimean Karaites and their impact on the religious and everyday life of the Galician community*

3.2.1. *Eighteenth- and nineteenth-century contacts between the Crimean and Galician Karaites.*

Early modern sources attest to active contacts between the Karaites of Galicia with their brethren in Constantinople, Volhynia and Lithuania. Moreover, there are some data on the contacts between the Karaites of Galicia and those of Syria and Palestine.⁸⁹ Surprisingly, it seems that in this period contacts with the Crimean communities were very limited, and the Crimean Karaites seldom visited those of

⁸⁷ Anna Sulimowicz, "Imiona Karaimów z Haliczu," *Awazymyz* 1 (8) (2004), 4.

⁸⁸ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 12-13. Seraja Szapszał mentioned to Tadeusz Kowalski that in the Crimea, on *Yom Kippur*, Karaite parents used to make some sort of bugaboo in order to threaten children who tried to steal dainties (Tadeusz Kowalski, "Zu den türkischen Monatsnamen," *Archiv Orientalní* 2:1 (1930): 6, ft.3).

⁸⁹ In 1735 (or in 1790) a Karaite from Constantinople visited Halicz and Kukizów in order to gather alms for the Karaites of Jerusalem. He had brought to Galicia a letter from the Karaite community of Damask (NLR, F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1866). In 1739/40 the Halicz community gathered 20 gold pieces for the construction of a new Karaite synagogue in Constantinople (Samuel ben Joseph ha-Rodi, hazzan of Halicz, to the Karaite community of Constantinople: NLR, F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1866).

Galicia even for commercial purposes.⁹⁰ This may be explained, first of all, by the remote geographic location of the Crimea. In addition, the Crimean Karaites, who spoke Crimean Tatar and were rather close to the Tatars in their language and everyday practices, were certainly far more distant from their Galician brethren in terms of their cultural and religious traditions. Nevertheless, archival documents show that the communities possessed a good deal of information about each other and that, at least in the first half of the eighteenth century, they were engaged in an active exchange of correspondence.⁹¹

The situation changed somewhat in the eighteenth century, when the poverty-stricken Galician-Volhynian Karaite intellectuals started leaving their ancestral home for the rich Crimean communities in order to improve their financial position. Joshua ben Samuel of Halicz, who married a Karaite woman from Mangup (the Ottoman part of the Crimea) and worked as a teacher in the religious school in this Crimean town, was perhaps the first Galician emigrant to the Crimea.⁹² His example was followed by Mordecai ben Nisan, the leading Karaite sage at Kukizów. He left Galicia in 1709 with the intention of settling in the Crimea with his son Nisan, but never reached his destination. According to later sources, he was invited to the Crimea to publish his major exegetical oeuvre there.⁹³ Apparently, he was killed somewhere on his way to the Crimea. In spite of the fact that the precise date and circumstances of his death remain unclear, according to later Crimean Karaite tradition, he was killed by the Rabbanites of Halicz, who bitterly hated him and who destroyed the manuscript of his

⁹⁰ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 742, 758, 1185-1187, 1268-1280, 1284-1297.

⁹¹ E.g. Mordecai b. Samuel Segan of Halicz to Judah b. Isaac of Çufut-Qale, 1732 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1575); Samuel b. Joseph of Halicz to Isaac b. Moses Çelebi-Sinani of Çufut-Qale, 1734 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1734).

⁹² He was buried in the Karaite cemetery of Mangup in 1705 (Firkowicz, *Avne Zikkaron*, Mangup section, no. 60).

⁹³ Franz Dombrovski [Dąbrowski], "Krymsko-karaimskie predaniia," *Sankt-Peterburgskie vedomosti* 39 (1853): 154.

work.⁹⁴ According to other, more reliable, reports, he was murdered by some unknown brigands.⁹⁵

Mordecai's attempt to leave Galicia for the Crimea did not pass unnoticed. In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries many other important Karaite savants left Galicia and Volhynia to seek financial profit and scholarly recognition in the rather ignorant but very rich Crimean communities. Among them were such famous scholars from Volhynia as Simcha-Isaac Łucki, Abraham Firkowicz, and the Sułtański brothers, as well as David Kukizów and Joseph-Solomon Łucki from Galicia.⁹⁶ In the nineteenth century, with further development of trade routes and communication in Europe, contacts between the Crimean and Galician communities became much more active. As has been mentioned above, the wealthy and prosperous Crimean community often endeavoured to accord financial and intellectual support to the tiny isolated Galician qehilah. According to Joseph Rohrer already at the beginning of the nineteenth century the Galicians were visited annually by a Crimean Karaite who brought them religious literature printed in the Crimea.⁹⁷ Indeed, the local community, which possessed at that time only manuscript prayer-books, was very happy to obtain printed works coming from the Karaite press in the Crimea.⁹⁸

Communication between the two communities became much easier in the second half of the nineteenth century. The Crimean community was usually the first to be addressed in the event of natural disasters, which often threatened the well-being of the Galician community. It was rich Crimean Karaite sponsors who financed the

⁹⁴ Ibid.

⁹⁵ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 588-589, 739.

⁹⁶ Dan Shapira, "Some New Data on the Karaites in Wolhynia and Galicia in the 18th Century," in *Karaimy Halycha*, 15.

⁹⁷ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 116.

⁹⁸ On this unique Karaite printing house, the only Karaite press in the world, which functioned in the Crimea (Çufut Qale and Gözleve/Eupatoria) from the 1730s until 1917, see Philip Miller, "Agenda in Karaite Printing in the Crimea During the Middle Third of the Nineteenth Century," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 20 (1998): 82-88; idem, "Prayer Book Politics," *Studies in Bibliography and Booklore* 18 (1993): 15-26.

restoration of the Halicz synagogue and the Karaites' houses, destroyed in the conflagrations of 1830, 1866, and 1913.⁹⁹ The Crimeans, as has been mentioned, provided the Karaite community of Kukizów with the money necessary to cover the Karaites's debt to the local landlord.¹⁰⁰ The Crimean Karaites also helped individual Galician Karaites who were facing serious financial difficulties, as in the case of an unnamed Karaite of Halicz who fell ill and ran into debt. His house burnt down and he himself was sent to the debtors' prison. In his petition to Simcha Babowicz, this Karaite asked for some money to pay his debts. He mentioned that Babowicz and the *gevir* Joseph ben Simcha Mangubi had helped his Galician co-religionist in the same situation in 1844.¹⁰¹

In the 1850s, at the time of the War in the East,¹⁰² the Crimean community financed another important project: the publication of the first printed prayer-book according to the *minhag* (=custom) of the Galician Karaite community. Already in the eighteenth century,¹⁰³ and especially in the 1820s, the Galician Karaites were obsessed with the idea of printing Karaite manuscripts in their own land. In 1822 David Kukizów wrote a few letters to the Crimean communities requesting help in publishing a few Karaite manuscripts in Galicia (most likely in Vienna or Lwów). He planned to print 500 copies of a volume comprising three Karaite exegetical manuscripts at a price of 2 silver rubles and 52-53 kopeks per copy. He expected to print more books afterwards, and hoped that some of the copies would be sold to

⁹⁹ GAARK, f.241, op.1, no. 1864; Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 13; KS 6 (1914): 15; "Karaimy g. Galicha," KS 9-10 (1914): 24; cf. § 2.1.5.

¹⁰⁰ See § 2.2.1.

¹⁰¹ The Yurchenko MSS, letter to Simcha Babowicz of 1845 (Hebrew).

¹⁰² This is what the Crimean war was called in the 1850s.

¹⁰³ Mordecai b. Samuel Segan of Halicz to Judah b. Isaac of Çufut-Qale, 1732 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1575); Samuel b. Joseph of Halicz to Isaac b. Moses Çelebi-Sinani of Çufut-Qale, 1734 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1734). Both letters contain the suggestion to print a Karaite *siddur* in one of the Rabbanite printing houses of Galicia. The Crimean leadership, however, rejected this proposal and organized their own press in Çufut-Qale, where the first Karaite prayer-book was printed in 1734.

learned Rabbanites.¹⁰⁴ In the same year, though, David left Kukizów for the Crimea without finishing his printing project.

The idea of publishing a prayer-book for the Galician community surfaced again in the 1830s-40s. At that time the head of the Halicz community, Abraham Leonowicz, tried to print Karaite prayer-books and some other manuscripts in Austria – a project which would be realized only after his death by his son, Joseph Leonowicz. In 1846 Abraham Leonowicz asked permission from the local Austrian authorities to import Karaite prayer-books from the Crimea. It seems that this was refused, even though the Crimean prayer-books had been passed by the censor.¹⁰⁵

Until the 1850s, the Galician Karaites continued using either self-designed manuscript prayer-books or prayer-books printed by the Karaite presses in the Crimea. This was not very expedient since both manuscripts and Crimean books were highly expensive and rare. The modest budget of the community, however, did not allow the Galicians to publish Karaite prayer-books in their home country. In the 1850s, though, under the aegis of hazzan Joseph Leonowicz, the members of the community ventured to publish their own prayer-books. Help from wealthy Crimean Karaites enabled the Galicians to realize this project, and the four-volume *Seder tefillot ha-Qara'im* appeared in Vienna from 1854 to 1857. The publication was sponsored by Moses Tongur, who was the mayor of the important Crimean port of Eupatoria,¹⁰⁶ whereas the editorial work was done by the Galician Karaite Isaac ha-

¹⁰⁴ NLR F.946, Evr.II A, nos. 1822, 1823. Both letters were written on a leaf with a galley of one page from Aaron b. Joseph's *Sefer ha-Mivhar* with *Ma'amar Mordecai*, i.e. the supercommentary by Mordecai b. Nisan Kukizów. The origin of this galley is unclear; it does not seem to be from the Çufut-Qale press. We may therefore assume that this was one of the first pages from the book that David Kukizów intended to print in Galicia. It was, apparently sent to the typesetter, but never fully published.

¹⁰⁵ Abraham Leonowicz to Judah ben Moses Magas, the hazzan of Łuck, Halicz, 27 Aug. 1846 (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 900, fol. 2r).

¹⁰⁶ See more on him in Kizilov, *Karaites*, 226. The prayer-book was published at the time of the Crimean war (1853-1856), which was not a particularly suitable period for such an activity. One may suggest that Tongur most likely sent his financial support before the beginning of the war.

Bachor (=the young one) ben Solomon Ickowicz, with assistance from the Rabbanite scholar Solomon (Zalman) Stern. Some of Leonowicz's religious hymns were published in this, the first and only Karaite prayer-book printed specifically for the needs of the Galician community.¹⁰⁷

3.2.2. *The visit of Abraham Firkowicz to Halicz in 1871 and his attempt to change the religious traditions of the community.*

Abraham Firkowicz (1787-1874), one of the most important figures in Karaite history, had had long and intimate contacts with the Galician Karaites since his early years. His correspondence with members of the Galician community began at the latest in the 1810s and lasted until the end of his days;¹⁰⁸ moreover, he had relatives in Halicz.¹⁰⁹ He even claimed to be descendant of two most important Galician Karaite families, those of Abraham ha-Shofet of Kukizów and Joseph ha-Mashbir of Halicz.¹¹⁰ In his quest for the origins of Karaite settlement in Eastern Europe he sent a few enquiries to Halicz as well.¹¹¹ For some unknown reasons, though, he did not like the local "Daniel" version of the Karaites' arrival in Europe, and did not include it in his most important book, *Avne Zikkaron*.¹¹²

It was only in 1871, however, three years before his death, that Firkowicz managed to pay a personal visit to Galicia and its Karaite inhabitants. While on a

¹⁰⁷ *Seder tefillot ha-Qara'im*, ed. Isaak b. Solomon Ickowicz and Solomon Stern, sumptem Moses Tongur, 4 vols. (Vienna, 1854-1857).

¹⁰⁸ Especially interesting is his correspondence with the Galician hazzanim, Abraham Leonowicz and Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640; NLR F.946, op.1, no. 675, fol. 1r).

¹⁰⁹ Sulamith, widow of Isaac of Halicz, mentioned that Firkowicz was her nephew from his mother's side (1822; NLR F.946, op.1, no. 722, fol. 1). Moreover, his father, Samuel b. Solomon Firkowicz, also conducted correspondence with the Galician Karaites (NLR F.946, op.1, nos. 807, 809).

¹¹⁰ See his genealogical notes in NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.162/2, fols.1, 3r, 13r; cf. *ibid.*, no. 1861, fol.1, left margin.

¹¹¹ See the answer to his enquiry by Elisha b. Elijah Leonowicz (1866). Later this letter remained in the hands of a certain Professor Kardo from the town of Krasna (Podolia, Ukraine) and was published by Menahem Nahum Litinski, "Le-qorot ha-qara'im be-Rusia," *Ha-Magid* 8 (22 Feb. 1894): 65-66.

¹¹² Firkowicz requested a copy of Abraham Leonowicz's chronicle related to the arrival of the Karaites in Halicz, and was therefore perfectly well informed about the "Daniel" version (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 898). See more in § 4.1.2.

European tour with his wife, Sulamith, he stayed for a few weeks in Łuck and in Halicz. In Łuck he was received by the Galician Karaite Simcha ben Joshua-Jacob Leonowicz (hazzan in Łuck from 1871 to 1876 and in Halicz from 1894 to 1900), who composed a special poem in Hebrew dedicated to Firkowicz and his arrival. There he compared Firkowicz with the patriarch Abraham – a comparison which would be later used by many Russian authors and scholars. This poem was recited in the Łuck synagogue before the whole Karaite congregation.¹¹³

Having remained for a while in Łuck, Abraham Firkowicz and his young wife travelled to Halicz, where they spent about six weeks. During his stay in that town, Firkowicz composed a special poetic appraisal of the local community in Hebrew.¹¹⁴ While in Halicz, the Karaite patriarch did not miss the opportunity to acquire local Karaite manuscripts. It seems that most of the Karaite documents of Galician provenance which are now kept in the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg were gathered by Firkowicz during his visit to Łuck and Halicz in 1871. Especially important among them were autographs of treatises by Abraham Leonowicz and Joseph ben Samuel ha-Mashbir.¹¹⁵

While staying in the community, whose leaders apparently highly esteemed the authority of the famous Karaite savant from the Crimea, Firkowicz surveyed local religious traditions and practices. He was displeased to find that many local traditions

¹¹³ NLR F.946, op.1, no. 241.

¹¹⁴ NLR F.946, op.1, no. 246. Hebrew, Firkowicz's autograph, 1871, 1 fol. Composed in Halicz in the house of the hazzan Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz.

¹¹⁵ Let me list below the most important. NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 163/5: Abraham Leonowicz, *Kaf nahat* (a commentary on Mordecai b. Nisan's supercommentary on Aaron b. Joseph's *Sefer ha-Mivhar*) and *Ke-khol ha-katuv* (a treatise on punctuation and vowel signs). Both finished in 1838 and copied in 1871 by Levi b. Joseph Leonowicz. NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640: A.Leonowicz to A.Firkowicz (10 letters, 17 fols.), Halicz, 1818-1838. NLR F.946, Evr. II A, no.2874: Leonowicz's poem given to Samuel b. Isaac on the occasion of his becoming circumciser (=mohe), Halicz. Ibid., no. 162/2: collection of notes, poems, and prayers by Joseph ha-Mashbir (Heb. and GVKar.). Ibid., no. 1715: Joseph ha-Mashbir, draft version of *Porat Yosef* (Decoration of Joseph). Ibid., no. 1742: Joseph ha-Mashbir, draft of the letter to Mordecai b. Nisan Kukizów, 1690s, unfinished. Ibid., no. 164/7: Joseph ha-Mashbir to Mordecai b. Nisan Kukizów, 1699, 2 fols. Ibid., no. 164/4: Joseph ha-Mashbir, *Pirkei Yosef* (Heb. and GVKar). Ibid., no. 1860: Joseph ha-Mashbir, adaptation of Kaleb Afendopulo's *Gan ha-melekh*.

considerably diverged from those of the Crimean Karaites, evidently under the influence of the customs of the local Slavic and Rabbanite population. In order to improve the state of religious knowledge of the Galician community, Firkowicz issued a series of *taqqanot* (regulations) related mostly to the marriage ceremony, betrothal, and the rite of circumcision.¹¹⁶

Firkowicz started his *taqqanot* with a few biblical passages showing how modest and strict marriages and circumcisions were in ancient biblical times, without noisy and elaborate feasts and drinking (Heb. *bli shum mishteh ve-seudah*¹¹⁷). Then he compared those pious times with the contemporary situation in Polish and Lithuanian Karaite communities, which he found absolutely unacceptable and contradictory to the Biblical prescriptions.¹¹⁸ In short, he suggested the following reforms. First, all the aforementioned religious ceremonies (circumcision, betrothal, and marriage) should *not* be accompanied by a long and loud feast. The wine should be consumed *only* for religious purposes, and the ceremonies should normally be completed by drinking just *one* glass of wine and eating just *one* spoonful of a sweet dessert.¹¹⁹ During wedding and circumcision ceremonies, the local Karaites should completely abandon the tradition of having *kum/kuma* and *druzhka/druzhko*¹²⁰ as unacceptable innovations borrowed from their Christian neighbours. *Druzhki* were supposed to be replaced by traditional Jewish *shoshvinim/shoshvinot* (best men / female companions of a bride).¹²¹

¹¹⁶ "Taqqanot Even Reshef"; see Firkowicz's autograph of the *taqqanot* in NLR F.946, op.1, no. 47. Printed version contains an additional document from Halicz with a list of the members of the community (cf. Appendix 1.5).

¹¹⁷ Hence GVKar. *suuda*.

¹¹⁸ "Taqqanot Even Reshef," 2-4.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 8 and passim.

¹²⁰ Firkowicz transcribed these Slavic loanwords with Hebrew characters: קומא \ קום and דרוזקא \ דרוזקו. In modern Russ. *druzhka* means "a best man" during a marriage. A twentieth century Troki Karaite used the Polish terms *druhna* and *drużba* for this purpose (Traczyk, "Obrzędowość," 71-72). On the term *kum/kuma* see §3.1.8.

¹²¹ "Taqqanot Even Reshef," 4, 10.

Both circumcision and marriage should take place in the private houses of those involved in these ceremonies, and not in a synagogue. The *huppah* (wedding canopy) should be placed in the house of the bride, and not in a synagogue. Firkowicz explained this regulation by the fact that the synagogue was a sacred place with holy books which might be desecrated if a woman entering a synagogue during the wedding commenced her menstruation.¹²² Furthermore, the hair of the bride, contrary to the contemporary Rabbanite custom, should not be shaved off. Moreover, wearing two earlocks,¹²³ which was customary among the Talmudic Jews, also should not be permitted. Firkowicz quoted the Biblical prescription concerning “not rounding the corners of the head” (Lev. 19:27) and suggested that a pious Karaite should wear five earlocks instead of two. Indeed, the wearing of two earlocks, a custom typical of European Rabbanite Jewry, was absolutely unacceptable in the Karaite tradition. Firkowicz’s emphasis on the necessity of abstaining from wearing two earlocks suggests that some Galician Karaites accepted this tradition from their Rabbanite neighbours. According to Fahn, the Karaite traditionalists of Halicz continued wearing earlocks even in the 1890s.¹²⁴

Firkowicz also determined the amount of money to be paid to the hazzan and the synagogue for performing rituals.¹²⁵ A person who did not observe the taqqanot was to be excommunicated from the Karaite qehilah, and was not to be allowed to enter the synagogue, nor receive properly slaughtered animals and any other religious objects. According to Firkowicz, the Karaites who lived in Eastern Europe in early

¹²² Ibid., 8. One of Fahn’s novels described the situation when Shelomit, a Karaite woman of Halicz, desecrated the local synagogue by her menstrual blood. The hazzan required purification by the removal of the plaster from the walls and the part of the floor where she had stood. It is unclear whether this novel was based on a real case or was merely the fruit of Fahn’s fantasy (Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 210-212).

¹²³ Heb. *peiot ha-rosh*; Yid. *peyes*, hence Russ. *peisy*.

¹²⁴ Reuven Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3: 22 (1894): 177.

¹²⁵ “Taqqanot Even Reshef,” 10-11.

modern times borrowed many “improper” traditions from their Slavic neighbours. The Karaites of Muslim lands (the Crimea, Turkey, Egypt, the Near East), in turn, had adopted many “vicious” practices of their Ishmaelite (i.e. Muslim) neighbours. Nevertheless, in contrast to the East European Karaites, who remained exposed to Slavic cultural influence, the Karaite communities of Muslim lands soon improved their morality and prohibited all deviations from the Karaite religious norm already by the first half of the nineteenth century.¹²⁶ Finally, Firkowicz stressed again the necessity of observing the mitsvah of daily prayer, keeping the synagogue and the cemetery in good order, and improving the level of education for children. For the latter purpose Firkowicz suggested building a special *Talmud Torah* (=religious school) for Karaite children.¹²⁷ In spite of the fact that observing many of these *taqqanot* represented quite a considerable difficulty, the members of the community unanimously agreed to follow Firkowicz’s regulations.¹²⁸

3.2.3. Crimean-Galician Karaite contacts after 1871.

What was the outcome of Firkowicz’s attempt to change local religious traditions? In spite of the fact that the community agreed to follow Firkowicz’s instructions in 1871,¹²⁹ it seems that practically none of his *taqqanot* were observed. According to later reports, in contrast to the local intellectual leaders, ordinary Galician Karaites welcomed neither Firkowicz, nor his innovations.¹³⁰ Abstaining from wearing two earlocks and not shaving the bride’s hair were, perhaps, the only *taqqanot* that were observed. However, this could have happened without Firkowicz’s influence, in the

¹²⁶ Ibid., 4-5.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 13-14.

¹²⁸ See the full list of those who signed their names under the *taqqanot* in *ibid.*, 13-15.

¹²⁹ See the list of the Karaites who signed Firkowicz’s *taqqanot* in Appendix 1.5. The *taqqanot* were signed by 46 Karaites, i.e. practically by all adult male members of the community.

¹³⁰ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 13.

wake of a general laicization of Karaite mores in Galicia.

By the end of the nineteenth century, most of Firkowicz's prescriptions were simply disregarded: marriages and circumcisions still took place in the synagogue, in the presence of *kum* and *kuma*. Both ceremonies were followed by solemn receptions, with many guests and, apparently, excessive consumption of wine. Thus, even if one assumes that Firkowicz's taqqanot were observed at all, by the end of the nineteenth century the "vicious" influence of Christian and Rabbanite society turned out to be stronger than the authority of the Crimean religious rigorist. It seems that the fact that Firkowicz actually did not have any administrative power within the East European Karaite community may have also contributed to the failure of his reform. During his visit to Troki (Lithuania) in 1871 Firkowicz tried to introduce similar sorts of reforms in the local Karaite community, but also without any apparent success.¹³¹ Nevertheless, his taqqanot remain a highly important and informative source on the state of religiosity of the Galician Karaites in the second half of the nineteenth century.¹³²

At the end of the nineteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century, local Karaites, potential candidates for religious leadership in the community, were given the possibility to study Karaite religious tradition in the Crimea. Shalom Nowachowicz and Zarach Zarachowicz, undoubtedly two of the most educated Karaite leaders of the Galician community in the first half of the twentieth century, received their education in religious colleges in the Crimea.¹³³ At the beginning of the

¹³¹ Tapani Harviainen, Haseeb Shehadeh, Harry Halén, "The Samaritan and Karaim Commitment to Minyan, Abraham Firkovich, and the Poor of Trakai," *Studia Orientalia* 82 (1997): 92-94; idem, "Abraham Firkovich as Collector of Dispersed Minorities and Their Manuscripts in the Light of His Archive in St. Petersburg," *Jewish Studies* 39 (1999): 103-104.

¹³² Even in the 1930s Galician Karaite authors were reading and studying Firkowicz's taqqanot, although none of them really followed and observed the prescriptions of the Crimean patriarch (see Zarach Zarachowicz, "Konaklyhy Hadzy-Babanyn Halicte," *KA* 1-2 (1938): 6-8). The language of this publication is highly interesting – GVKar. with numerous Slavic and Hebrew loanwords.

¹³³ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 539, 547; Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 14.

twentieth century many Galician Karaites could not overcome the temptation to leave provincial Halicz for the radiance of the prosperous Crimea – and thus made their ancestral community even smaller.¹³⁴ It seems that in this period the rich and populous Crimean community represented for the Galicians the only hope of a potential physical and financial renaissance.

After 1917-1920, when the Crimea became part of Soviet Russia, the wealthy local community, which partially emigrated to Turkey and France, could not accord any help to the Galician community. With many of them being convicted and killed by the Soviets, or facing the problem of survival in the rather unfriendly emigration, the Crimean Karaites could not assist their religious brethren in Eastern Europe any longer. Those who remained in the Crimea were largely forced to abandon their religion, language, and ethnic culture, and become faithful followers of the Soviet ideological machine. Thus, after 1917 there disappeared the only source of hope and financial support for the Galician community – the help of the wealthy Crimean Karaites. While there was virtually no interaction between the Crimean and Galician Karaites in the interwar period, their contacts were re-established after the end of the Second World War, when Galicia and the Crimea found themselves within the borders of the same state, the Soviet Union.

¹³⁴ Schreiber, *Badania*, 5-6.

Chapter 4. The Karaites and Their Neighbours: Relations with the Christian Population and with the Rabbanite Jews.

4.1. *The Karaites and the Slavic population (Poles and Ruthenians)*

4.1.1. *Everyday interaction*

We do not have that hatred towards the 'goim' (infidels). We live in perfect peace with peasants and with all Christians. Everyone is our neighbour and we love him as God commands us.

Samuel Mordkowicz to the Polish traveller Grzegorz Smólski.¹

The Slavs (the Ruthenians² and the Poles) and the Rabbanite Jews represented the majority of the population of Galicia from 1772 to 1918. In 1910, for example, the Ruthenians constituted 62% of the population of Eastern Galicia, the Poles – 25%, and the Rabbanite Jews – 12%.³ The population of the largest cities of the area (Lwów, Stanisławów, Brody, and Kołomyja) was largely Polish and Jewish, whereas the small towns and villages were predominantly Ruthenian. In some cases there was no strict division between the Poles and the Ruthenians because of the fact that many Ruthenians living in the cities were assimilated by Polish culture, whereas many Poles living in rural areas, on the contrary, were culturally and linguistically closer to the Ruthenians. Furthermore, there existed a few transitional groups with mixed ethnic

¹ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 523.

² For more details on the difference between the Ruthenians and Ukrainians, see Ch. 4, ft. 22 and §4.1.2, 5.3.1.

³ Bihl, "Ruthenen," 561; Ivan Rudnytsky, "The Ukrainians in Galicia under Austrian Rule," *Austrian History Yearbook* 3:2 (1967): 400. The whole Polish population of Austria was 4,967,984 souls (9,9%) in 1910 (Henryk Batowski, "Die Polen," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol.3:1, 526). There were 3.2 million Ruthenians and 871,895 Rabbanites in Galicia in 1910 (Bihl, "Die Ruthenen," 560; idem, "Die Juden," in *Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848-1918*, vol. 3:2, 882). In some Galician towns (Brody, Buczacz, Stanisławów, Kołomyja) the Jewish population constituted as much as 50-70% in 1900 (ibid., 885).

self-identity. Among them were the so-called *Latynnyky* (Roman Catholics of Ruthenian origin; many were subsequently Polonized); Polish-speaking Ruthenian Greek Catholics; Polish colonists (the Poles living in Ruthenian villages).⁴

The Ruthenians, Poles, and Rabbanite Jews represented the Karaites' immediate ethnic neighbours, with whom they were engaged in constant everyday contact and under whose influence they *volens nolens* came. Furthermore, a few less well known ethno-religious groups lived in Halicz in the nineteenth century and in the interwar period. Among them were the Hassidic Jews, *Latynnyky*, *Subbotniki* (Slavic converts to Judaism), Russian Old Believers (*Starovery*), and certain Judeo-Catholics (possibly Frankists).⁵ The towns of Halicz and Kukizów were predominantly Ruthenian and Jewish.⁶ Nevertheless, it was usually the Poles, the minority in these two towns, who represented the administration.

Use of Yiddish, wearing of traditional Jewish dress, engagement in money-lending and petty trade, elaborate and solemn celebration of the Sabbath – these were the features that drastically differentiated the Ashkenazic Jews from the local Karaite and Slavic population. Most travel descriptions and official accounts agree that the Karaim-, Polish- and Ruthenian-speaking Galician Karaites, with their active involvement in agriculture and physical work in many respects were certainly much closer to their Gentile neighbours than to the Ashkenazim.

There were a few features that evoked a justifiable sympathy for the Karaites on the part of the surrounding Slavs. As the earliest Austrian reports after the annexation of Galicia state, already by that time most Galician Karaites did not wear any

⁴ Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy*, xx.

⁵ If the presence of the Hassidim and *Latynnyky* in Halicz is well attested, other “exotic” sectarian groups (*Starovery*, *Subbotniki*, and Frankists) are mentioned only in one interwar report (Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13).

⁶ This is according to the interwar statistics, which also reflect the situation before 1918 (Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy*, 48, 82).

distinctive clothing. According to these sources, their dress was similar to that of the local Polish and Ruthenian population. Moreover, the Karaites used to cut their hair and even shaved their beards – again, in contrast to the local Ashkenazim.⁷ According to these reports, Karaite women usually wore white clothes, which differed radically from the many-coloured dresses of the Ashkenazic women.⁸

Nevertheless, there is no doubt that these early Austrian sources, composed, evidently, after a rather brief acquaintance with the Karaites, were not entirely objective. As more observant later authors inform us, Karaite society was split into two distinct groups – “traditionalists” and “modernists.” The “traditionalist” Karaites continued wearing long dark clothes, ear locks, tallit qatan, long beards – and looked exactly like their Talmudic neighbours.⁹ The “modernist” Karaites, however, looked exactly like the local Polish and Ruthenian peasants. Long beards were, perhaps, the only distinctive feature of these “secular” Galician Karaites.¹⁰ Moreover, Karaites women were also divided into two groups. “Secular” Karaite women looked like the Slavic ones, whereas “traditionalist” women shaved their hair and wore wigs (undoubtedly, under the influence of the customs of their Rabbanite neighbours).¹¹

A few words should be said about the anthropological type of the Galician Karaites. Grzegorz Smólski noticed that some Karaites represented the “pure Semitic type,” whereas others were “much less Semitic.”¹² Indeed, two main types were generally represented among the Galician Karaites: 1) Karaites with dark hair, eyes, skin, and apparent Semitic (or Oriental) features; 2) Karaites with anthropological

⁷ HK IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784, Doc.1494, Gehorsamster Bericht; HR NK 5, Konv.5, I Abteilung, fol. 475v, 12^{mo}.

⁸ Kronbach, “Ueber die karaitischen Juden,” 531.

⁹ D.F., “Pis’mo,” 75; “Taqqanot Even Reshef,” 8-9; Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3: 22 (1894): 177; idem, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

¹⁰ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 146; Gerson Wolf, *Die Juden* (Vienna-Teschen, 1883), in *Die Völker Oesterreich-Ungarns*, vol.7, 95-97.

¹¹ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

¹² Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 538, 547. Cf. the photos taken by B. Janusz before WWI (Janusz, *Karaici*, 15, 16, 19, 25; see Illustrations, figs. 9.5, 9.6).

features similar to those of the local Slavs (fair complexion, straight nose, light hair, etc.). Some authors considered these Semitic features, which were especially noticeable in the Karaite women, to be typical of the Caucasian or even Mongolian peoples.¹³

Karaite children, who were studied by Witold Schreiber at the beginning of the twentieth century, possessed 42,1% features similar to those of the local Christians, 26,3% were close to the local Rabbanites, and 31,5% had their own anthropological features, peculiar only to the Karaites. Among these typically “Karaite” features were large protruding noses and dark complexion, somewhat similar to the southern Italians.¹⁴ As we will show later, results of Schreiber’s anthropological study seem to be much more reliable than those of his later contemporary, Corrado Gini.¹⁵ Generally speaking, according to some scholars, despite their Semitic anthropological features the Karaites differed from the local Ashkenazim first of all by the lack of something that these anthropologists described as the “ghetto expression” typical of the European Rabbanite Jews.¹⁶ This is how, for example, Smólski portrayed the shammash Samuel Mordkowicz: “A man in his forties, with thick black hair and beard, of exclusively Semitic appearance, having, however, nothing in common with a Polish Jew-Hasid either in his speech, or in his demeanour.”¹⁷

Sources also attest that the Karaites evoked the goodwill of the local Slavs by their marriage traditions. In contrast to the Rabbanites, who often married off their

¹³ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 147. This, perhaps, may be explained by a general tendency of some later Rabbanite authors to present the Karaites as some sort of “degraded” Jews with Mongolian features (cf. Ephraim Deinard, *Massa Qerim* (Warsaw, 1878)).

¹⁴ Schreiber, *Badania*; Janusz, “Dzieci Karaitów,” 120-121.

¹⁵ The results of Corrado Gini’s anthropological research in Halicz in 1934 will be discussed in § 6.3.

¹⁶ “Nie znajdujemy u Karaimów tego wyrazu twarzy ‘getto’ właściwego żydom...” (Julian Talko-Hryniewicz, *Karaimi vel Karaici Litewscy: zarys antropologo-etnologiczny* (Kraków, 1903), 56).

¹⁷ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 538. This traveller’s description may also be compared with Mordkowicz’s photo, where the latter is holding a flag with the Star of David in his hands (*ibid.*, 483 and Illustrations, fig.3.3).

children at a very early age (16 or younger for women, and 18 for men),¹⁸ the Karaites married off their offspring when they were already adults (20 years old for women and 30 for men).¹⁹ What was even more important, the Karaites were distinguished from the Yiddish-speaking Rabbanites by their good knowledge of Polish and Ruthenian, the languages of their Slavic neighbours. Any inquisitive visitor to Galicia immediately noticed this positive feature. Joseph Rohrer (1803) mentioned Shalom Zacharjasiewicz's good command of Polish – and added that he spoke it without making a wry face, as was usually done by the Talmudic Jews.²⁰ Grzegorz Smólski (1903) remarked that most of the Karaites whom he met in Halicz could speak quite correct Polish, with pure pronunciation and “without Jewishness” (Pol. *bez żydowienia*).²¹

In addition to a comparatively good command of Polish, most Galician Karaites, it seems, possessed an even better command of the local Ruthenian dialect of the Ukrainian language, usually called in the sources “ruska/prosta mowa” or “die ruthenische Sprache.”²² From the standpoint of modern linguistics, the dialect spoken by the inhabitants of present-day Western Ukraine (at that time Habsburg Austria and, later, interwar Poland), is so different from the official modern Ukrainian language, that it may be best described as the “Ruthenian dialect of Ukrainian.” To facilitate the terminology, I will use the abridged form of this designation, and call the dialect

¹⁸ Ruppin, *Jewish Fate*, 82.

¹⁹ Goehlert, “Karaiten,” 602; Janusz, *Karaici*, 72; Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 291.

²⁰ Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 109-110. Cf. Rohrer, *Versuch*, 145-148; Grzegorzewski, “Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt,” 2.

²¹ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 538.

²² Even at the beginning of the twentieth century, the Galician “Ruthenen” usually called themselves “rusyny/rusnaky” and “narod rus’kyi.” At that period the term “Ukrainians” was used to denote only a small part of the “ruthenischen oder kleinrussischen Volkes” (Michael Moser, “Das Ukrainische (‘Ruthenische’) der galizischen Polen und Polonophilen zwischen 1830 und 1848/1849,” *Zeitschrift für Slawische Philologie* 62:2 (2003): 312, ft. 3; cf. Roman Szporluk, “The Making of Modern Ukraine: The Western Dimension,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25:1/2 (2001): 63-65; Wolf Moskovich, “Galicia and Bukovina under Austrian Rule and After,” *Jews and Slavs* 9 (2001): 227-228).

“Ruthenian.”²³ It is of interest that even the Karaites themselves sometimes called this dialect the “Rusyn” language.²⁴

Grzegorz Smólski explained the Karaites’ good command of Ruthenian by their constant commercial and everyday contacts with the local Rusyn population (Pol. *lud ruski*) that inhabited Halicz and the surrounding villages.²⁵ These contacts influenced some of the Karaites’ ordinary traditions and customs, their dress, and the local variety of the Karaim language.²⁶ Thus, for example, according to Smólski, Rachel Eszwowicz looked exactly like an ordinary peasant woman from Eastern Galicia. Furthermore, she even sang to the journalist a few folk-songs “po rusku” and in Polish.²⁷ The Galician Karaite poet Zechariah Isaac Abrahamowicz (1878-1903) often took inspiration from well-known Polish songs and, moreover, composed a few verses in Ruthenian.²⁸ Not only secular, but even religious poetry was sometimes sung to the melodies of Slavic folk-songs.²⁹

4.1.2. *The intellectual dimension: the Karaites and the Ruthenian Russophiles*

In the 1780s, soon after the annexation of Galicia, Joseph II introduced a number of legislative innovations which partly limited the authority of the local Polish nobility

²³ Cf. Michael Moser, “Die Entwicklung der ukrainischen Sprache,” in *Ukraine. Geographie. Ethnische Struktur. Geschichte*, ed. Peter Jordan *et al.* (Vienna, 2001), 488.

²⁴ Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz (1831) remarked that he was going to buy salt in the place called in the “Rusyn language *hurmania*” (הנק' בלשון רוסין הורמניא) (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1631, fol. 2v).

²⁵ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 538.

²⁶ For an analysis of the phonetic and semantic influence of the local Slavic languages on the GVKar see Mikhail Kizilov, “Faithful Unto Death: Language, Tradition, and the Disappearance of the East European Karaite Communities,” *East European Jewish Affairs* 36:1 (2006): 76-77; Grzegorzewski, “Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt,” 23-29.

²⁷ Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 565.

²⁸ Cf. his “Hanuz karajlar eksilmed” (The Karaites are not extinct yet) and the Polish hymn “Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła”; “Uflu titinbe” (With heavy smoke) and “Z dymem pożarów” (see “Hanuz karajlar eksilmid,” *MK* 1 (1924): 18-19; “Zecharja Abrahamowicznin tiziwleri,” *KA* 2 (1931): 24-29; Pushyk, “Karaïms’kyi poet”).

²⁹ One of Abraham Leonowicz’s poems was sung according to the melody of the Ukrainian song “Цілий світ зійшов” (Grzegorzewski, “Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt,” 72).

(*szlachta*) and gave some minor autonomous rights to the inhabitants of villages.³⁰

With the introduction of Joseph's policy of religious and ethnic tolerance, the local Ruthenian population received a foundation for the development of their national feelings, language, culture, and identity. The university of Lwów, where Latin, German, and Polish were used as the languages of instruction, was opened in 1784. It seems that the Ruthenian language sometimes was also used there.³¹ A renaissance in the Ruthenian national movement started in the 1830s with the rise of the so-called "Russophile" movement in Galicia. From the standpoint of today, when Galicia represents a centre of the most radical anti-Russian Ukrainian nationalism, it is quite difficult to imagine that in the nineteenth century this region nourished an enthusiastic nationalist movement which in its essence was explicitly pro-Russian. Surprisingly, the Karaites had virtually no interaction with Galician intellectuals with *Ukrainian* ethnic self-identification. Perhaps, unlike the Russophiles, the latter did not find anything relevant for their political and nationalist agenda in an obscure ethnic group of non-Talmudic Jews living in their country.

The Russophiles (also ironically called *Moskvophiles* or, disparagingly, *Moskalophiles*) were representatives of the Ruthenian intellectual elite, who struggled against the growing Germanisation and Polonisation of the local Ruthenian population. They placed special emphasis upon the necessity of studying Galician history, culture, and traditions to counteract this. In passing, it is important to say a few words about the linguistic agenda of the movement. While considering the most suitable language in which to express their national sentiments, the Russophiles decisively rejected German and Polish as the languages of their ideological enemies.

³⁰ Fras, *Galicja*, 198-199.

³¹ Soon after its inauguration, for various political reasons, it was removed to Kraków and was reopened only in 1817 (N.M. Pashaeva, *Ocherki istorii russkogo dvizheniia v Galichine XLX-XX vv.* (Moscow, 2001), 11-12).

For a while they contemplated the possibility of a revitalization of Old-Church Slavonic, which, however, they found to be too archaic and unsuitable for their objectives. Equally unsuitable were the local Ruthenian idioms, which they considered too unrefined and unsophisticated. This is why in the 1830s-40s they turned their attention to Russian, which they perceived as the Slavic language *par excellence*. Having made their choice, the Russophiles faced a very serious problem: unfortunately, practically none of them could write in correct literary Russian. Thus, most of them had to master the ability to compose academic studies and journalistic articles in this language. Nevertheless, even at the end of the nineteenth century, the quaint sort of Russian (the so-called “yazychie”) used by most Russophiles represented a curious mixture of Russian and Old-Church Slavonic, with numerous mistakes and calques from Polish and local Ruthenian dialects.³² It was only at the beginning of the twentieth century that the Russophiles switched entirely to standard literary Russian.

In the second half of the nineteenth century the Russophiles had to endure the struggle against the Galician Ukrainian nationalists, maltreatment on the part of the Austrian administration, and lack of support from Russia. Because of severe persecution of the members of the movement and its sympathizers by the Austrian government during World War I³³ and also as the consequence of the Russian revolution of 1917, the Russophiles became much weaker in the interwar period. The movement practically disappeared during the Second World War as a result of the development of the radical Ukrainian nationalism of Stepan Bandera and his

³² This somewhat artificial language is hardly comprehensible for those who cannot read all of the aforementioned languages. Most of the Russophiles' articles on Karaite history were composed in this very language.

³³ According to some estimates, about 30,000 Galician Russophiles died in the course of these persecutions and in concentration camps for Russophiles from 1914 to 1918 (Pashaeva, *Ocherki*, 140-150). Paul Magosci mentioned that 6,000 Rusyn-Lemki were deported to the concentration camp in Talerhof (*Rusin'skyi yazyk*, 30).

followers.³⁴

On a political level the interest of the Russophiles' ideological leaders in the Karaites corresponded to a general attitude of the movement towards the Jews. In spite of the fact that because of economic competition the Ruthenian peasantry generally disliked the Jews, the Russophiles saw in the Galician Ashkenazim their potential allies in the fight for Galicia's autonomous rights. This tendency of political rapprochement with the Jews became especially clear after the stormy events of 1848.³⁵ On a cultural level the Russophiles, with their emphasis on the study of the history of Galicia, were interested in the Karaites as one of the local historical curiosities. The Galician Russophile historians viewed the Karaites as one of the earliest non-Slavic colonists of the region, who were already settled there during the times of Prince Daniel of Galicia in the thirteenth century (i.e. prior to Polish domination!). The fact that most Karaites spoke fluent Ruthenian also facilitated contacts between the Russophiles and Karaite intellectuals.

The first contacts between the Galician Karaites and local Ruthenian intellectuals, however, were initiated by a non-Russophile scholar, Anton Angelovich³⁶ (or Angiełłowicz/Anhelovych, 1756-1814), the metropolitan of the Greek-Catholic diocese of Lwów and Halicz from 1807 to 1814 and professor and rector at the University of Lwów. In 1813 Angelovich contacted Abraham Leonowicz (hazzan from 1810-1851), the Karaite savant from Halicz. In his letter Angelovich requested the hazzan to provide him with a historical memorandum concerning the

³⁴ For details see Pashaeva, *Ocherki*; Andrew Sorokowski, "The Greek-Catholic Clergy in Galicia in the Interwar Period" (Oxford, Keston Institute, uncatalogued materials); Anna Veronika Wendland, *Die Russophilen in Galizien* (Vienna, 2001); [Ochevidets], *Galitskaia Rus' prezhde i nyne. Istoricheskii ocherk i vzgliad na sovremennoe sostoianie* (St. Petersburg, 1907), a book written by one of the Galician Russophiles under the pseudonym "Ochevidets" (Russ. "eyewitness").

³⁵ Wendland, *Die Russophilen*, 321-324.

³⁶ Since the authors themselves preferred using the Russian forms of their names, I will use the Russian transliteration as well; the Polish and Ukrainian transliteration will be provided in brackets.

origins of the local Karaite community. It seems that the metropolitan's interest in the Karaites was explained by his scholarly curiosity on the one hand, and by mercantile considerations on the other. In 1811 Angelovich acquired the right to sell brandy in Halicz and Żalukiew, and may have been interested in who else was permitted to merchandise alcohol in this area before 1811.³⁷ Unfortunately, neither Angelovich's enquiry, nor Leonowicz's reply of 1813, have survived. Nevertheless, from Leonowicz's later correspondence it is evident that Angelovich had read his reply and found it in conformity with some other books on Karaite history.³⁸

In 1838 Leonowicz received a new historical enquiry, this time from the historian Denis Ivanovich Zubritskii (a.k.a. Djonizy Zubrzycki/Zubryts'kyi, 1777-1862), who is known as the founder of the Russophile movement, an ardent proponent of the Russian language, and the author of several important studies related to Galician history. On the whole, Zubritskii was perhaps the most important and active figure in the history of the Galician Russophiles.³⁹ In his reply to Zubritskii, Leonowicz sent him a Polish translation of the famous historical (or, rather, pseudo-historical) chronicle concerning the supposed arrival of the Karaites in Halicz in the thirteenth century. According to Leonowicz himself, he had translated this text from an old manuscript, which was burnt during the fire of 1830. Unfortunately, a number

³⁷ Even the phrase that the Karaites were "allowed to keep and trade in their houses all sorts of beverages" (Pol. *wolno jm trzymac y synkowac w jch domach wszelkiemi trunkami*), inserted, undoubtedly, to satisfy Angelovich's curiosity, shows the speculative and non-historical character of Leonowicz's chronicle.

³⁸ Jaroslav Stepaniv, "L'époque de Danylo Romanovyč (milieu du XIIIe siècle) d'après une source Karaïte," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3:2 (1978): 337-338. Stepaniv was the pseudonym of the Lwów scholar Jaroslav Dashkevich. It should be mentioned that Dashkevich's article, which was a historic event in the study of the Galician Karaite community after many years of post-war silence, is somewhat marred by the author's nationalist tendency to denote as "Ukrainian" all *Polish* and *Ruthenian* authors who, by their own account, definitely considered themselves to be Poles and Rusyns. Furthermore, some of Dashkevich's conclusions concerning the veracity of Leonowicz's "chronicle" are rather misleading because of his lack of knowledge concerning the relevant literature and sources in Hebrew.

³⁹ Denis Zubritskii, *Kronika miasta Lwowa* (Lwów, 1844); idem, *Kritiko-istoricheskaya povest' vremennykh let Chervonoi ili Galitskoi Rusi*, trans. from Polish by Osip Bodianskii (Moscow, 1845). Some of Zubritskii's books were banned in Austria because of their pro-Ruthenian historical tendencies. Concerning him, see Pashaeva, *Ocherki*, 13-14 and passim.

of historical inaccuracies and anachronisms in this allegedly “medieval” chronicle strongly suggest that it could not be a genuine thirteenth-century document.⁴⁰ Undoubtedly, Leonowicz simply copied it from the manuscript documents of the hazzan Samuel ben Moses (hazzan from 1796 to 1801), who, in turn, copied it from Joseph-Solomon Łucki’s documents.⁴¹ The fact that the Halicz Karaites had no idea about the history of their settlement in Galicia is explicitly mentioned by Samuel ben Moses himself.⁴²

It should be noted that in the 1830s Vitold (his Lithuanian origins notwithstanding) was seen as the Polish ruler *par excellence*, the symbol of the Polish state and Polish valour. Daniel of Galicia, on the contrary, was perceived as the champion of the Ruthenian cause, the most glorious of Galician dukes before the Polish invasion. In my opinion, it is highly revealing that in his letters to Angelovich and Zubritskii, both Russophile scholars, Leonowicz omitted the part of Samuel ben Moses’ chronicle related to the resettlement of the Karaites by Vitold and left only the part relating to Daniel’s role in this process. Moreover, he specifically emphasized in his letter to the aforementioned scholars that it was only at the time of the “rule of the Grand dukes of Ruthenia” (Pol. *za panowania Wielkich Xiążąt Ruskich*) that the Karaites were settled in Galicia (called by Leonowicz *Russyja Czerwona*, i.e. Red

⁴⁰ For the complete Polish text of Leonowicz’s letter, see Appendix 3.2. The original of Leonowicz’s letter to Zubritskii, together with the Polish translation of the aforementioned “chronicle,” is kept in the Vasyl’ Stefanyk Academic Library of Lwów (Lviv), Ossolineum I 1252, fols. 13-15 (the original Polish text and a French translation of the chronicle were published in Stepaniv, “L’époque,” 334-337). The text of the document contains a number of apparent Early Modern toponyms, historical inaccuracies, later interpolations, etc. A detailed critical edition of this chronicle, with a comparative analysis of different versions of its text, is being prepared by Mikhail Kizilov. It is of interest that in 1578 the Galician Armenians fabricated a charter which was supposed to prove their arrival in Galicia before the Tatar invasion of the mid-thirteenth century (Stepaniv, “L’époque,” 361-362). They were apparently impelled by the same motives as the Karaites.

⁴¹ Joseph-Solomon Łucki, in turn, copied the text of this document from some Polish chronicles (Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 581, ft. 38a).

⁴² Ibid.

Russia).⁴³ In my view, this gives us some grounds to suggest that Leonowicz himself was aware of the patriotic Russophile agenda and its anti-Polish sentiments, which were the basis of the scholarly enquiries, and was trying to gain the sympathy of their authors.

During Leonowicz's lifetime Zubritskii himself published Leonowicz's chronicle in his study on the history of Galician Rus'. In spite of his positive characterization of the Karaites, Zubritskii voiced his doubts about the veracity of this chronicle and expressed the hope that later historians would provide a more detailed analysis of its contents.⁴⁴ The publication of this alleged thirteenth-century historical account sparked a flash of interest on the part of a few Galician Russophile historians: they were excited to find a document which, in their opinion, could have been one of the earliest known historical records pertaining to the history of medieval Galicia in general. Many of them immediately decided to visit Halicz personally in order to obtain more information from the owner of the document, Abraham Leonowicz. Another Ruthenian historian and linguist, the Russophilic scholar Ivan Vagilevich/Vahylevych (1811-1866), one of the founders of the famous group of Galician intellectuals, *Rus'ka Triitsia* (Russian Trinity), made the personal acquaintance of Leonowicz and inserted the full text of his chronicle into his hitherto unpublished article, "The town of Halicz."⁴⁵

In 1850, that is, only a year before Abraham Leonowicz's death, he was visited by two other Ruthenian scholars, Y. Levitskii and A. Petrushevich. Yemelyan Levitskii (or Omelyan Levyts'kyi, 1821-1891), a local enthusiast-historian, was predominantly interested in Leonowicz's chronicle as a source of information

⁴³ Stanisław Kunasiewicz, *Przechadzki archeologiczne po Lwowie*, pt. 2-3 (Lwów 1876), 122. ft. 1.

⁴⁴ Zubritskii, *Kritiko-istoricheskaya povest'*, 153-155.

⁴⁵ Stepaniv, "L'époque," 339.

concerning the pagan practices of the local Slavic population.⁴⁶ Anton Stepanovich Petrushevich (a.k.a. *otets Antonii*, 1821-1913), a famous Ruthenian historian, received from Leonowicz the Hebrew original (!) and the Polish translation of the chronicle. Nevertheless, as a serious scholar with a critical approach to the analysis of historical sources, Petrushevich could not help noticing the anachronistic character of this document. Therefore, he severely criticized the document and dismissed it as a forgery. In his opinion, on the basis of this falsified document Leonowicz tried to prove the early settlement of the Karaites in Galicia during the rule of the Ruthenian dukes in order to demonstrate their ancient rights to sell alcoholic beverages and own land in Galicia. Petrushevich's notes on this document appeared in the periodical published by the *Galitsko-Ruskaia Matitsa*, an important association of Ruthenian enlighteners, scholars, and nationalists.⁴⁷ Later, Leonowicz's chronicle and its variants were published many times in the Hebrew original together with Polish, Russian, and French translations.⁴⁸ The text of this chronicle, as Leonowicz copied it, became the most cited document related to the history of the East European Karaites.

Petrushevich's scholarly and public authority, and his severe critique of this document, seem to have largely cooled the Russophiles' enthusiasm for the Karaites.

⁴⁶ When taking into consideration the fact that this chronicle does not seem to be an authentic document, it is not entirely clear whether one can trust the data concerning Slavic pagan practices mentioned in it. Levitskii published his articles only about thirty years after Leonowicz's death (Ye.L. [Yemelyan Levitskii], "Neskol'ko narodnykh predanii o Galiche," *Slovo* 6 (1879):1). Yaroslav Dashkevich referred to one more article by Levitskii (Ye.L. [Yemelyan Levitskii], "Yeshche o Galiche i yego okrestnostiakh," *Slovo* 5 (1885): 2). However, when I consulted this issue of *Slovo* I could not find it there.

⁴⁷ Anton Petrushevich, "Peresmotr gramot kniazia L'vu pripisyvaemykh," in *Galitskii istoricheskii sbornik*, vol. 2 (Lwów, 1854), 173-176.

⁴⁸ Kunasiewicz, *Przechadzki archeologiczne*, pt.2-3, 121-122; Bałaban, "Karaici," 2-4 (Polish). See the critical edition of the Polish translation together with Leonowicz's letter of 1838 in Stepaniv, "L'époque," 334-373 (French). A copy of the Hebrew original of this text together with some notes on medieval Russian history was made by Jacob-Joseph b. Samuel-Joshua [Leonowicz?] of Halicz in 1871 (NLR F.946, op.1, no.898). Cf. another Hebrew copy by Joseph b. Abraham Leonowicz: Moses Tenenbaum, "Le-qorot ba'alei miqra," *Ha-Nesher* 4:15 (8 Apr. 1864): 60; *Ha-Nesher* 4:16 (15 Apr. 1864): 63-64 and the letter of Elisha b. Elijah Leonowicz to Abraham Firkowicz of 1866 published by Litinski, "Le-qorot," 65-66. It is noteworthy that Jacob Mann simply ignored Abraham Leonowicz and his "Daniel" version of the Karaite settlement (Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 581, 586-587).

Moreover, later Karaite leaders apparently lacked Abraham Leonowicz's charisma, and contacts with Ruthenian intellectuals were discontinued. Only a few later authors, such as the aforementioned Y. Levitskii or his colleagues Venedikt Ploshchanskii (1834-1902) and ethnographer Vladimir Hrebeniak, devoted some of their attention to the Karaite community. In spite of the fact that their writings were published in major Galician periodicals of that time,⁴⁹ they neither produced any particular public response, nor evoked a new wave of interest in the Karaites on the part of the Galician audience.

4.2. *The Karaites and the Talmudic Jews*

4.2.1. *The Karaites' ethnic self-identification and their position within the Jewish fold*

... der Talmudische Jude will neben keinem Karaimen wohnen.

The Austrian traveller Joseph Rohrer (1803)⁵⁰

There are a few Jewish residents in Karaite houses; this produces a somewhat strange impression when taking into account the notoriously hostile relations between the Karaites and the Jews.

The Polish journalist Grzegorz Smólski (1903)⁵¹

It is very difficult to characterize the complex nature of the relations between the

⁴⁹ Venedikt M. Ploshchanskii, "Zhydy-Karaity," in *Literaturnyj Sbornik, izdavaemyi galitsko-russkoiu matitseiu* (Lwów, 1870), 109-116. This article represents a Russian adaptation of Tadeusz Czacki's "Rozprawa o Karaitach" together with a compilation from Joseph Rohrer's travel report. Ploshchanskii, another important ideological leader of the Russophiles and editor of their periodical *Slovo*, was ironically depicted in the novel *Duma pro Nauma Bezumovycha* by the famous Ukrainian nationalist writer Ivan Franko (Wendland, *Russophilen*, 14, ft. 3). Cf. Ye.L. [Levitskii], "Neskol'ko narodnykh predanii"; idem, "Yeshche o Galiche"; Vladimir Hrebeniak, "Karaïms'ka oselia v Halychi," *Ilustrovana Ukraïna* 21-22 (Lwów, 1913): 16.

⁵⁰ Rohrer, *Versuch*, 147-148.

⁵¹ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 523.

Karaite and Rabbanite Jews, which has been formed by representatives of these two different trends in Judaism over the course of more than a thousand years, from the emergence of the Karaite movement in the mid-eighth century until today. These relations, which have fluctuated between such polarised feelings as brotherly friendship and bitter animosity, were determined by an understanding of their mutual adherence to a single religious entity on the one hand, and by a hostile attitude towards their brethren's "heretical" interpretation of religious law, on the other.

Relations between the Karaites and the Rabbanites may be best described as those of two close relatives who belong to different branches of the same religion. Perhaps relations between members of two branches of Christianity – Protestants and Catholics – represent the closest parallel. In this case the Karaites, because of their adherence to *Sola Scriptura* and rejection of later commentaries on the Bible, might be called "Protestants," whereas the position of the Catholics would correspond to that of the Rabbanite Jews. The comparison of the Karaites with the Protestants (and the Rabbanites with the Catholics) was indeed commonplace in early modern literature on Jewish sects and movements.⁵²

Even the two short quotations placed as an epigraph to this subchapter show the ambivalence of Karaite–Rabbanite relations on the one hand, and the superficial stereotypical approach of Christian observers, on the other. Indeed, authors of Christian background, who usually received information about the irreconcilable differences between Karaite and Rabbanite religious doctrines, simply could not imagine that these – in their view – hostile and bellicose movements could peacefully coexist with each other. Traditionally, since the early periods of their coexistence, the Karaite community of Halicz was always in contact with the local Rabbanite

⁵² J. van den Berg, "Proto-Protestants? The Image of the Karaites as a Mirror of the Catholic-Protestant Controversy in the Seventeenth Century," in *Jewish-Christian Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, ed. by J. van den Berg and E. van der Wall (Dordrecht, 1988), 34-37.

community. Relations between these two communities were in many respects much closer and friendlier than in many other regions where Karaites and Rabbanites lived next to each other. On the other hand, paradoxically, these relations were often much more bitter and hostile than in some other places. Traces of both polarities may be found in many documents and sources of the eighteenth to the early twentieth centuries.

An analysis of the ethnic self-identification of the Galician Karaites may help in understanding the complex and ambivalent nature of Karaite–Rabbanite relations. In Poland, even in the second half of the eighteenth century, after the liquidation of the *Vaad* system, the Karaites still shared the same rights, privileges, duties, and burdens as other Jews. Whilst considering themselves to be a part of the people of Israel, the Karaites clearly understood their specific status within the Jewish fold. As an example, in a petition to the Polish Sejm, the Karaites of Łuck (1790) stressed that their difference from other Jews was mostly of a religious character: “We, the Karaite Jews, which means in Polish ‘Biblicists,’ differ from the Rabbanite Jews in all rituals since the destruction of Jerusalem.”⁵³ Similar phrases about the difference between the Karaites and the Talmudic Jews may be found in many other seventeenth and eighteenth century sources.

The situation changed at the end of the eighteenth century, when the Karaites, perhaps for the first time in their history, decided to use the religious difference between them and other Jews in order to achieve a higher social and economic status. At the end of the eighteenth to the early nineteenth century, the Galician Karaites drew a clear line between themselves and the Ashkenazic Jews in order to avoid the heavy burden of double taxation imposed on the Rabbanites after 1772. As we have

⁵³ “My Żydzi Karaimy, co po polsku znaczy Biblicianie, różniący się od zburzenia Jerozolimy obrządkiem od Żydów Rabanów we wszystkim...” (*Przeswietna Deputacyo...* (Łuck: n.p., n.d. [ca. 1790]), no page numbers).

seen, in 1774 the Galician Karaite *Itzko Salomonowicz* (Isaac ben Solomon) wrote a petition to the Austrian Court Chancellery, in which, inter alia, he mentioned that he was not a Jew, but a peasant.⁵⁴ This claim, in spite of its apparent naïveté (did the author of this petition mean that his being “a peasant” excluded the possibility of his being “a Jew” at the same time?) was perhaps the first clearly articulated manifestation of the Karaite nationalist tendency of separation from other Jews in Eastern Europe.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, this claim should be analysed in the context of the economic competition between the Karaites and the Ashkenazim. Itzko (Isaac) undoubtedly meant that because of his being a peasant he should be excluded from the double marriage tax imposed on the Rabbanite Jews. Thus, his claim should probably be understood in the sense of being “not a Rabbanite Jew.”

At about the same time that Itzko submitted his petition, the Galician Karaites started claiming to the official Austrian observers that they, in fact, had arrived in Galicia from Turkey. In the earliest official report of 1774 the local Karaites were referred to as the “Karaimiter Nation oder sogenannte Turckhische Juden.” Moreover, the Karaites told the authors of this report that they had arrived in Halicz only in the sixteenth century from Constantinople.⁵⁶ The economic reason for the emergence of this “Turkish” claim also seems to be quite evident: after the peace treaty of Passarowitz between Austria and Turkey (1718) some Jews who were former Turkish subjects were allowed to live and trade in Austria.⁵⁷ Their position was much better than that of other Austrian Jews. The Karaites, while calling themselves “Turkish

⁵⁴ “...er sein kein Jude, er sei Ackerbauer und zahle Feudalabgaben wie die anderen Bauern” (Karniel, *Toleranzpolitik*, 292). See more in § 1.1.2.

⁵⁵ This tendency was later defined by Roman Freund as “endogenous dejudaization” (Roman Freund, *Karaites and Dejudaization: A Historical Review of an Endogenous and Exogenous Paradigm* (Stockholm, 1991)).

⁵⁶ See “Gehorsamster Bericht” HK IV, T.I, K. 1520. Galizien – 1784; Doc.1494 (Oct.1774), fol. 1). These data were later repeated in some other studies (e.g. Stöger, *Darstellung*, vol. 1, 104; [Fürst], “Halicz,” 307-308).

⁵⁷ Nathan Gelber and Meir Lamed, “Austria,” *EJ* 3 (1971), 891.

Jews,” clearly showed the Austrian government that they deserved to be treated differently from the rest of the Jews, who had come to Austria not from Turkey but from Ashkenaz (i.e. Europe). The Karaites used the motif of their “Turkicness” only until the second quarter of the nineteenth century. After that, having secured their economic position in Austria, they dropped this “Turkic” claim, which would reappear on the historical scene in the interwar period.⁵⁸

Approximately at the same time, in the first half of the nineteenth century, in order to avoid association with the rest of Austrian Jewry, in their official documents the Karaites dropped the word “Juden / Jews” from their ethnic name and usually referred to themselves as “Karaimen / Karaici.”⁵⁹ At the same time, in addition to the term *qara'im* (=Karaites) in their internal documents in Hebrew and Karaim they continued using the terms *Yisra'el* (=Israel/Israelites) or *yehudim* (=Jews) to denote their community in Halicz and other parts of Europe.⁶⁰ The Galician Karaites also often used the medieval term *bene miqra* (=followers of the Scripture) as their self-designation. In order to distance themselves from the rest of Austrian Jewry the Karaites used such terms as *yehudim talmudi'im* / *rabbani'im* (=Talmudic / Rabbanite Jews) to denote the Ashkenazim. In addition, the Galician Karaites called the Rabbanites *ba'alei ha-qabbalah* or *meqqubalim* (both mean “followers of the [oral, i.e. Talmudic] tradition”).

Thus, their tendency to distance themselves from their Rabbanite neighbours notwithstanding, from 1772 to 1918 the Galician Karaites certainly continued to view themselves as part of *'am Yisra'el* (=people of Israel), followers of the Torah given to

⁵⁸ For a critique of the “Turkic theory,” see Chapter 6.

⁵⁹ For a contrast, see the aforementioned document from Łuck where the Karaites called themselves “Żydzi Karaimy” (=Karaites) (*Przeswietna Deputacyo*).

⁶⁰ E.g. NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.163/5, fol.1r; Kowalski, “Z pożółkłych kart,” 15, 17. Cf. the fact that one of Zechariah-Isaac b. Samuel Abrahamowicz’s most important poems is called *Ulusum Jisrael* (“My people, Israel”) (“Zecharja Abrahamowicznin tiziwleri,” *KA* 2 (1931): 25-27).

Moses on Mount Sinai. This was especially evident in the contacts between Karaite savants and Rabbanite maskilim, who often expressed the hope for the unification of these two branches of Judaism into one whole. The rigorist position of the local Galician Rabbis, who fully accepted Joseph Caro's anti-Karaite legislation, was one of the factors that nullified the idea of unification. The Karaite matrimonial laws, which banned mixed marriages, also contributed to the failure of this project (see §4.2.3). The Karaites retained their Judeo-Karaite "Israelite" identity until the interwar period, when, under the influence of political changes, they had to drastically reconsider their ethnic self-identity (see Chapter 6).

4.2.2. Everyday interaction: hostility and amity

As has been mentioned, in 1774 the Karaites of Galicia received a special legal status, which positively differentiated them from the rest of the Austrian Jews. This distinctive benevolent treatment of the Karaites on the part of the Austrian administration considerably deepened the already existing antagonism between the two communities. Reciprocal everyday hostility and ideological animosity between the Karaites and their Rabbanite neighbours is attested in many contemporary sources, especially in travel reports. After a visit to the Karaite synagogue of Halicz in 1803 Joseph Rohrer recorded an indignant monologue by a local Rabbanite. The latter complained about the primitive and corrupt character of Karaite religious doctrine and wondered whether the Karaites deserved to be called Jews at all:

Could anyone think... that these Karaite people can be of any use? They are neither Jews nor Christians, they are hybrids; but they still observe the Jewish Sabbath. None of us Jews would ever leave the house without having the Ten Commandments [die zehn Gebote]⁶¹ with him. A Karaite

⁶¹ Here perhaps in the sense of "a prayer book."

leaves his [Ten Commandments] in the synagogue. Can such a man earn any respect; can he still be called a Jew; is this just?⁶²

Rohrer, who had a very positive opinion of the Karaites, did not condescend to reply to this angry soliloquy. It is evident that the traveller's Rabbanite informant was irritated largely by Karaite religious practices, which he found irrational and unacceptable.

Some sources provide readers with the Karaite perspective on the reason for the hostility between the Karaites and Rabbanites. Grzegorz Smólski (1903) asked a local Karaite to explain to him the cause of this hostility. The latter informed the traveller: "The [Rabbanite] Jews blacken us wherever they can... The Jews cannot forgive us our religion. They know that even though we are few in number, the time will come when the whole world will be Karaite."⁶³

Another Karaite informant questioned by Smólski added more information on the subject:

- We [the Karaites] are of the Mosaic faith; although we do not recognise the Talmud, we scrupulously fulfil God's commandments. We say: "Love thy neighbour as thyself." This is why whilst seeing in everyone, even in our enemy, our neighbour, we do not hate anyone, and, consequently, [do not hate] the [Rabbanite] Jews either. If the Jews do not like us, it is their problem, not ours.
- Why do the Jews hate the Karaites? – I asked.
- Mainly because of the fact that our religion, as they say, allegedly called forth Christ. They say that Christians descended from the Karaites. Furthermore, they do not like us because the Talmud means nothing to us...⁶⁴

⁶² Rohrer, *Bemerkungen*, 115.

⁶³ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 539. Cf. in other place: "Jewish books... show us [the Karaites] black as chimney-sweeps" (ibid., 564).

⁶⁴ Smólski, "U Karaimów," 523.

It may be clearly seen from this dialogue that the Karaites put all the blame on the Rabbanites and suggested that the source of the latter's aggression lay in the specificity of Karaite religious doctrine, which, on the one hand, did not recognize the authority of the Talmud, and supported early Christianity, on the other.

These claims need to be examined in a more detailed way. While the Karaites certainly did not recognize the *binding* authority of the Talmud,⁶⁵ the question of the nature of Karaite-Christian relations is much more complicated. All attempts to trace a direct linkage between the Karaites, Sadducees, Qumranites and other Jewish sectarians seem to be futile, in spite of numerous parallels between Karaite doctrine and that of various sectarian groups of the Second Temple period.⁶⁶ Therefore, the aforementioned Rabbanite claim that the Karaites allegedly supported early Christianity was, certainly, absolutely groundless: Karaism was formed as a unified religious movement only in the eighth to tenth centuries A.D., i.e. much later than the emergence of Christianity. This claim perhaps echoed statements made by some nineteenth-century Crimean Karaite leaders, who often emphasized their equable and tolerant attitude towards Christians and Christianity. Moreover, they frequently informed travellers that the Karaites had left the land of Palestine before the birth of Jesus – and therefore they had taken part neither in the crucifixion, nor in the composition of the Talmud. These statements do not convey historical truth about the development of the Karaite movement, and should be understood as an attempt to

⁶⁵ Some Karaite intellectuals did study the Talmud. The British traveller Ebenezer Henderson (1821) found volumes of the Talmud on the bookshelves of the Çufut-Qale hazzan, Isaac b. Solomon. Isaac remarked that the Karaites “do not admit that the Talmud has any binding authority... but should we, on this account, reject what [is] good in it...?” (Henderson, *Researches*, 310, 320).

⁶⁶ For a survey see Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 84-86; Daniel Lasker, “The Dead Sea Scrolls in the Historiography and Self-Image of Contemporary Karaites,” *Dead Sea Discoveries* 9:3 (2002): 281-294; Bernard Dupuy, “Les Karaïtes sont-ils les descendants des Esséniens?” *Istina* 29 (1984): 139-151; Yoram Erder, “The Karaites’ Sadducee Dilemma,” *Israel Oriental Studies* 14 (1994): 195-226.

dissociate the Karaites from the burdens imposed by Christian authorities on the rest of the European Jews.⁶⁷

According to Fahn, the Rabbanites of Halicz hated the Karaites “with utmost hatred,” whereas the latter in return also “kept anger in their hearts” against the Rabbanites: “These [the Karaites] believe that all the Jews hate them and those [the Rabbanites] think that every Karaite is their enemy.”⁶⁸ Relations seemed to be especially bad between the Karaites and the Galician ultra-orthodox, the Hassidic Jews. One of the Hassidic Rabbis, Meir of Przemyślany (Ukr. Peremyshliany), even put a curse (=qlalah) upon the Karaites.⁶⁹ Moreover, the Rabbanites considered the Karaites to be “half-Jews” (=hetsi-yehudim) and were not sure whether the commodities produced by the latter could be considered ritually pure. Fahn illustrated this mistrust by the story of a Karaite miller who wished to sell his flour to the Rabbanites before Passover. In order to be allowed to do so he had to obtain special permission from the head of the Rabbanite community of Halicz.⁷⁰ The same suspicious attitude to Karaite religious doctrine as “half-Jewish” is also reflected in the fact that because of the difference in their dietary laws, Karaites normally were not allowed to dine at the same table with Rabbanites.⁷¹

Hostile relations between the Halicz Karaites and Rabbanites are also evident in the controversy concerning the historical origins of the Karaite settlement in the town. During the end of the nineteenth and into the early twentieth century, the Karaites

⁶⁷ For details see Kizilov, “The Karaites of the Crimea,” 789-818; Kizilov, *Karaites*, 67-68, 242-248.

⁶⁸ Fahn, “Ha-Qara'im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177; idem, “Ha-Qara'im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140. One can, however, doubt the veracity of Fahn's statement. In the same article Fahn contradicted himself by saying that the Karaites hated the Poles and Ruthenians and had rather peaceful relations with the Rabbanites (idem, “Ha-Qara'im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140).

⁶⁹ Fahn, “Ha-Qara'im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119.

⁷⁰ Ibid., *Ha-Magid* 6: 17 (1897): 140.

⁷¹ Menasche Josef Friedler, *Die galizischen Juden von wirtschaftlichem, kulturellem und staatsbürgerlichem Standpunkte 1815-1848* (doctoral dissertation, University of Vienna, 1923), 109, ft.2.

boasted to the Rabbanites about their early arrival in Halicz, where, in their view, they were settled much earlier than the Ashkenazim.⁷² The Rabbanites, in turn, popularized a derogatory legend about the origin of the Karaite settlement in Halicz. According to this legend, the Tatar Khan (perhaps Batu) presented a pair of Karaites to the Prince of the Halicz principality (apparently, Daniel of Halicz) in exchange for a pair of thoroughbred Galician dogs. Since then, according to the legend, the local Rabbanites called the Karaites *mehir kelev* (Heb. “dog’s price”).⁷³ Fahn also mentioned that the Rabbanites used two other derogatory terms to denote the Karaites: *qal-daḡ* and *Tsadoq*.⁷⁴ *Qal-daḡ* was apparently a pun on the guttural phonetics of the Karaim language, whereas *Tsadoq* was an allusion to the Karaites’ alleged “Sadducean” origin. Jan Grzegorzewski himself witnessed the fact that at the beginning of the twentieth century the local Rabbanites used to interrupt Karaite religious ceremonies which took place outside the synagogue, molest the Karaites, and mock their liturgy.⁷⁵

In the 1850s the Rabbanite scholar Solomon Stern accorded academic help to the Karaite community and edited an important Karaite publication: the prayer-book printed for the Galician Karaites in Vienna.⁷⁶ Nevertheless, for some unclear reasons the Karaite authorities decided that the Rabbanites should not be allowed to buy it.⁷⁷ This prohibition seems to be highly irrational. Purchase by Rabbanites of the Karaite prayer-book might have attracted much interest in Karaism on the part of the local Ashkenazim, and it is possible that some Rabbanites might have even become

⁷² Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119; idem, “Benei segulah: ‘al pi nusah ha-qara’im,” in his *Kitve’ Reuven Fahn*, 259-260.

⁷³ Fahn, “Benei segulah: ‘al pi nusah ha-yehudim,” in his *Kitve’ Reuven Fahn*, 260-261. Z. Abrahamowicz (a Galician Karaite himself) correctly mentioned that this legend was based, most likely, on a corrupt interpretation of the Polish word “Karait” (=a Karaite). When understood as a Turkic expression (*qara it*), it could be translated as a “black dog” (Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 14). The correct translation of the term “*qara’im* / Karaites” is certainly “readers.” See more in § 5.3.1.

⁷⁴ Fahn, “Me-Hayye,” 194.

⁷⁵ J. Grzegorzewski, drafts entitled „Rytuały, obrządy i zwyczaje” (AN PAN, K III-6, no. 16).

⁷⁶ *Seder tefillot ha-Qara’im*.

⁷⁷ Fahn, “Le-qorot,” 51, ft. 4; Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el,” 118, ft.1; Josef Löwy, “Karaitische Aphorismen,” *Ben-Chananja* 2 (1859): 266.

prospective candidates for conversion to Karaite Judaism. Were the Karaites so much against the Rabbanites reading Karaite prayers or they were simply afraid that the Ashkenazim, more numerous than the Karaites, would buy the whole edition of their prayer-book? Unfortunately, the sources do not provide any further insight into this problem.

In addition to the ideological combat between the Karaites and Rabbanites, there were also a few direct conflicts between the two communities. Most of these conflicts, however, had a financial rather than an ideological character. Being apparently jealous of the financial privileges conferred on the Karaites by the Austrian administration, in 1805 the Rabbanites sent an appeal to the head of the Stanisławów circle, in which they suggested that the latter revoke the privileged status of the Karaites. It took the Karaite community considerable efforts to repel this attack and preserve their recently-acquired rights.⁷⁸ Moreover, it seems that with the help of the local administration the Rabbanites tried to have the privileged status of the Karaites revoked after this as well.⁷⁹ There were times when the Rabbanites did not fulfil their financial obligations to the Karaites. For example, Abraham Leonowicz mentioned that in 1817 he had to travel to the town of Żurawka⁸⁰ to resolve his case with the local Rabbanites (מקובלים) who could not return the money they had borrowed.⁸¹ In 1848 there was a major conflict with Rabbanite morticians who tried to exact too much money from the Karaites for performing funerals (see §3.1.7).

As often happens with neighbours, in spite of the aforementioned conflicts, quarrels

⁷⁸ Zarachowicz, "Przyczynki," fols.6-7 (the Yurchenko MSS); for details see § 1.1.2.

⁷⁹ Abraham Leonowicz to A.Firkowicz, Halicz, 1818 (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 640, fol. 1v).

⁸⁰ At that time in Russia; today a town in the Sums'ka region of Ukraine.

⁸¹ The Rabbanites could not return the money because on their way back from Olomunz they were robbed by bandits. The hearing of Leonowicz's case against them in the court in Żurawka lasted for ten weeks (Abraham Leonowicz to Joseph b. Moses Moszkowicz of Łuck: NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2847, fol.6r).

and general animosity, sometimes relations between the two communities were comparatively peaceful. Indeed, the Rabbanite and Karaite quarters of Halicz and Kukizów were located next to each other. The same applies to most of the East European Karaite and Rabbanite cemeteries, which were also normally situated in the same vicinity. At the time of Grzegorz Smólski's visit to Halicz (1903), the Rabbanites owned a few houses on Karaite Street. Moreover, some Rabbanites rented rooms in houses belonging to Karaite landlords.⁸² D.F. (i.e. Reuven Fahn?) mentions that the local Karaites and Rabbanites had rather peaceful relations, but without any tendency toward rapprochement. He also accused the Rabbanites of undermining all attempts to establish contacts between the two communities.⁸³ Majer Bałaban mentions that Karaite youths attended Rabbanite religious schools, but skipped those lessons that were related to Talmudic practices.⁸⁴

Close cultural links between the Galician Karaites and Rabbanites can also be clearly seen in the Ashkenazic style of Karaite tombs and in the interior and exterior architectural design of the Karaite synagogue/kenesa of Halicz. Moreover, by the second half of the nineteenth century the Karaites adopted many of the Rabbanite practices, such as wearing a *tallit qatan* and ear locks (see §3.1.2, §3.2.2). Some later reports attest that the Karaites used to hire not only Rabbanite morticians (until 1848), but also Rabbanite *mohelim* (=circumcisers).⁸⁵ Archival sources show that it was usually the Rabbanites to whom the Karaites turned for monetary help when they were in financial straits. Moreover, given that the majority of the trade in Galicia was in the hands of the Rabbanites, the Karaites were inevitably forced to have frequent commercial contacts with them. In spite of the fact that the Galician Karaites were

⁸² Smólski, "U Karaimów," 523, 539.

⁸³ D.F., "Pis'mo," 74-75.

⁸⁴ Majer Bałaban, "V Galicii karaimy," in *Evreiskaia entsyklopediia* 9 [n.d.], 291.

⁸⁵ Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13.

supposed to have their own *shohet* (slaughterer), some of them used to buy *kosher* (ritually clean) meat from the Rabbanite slaughterers, although Karaites were charged more money than Rabbanite customers. At some point one of the slaughterers, who considered the Karaites to be *goyim* (=non-Jews, Gentiles), apparently decided that it was allowed to sell *trefah* (=ritually unclean) meat to the Karaites. The local Rabbi, however, Joseph Benjamin Reich, who was informed about this, took a Karaite-friendly stand and prohibited the sale of ritually unclean meat to the Karaites.⁸⁶ In fact, the difference between Karaite and Rabbanite animal slaughter is not very marked: according to both traditions animals are slaughtered ritually at the neck, but different blessings are said and different signs of the animal's health and suitability for consumption are checked.⁸⁷

The Rabbanites seldom needed any assistance from the small and comparatively poor Karaite community. Nevertheless, archival documents register a few cases when the Karaites loaned money to the local Rabbanite merchants.⁸⁸ Sometimes the Karaites accorded spiritual and educational support to the Ashkenazim and even to their non-mainstream religious movements. To give an example, certain Hassidic Jews from Lwów, who arrived in Kukizów in 1816, asked the local Karaite hazzan, David Kukizów, to fetch them some printed or manuscript texts in Hebrew in order to improve the Hebrew literacy of one of their children. The latter agreed and provided them with some of his manuscript documents.⁸⁹ In the 1860s the positive image of the Karaites helped to improve the position of the Reformed Jews. At this time, during the active ideological campaign against Reform Judaism, Anton Ritter von Schmerling (1805-1893), the Austrian *Staatsminister*, came to the defence of the

⁸⁶ Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 129.

⁸⁷ Lasker, "Karaite Judaism," 1813.

⁸⁸ E.g. NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2847, fol. 6r.

⁸⁹ Nahman Krochmal, *Kitvei Rabbi Nahman Krochmal*, ed. Simon Rawidowicz, 2nd ed. (London-Waltham, 1961), 413.

Reformed Jews. He stated that most of the accusations against *Reformjuden* were absolutely groundless, and pointed out the example of the Karaite Jews, who rejected the Talmud, but remained among the most honest and exemplary citizens of Austria.⁹⁰

4.2.3. *The problem of conversion and intermarriage.*

The position of the Rabbanite authorities concerning intermarriage with Karaites and acceptance of Karaites in the Rabbanite community was not unanimous. Rambam (a.k.a. Maimonides / Moses ben Maimon; 1135-1204), his ideological campaign against Karaism notwithstanding, was of the opinion that one should sustain friendly relations with the Karaites and that every effort should be made to return them to Talmudic Judaism.⁹¹ It is unclear what the procedure of “return” to Rabbinic Judaism entailed, but apparently it included the oral recognition of the authority of the rabbis and the Talmud. Written documents attest that in medieval Byzantium, and especially in Egypt, cases of intermarriage between Karaites and Rabbanites were considered a normal legal practice. The spouses of such mixed families were allowed to retain their religious views providing that they would not offend each other’s feelings. Members of such families, nevertheless, had to overcome numerous problems caused by the discrepancy in the Karaite and Rabbanite religious calendars.⁹²

According to the twentieth-century Rabbanite scholar, Zvi Cahn, the rabbis of sixteenth-century Europe, however, developed an absolutely different attitude to the question of intermarriage with Karaites and their “return” to the Rabbanite fold. In one of his studies Cahn published a Hebrew text, which was in his opinion an excerpt

⁹⁰ Wolf, “Karaiten,” 95.

⁹¹ Schur, *Karaite Encyclopedia*, 191-192.

⁹² Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 171-175, 177-180; S.D. Goitein, “A Maghrebi Living in Cairo Implores His Karaite Wife to Return to Him,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 73:2 (1982): 138-145.

from the *Responsa* of Rabbi Elijah Mizrahi.⁹³ According to this excerpt, a Karaite desirous of conversion to Rabbanism was supposed first to convert to another religion (be it Christianity or Islam), and only then would he be allowed to embrace Rabbinic Judaism on the same legal footing as non-Jews.⁹⁴ According to Cahn, later this regulation was included in Joseph Caro's *Shulhan Arukh*, the sixteenth-century code of Rabbinic Judaism which was accepted in most Jewish communities in Europe and other parts of the world.⁹⁵ Nevertheless, according to Alfred Eidlisz, the text published by Cahn is not to be found either in any editions of Mizrahi's *Responsa* or in *Shulhan Arukh*. Furthermore, Alfred Eidlisz suggested that for some unknown reason Cahn had falsified this text.⁹⁶ Whatever the case may be, according to Johann Rittangel in seventeenth-century Lithuania the Rabbanites were more willing to accept a Muslim or a heathen into their community than a Karaite.⁹⁷ Needless to say, such a rigorist and intolerant attitude, so different from medieval Rabbinic legislation, could not promote integration of the Karaites into the Rabbanite community and vice versa.

In 1911 the Crimean Karaite authorities accepted a regulation prohibiting mixed marriages between Karaites and other ethnic groups (be it Jews, Slavs or other ethnicities).⁹⁸ Nevertheless, this decision was valid only among the Russian Karaite

⁹³ Elijah b. Abraham (Re'em) Mizrahi (1450-1526) was a Turkish rabbi and mathematician. He was known for his mild attitude toward the Karaites, to whom he taught the Talmud. Nevertheless, he completely rejected on halakhic grounds the permissibility of intermarriage between Karaites and Rabbanite Jews (Jacob Habermann, "Mizrahi, Elijah," *EJ* 12, 182-184).

⁹⁴ See his Responsum no. 28 reproduced in Zvi Cahn, *The Rise of the Karaite Sect* (New York, 1937), 118.

⁹⁵ Ibid.

⁹⁶ Alfred Eidlisz, private communication of 18 May 2007.

⁹⁷ The University of Sheffield Library, the Hartlib Papers, Letter of Cyprian Kinner to Samuel Hartlib, Aug. 1648: 1/33, fols. 63A-63B (a copy of Rittangel's letter in German). We may assume that Rittangel, with his Protestant anti-Talmudic agenda, might have slightly exaggerated the Rabbanite animosity towards the Karaites. I would like to express my gratitude to Ms. Jacky Hodgson, the Head of Special Collections of the University of Sheffield Library, for sending me a copy of Rittangel's report. I am preparing this most interesting account for publication.

⁹⁸ It is somewhat unclear exactly when this decision was taken. It definitely did not occur during the all-Karaite conclave of 1911; materials from this conclave do not contain a single reference to the

communities (Volhynia, Lithuania, and the Crimea), whereas the Karaites of Halicz, Cairo, and Constantinople did not recognize it as binding.⁹⁹ We do not know too much about the attitude of the Karaite authorities to this problem before 1911. One may assume that there were certainly cases of intermarriage and acceptance of Rabbanites in Karaite communities. Such an individual, however, most likely tried to forget about his Rabbanite past and would hardly transmit information about it to his posterity. According to the eighteenth-century author Friedrich Augusti (himself a baptised Jew), there were some cases of Rabbanites converting to Karaism. Moreover, these converts, because of their conspicuous erudition, could become leaders in the Karaite community! Augusti, however, was not aware of a single case of a Karaite's conversion to Rabbinic Judaism.¹⁰⁰ Yet, there were a few Jews with typical Krymchaki-Rabbanite surnames registered as members of the Karaite community of Çufut-Qale in the Crimea at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. These were possibly Rabbanite converts to Karaism.¹⁰¹

According to some sources, (somewhat surprisingly) it was Zarach Leonowicz (hazzan from 1884 to 1894), the highest spiritual authority of the local Karaites, who decided to convert to Talmudic Judaism. The local rabbis, however, agreed to accept him into their community only on the condition that he would first denounce his Karaite beliefs and convert to Christianity. Only then would he be allowed to convert to Rabbanite Judaism. The hazzan certainly did not want to undergo this humiliating

question of mixed marriages ("Pervyi natsional'nyi karaimskii s'ezd v Evpatorii," *KZh* 1 (1911): 70-86; "Eshche o pervom natsional'nom s'ezde," *KZh* 2 (1911): 59-63). It seems that this regulation was accepted a bit earlier, in Feb. 1911 (GAARK F.241, op.1, no.1163 (14)).

⁹⁹ Gini, *I Caraimi*, 12. In spite of this regulation, numerous mixed Karaite-Rabbanite marriages were registered in Europe and America in the interwar period and after 1945 (e.g. *ibid.*; MS LMAB F.143, no. 1016, fols. 1, 7-10. Leonard Fox informed me that his parents had registered their mixed Karaite-Rabbanite marriage in 1932). For more discussion regarding mixed Karaite-Rabbanite marriages, see Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 39-40; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 685-687.

¹⁰⁰ Augusti, *Gründliche Nachrichten*, 58-59.

¹⁰¹ B. Kokenay to A. Szyszman, 1946 (Russian and Hebrew) (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1519, fols. 18-20; *ibid.*, no. 375, fols. 45-46).

procedure, and he remained a Karaite until the end of his days. Reuven Fahn, who recorded this story from oral reports of the local Ashkenazim, himself was uncertain of its veracity.¹⁰² Zarach Leonowicz's relative, Jacob-Joseph Leonowicz,¹⁰³ was also deeply interested in the Talmud and wanted to marry a Rabbanite woman. Again, as in the previous case, the rabbis suggested that he convert to Christianity, and only then would he be accepted into the Rabbanite community.¹⁰⁴

These seem to be the only known cases when Galician Karaites, as a result of their interest in Rabbinic literature, were willing to convert to Talmudic Judaism. Speaking about the Volhynian Karaites, it is known that in 1644 a certain Karaite of Łuck converted to Rabbanite Judaism. Later, however, he turned Christian.¹⁰⁵ The sources are silent concerning the opposite cases, when local Ashkenazim were interested in conversion to Karaism. Indeed, there were a few nineteenth-century instances when Rabbanites tried to become registered as Karaites, but these can be explained only by a desire to avoid double taxation, and not by any interest whatsoever in Karaite religious doctrine.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, at least in one case certain Rabbanite, Simcha ben Joshua, embraced Karaism at the beginning of the nineteenth century only because of his religious convictions.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, ca. 1764 another

¹⁰² Fahn, "Maskilei Yisra'el," 120; idem, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177.

¹⁰³ He lived from the second half of the nineteenth to the first half of the twentieth century; *shohet* (slaughterer) in Halicz in the 1890s; junior hazzan in Halicz before the war, and senior hazzan in Łuck from 1914 to 1917. He was perhaps the same person as the copyist of Abraham Leonowicz's chronicle in 1871, whose name was Jacob-Joseph ben Samuel-Joshua (NLR F.946, op.1, no.898). See concerning him also Fahn, "Ha-Qara'im be-Halich," *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 130; Zarachowicz, "Listy z Halicza," 29; see his poems in Karaim in Grzegorzewski, "Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt," 66-67, 73-74; Kowalski, "Materjały karaimskie," 27.

¹⁰⁴ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 14.

¹⁰⁵ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 685.

¹⁰⁶ See the case of the Austrian citizen Zacharius Weißstein, who claimed to be a Karaite and tried to register his daughter as a Karaite (1891-1892; Russian and CrTat. in Hebrew characters: GAARK, F.241, op.1, no. 533). In 1899 the Krimchaki Jew Joseph Levi tried to become registered as a Karaite merchant in Melitopol' (GAARK F.241, op.1, no. 769; Russian). On the conversion of two Polish women to Karaism in Halicz in 1922 see §5.2. See also anecdotic stories recorded by Jan Grzegorzewski (AN PAN, K III-6, no. 16; Appendix 3.4).

¹⁰⁷ NLR F.946, Evr. II A, no.163/10; Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 686, ft. 122a.

Rabbanite emigrated from the Crimea to Lithuania where he turned Karaite.¹⁰⁸ This meagre information concerning the question of conversion in both Karaite and Rabbanite sources may be explained by the unwillingness of both communities to recognize that such apostasies took place at all.

4.2.4. *The intellectual dimension: Karaite savants and Rabbanite maskilim*

According to Dan Shapira, “to ignore this early *Haskalic*–Karaite romance means missing the point of the Rabbanite–Karaite relationship in the late 18th–mid-19th centuries.”¹⁰⁹ Indeed, in contrast to rather hostile relations on the everyday level, the nineteenth century witnessed a sudden rise of intellectual interaction between Karaite and Rabbanite thinkers. Most of the nineteenth-century Jewish enlighteners-maskilim (M. Jost, M. Kreutzenbach, J. Wertheimer, B. Stern, L. Zunz, A. Geiger, Z. Frankel, A. Jellinek, E. Carmoly, J. Fürst, J. Schwarz, G. Wolf and many others) viewed the Karaites with deep interest and sincere sympathy as the “exemplary” and “emancipated” Israelites, so very different from the rest of European Jewry. Practically each one of them devoted an entire study or at least a few lines to the Karaites. The Karaites, in turn, contributed to many important maskilic periodicals of that time, such as *ha-Melits*, *ha-Karmel*, *ha-Maggid*, *ha-Nesher*, *Kokhve Yitshaq* and others. While a general history of Karaite–Rabbanite relations outside Galicia deserves a separate study, I would like to focus only on the contacts between the Galician Rabbanite maskilim and Karaite intellectual leaders.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁸ Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 685–686, 1337–1338.

¹⁰⁹ Shapira, “Remarks,” 139.

¹¹⁰ On the general attitude of the maskilim to the Karaites, see Reuven Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el ve-hokhmei miqra,” in his *Kitve Reuven Fahn*, 65–141, on Galicia esp. pp. 118–122; Israel Bartal, “Ha-Haskalah be-Eiropa ve-ha-qara’im: dimui u-metsi’ut,” in *Proceedings of 11th World Congress of Jewish Studies* 2:2 (Jerusalem, 1994), 15–22; idem, “The Karaites in Eastern Europe and Jewish Enlightenment,” in *Karaites in Eastern Europe in the Last Generations. Proceedings of the First International Karaite Colloquium*, ed. Dan Shapira et al. (Jerusalem, 2008) (in print); Bałaban, “Karaici,” 22.

Generally, the term *Haskalah* (from Heb. *sekhel* =reason/intellect), or Jewish Enlightenment, is used to denote the movement among the European Jewish intellectual elite toward abandoning their exclusiveness and acquiring the knowledge, manners, and aspirations of the nations among whom the Jews lived. This movement began in Germany in the 1770s, spread to most Central and East European countries, and lasted approximately until the 1880s. The *Haskalah* might be understood as a Jewish variant of the European Enlightenment. This movement also contributed to the rise of Reform Judaism and Zionism. The *Haskalah* and its leaders, enlighteners-maskilim, encouraged the Jews to leave their ghettos and begin studying secular subjects, sciences, medicine, crafts and arts. Moreover, they also encouraged people to emulate Gentiles by adopting their dress, manners, and culture. While suggesting that the Jews should consider themselves to be citizens of their states, the maskilim also emphasized the necessity of being loyal to the governments of their countries. While being critical of Yiddish as a “ghetto language,” the maskilim actively promoted the study of European languages and Hebrew. The maskilim were also fairly critical of the Talmud and some of its rigorist principles. This is why the non-Talmudic Karaites evoked such strong interest on the part of maskilim. Most nineteenth-century maskilim expressed the hope that the Karaites and the Rabbanites soon would be reunited as one people and all ideological battles between the two parties would cease.¹¹¹

The *Haskalah* found its way to Galicia and Austria in the first quarter of the nineteenth century. In addition to Vienna, its main centres were in Brody, Tarnopol, Lwów-Lemberg, and Żółkiew, that is, in the immediate neighbourhood of the Karaite centres in Galicia. Their mutual interest notwithstanding, it seems that it was the

¹¹¹ Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el,” 117-122.

maskilim who initiated contact with the Galician Karaites. The first Austrian maskilim, Peter (Perez) Beer of Bohemia (1758-1838) and Solomon Levinsohn of Hungary (1789-1822) had already demonstrated interest in the Karaites, but they did not contact any Karaite in person, nor were they very knowledgeable about their history.¹¹²

Nahman Krochmal (1785-1840), a famous Galician maskil and scholar, was perhaps the first to establish closer contacts with the local Karaites. Krochmal's writings are full of sympathy for the latter. He even accepted their theories about Karaite origins in the Second Temple period. Born in Brody, he spent most of his life in Żółkiew, which was frequently visited by the Karaites of Halicz and Kukizów. He corresponded with the two most important of them – hazzanim Abraham Leonowicz of Halicz and David ben Mordecai of Kukizów. According to Fahn, David Kukizów was the first Karaite savant to establish close links with the Galician maskilim, and come close enough to a proper understanding of Rabbinic literature, the Talmud, and Haskalah. In many of his writings Kukizów referred with deep respect to the Talmudic scholars and their works.¹¹³

The history of his friendly correspondence with Krochmal was soon marred by an unpleasant episode which clearly shows the complexity of relations not only between the Karaites and the Rabbanites, but also between the maskilim and other Rabbanite Jews. Approximately from 1814 to 1816 Krochmal was engaged in correspondence with David Kukizów. However, in 1816 Kukizów accidentally gave some of his letters to the local Hassidic Jews. The latter, when they discovered that

¹¹² Ibid., 77-78.

¹¹³ Ibid., 85, 87. David may have inherited his friendly attitude to the Rabbanites from his father, Mordecai b. Nisan, who mentioned that it was Rabbanite Jews who had taught him the Hebrew Bible and literature (Maggid, "Reshit davar," xiii). David's sons continued the family tradition of maintaining close contacts with the Rabbanites. This is why it was the Rabbanite scholar David Maggid who edited a collection of David Kukizów's writings: *Tsemah David*, ed. David Maggid (St. Petersburg, 1897).

Krochmal's epistles were full of praise for the Karaite hazzan, copied and publicized these letters. They apparently tried to compromise Krochmal and suggest his deviation from the norms of Judaism and Jewish religious law. The matter was especially sensitive because at the same time the Rabbanite authorities of Lwów imposed a *herem* (=ban) on some maskilim.¹¹⁴

While being understandably vexed by these complications, Krochmal did not change his positive views of the Karaites. He mentioned that they believed in the same Written Law as the Rabbanites, the coming of the Messiah, the resurrection of the dead, and other articles of Jewish creed. Moreover, in spite of the fact that their forefathers rejected the Talmud, in his time many Karaites approached the study of the Oral Law (= *Torah she-be-'al peh*, i.e. the Talmud). Krochmal suggested in his letter that the Karaites should be given hope that some day they would join their Rabbanite brethren, and there would be no division between these two branches of Israel.¹¹⁵

As has been mentioned, Krochmal also maintained contacts with another important Karaite leader, Abraham Leonowicz. During half a century of his tenure in the office of leader of the Halicz community, Leonowicz kept up relations with many famous Rabbanite thinkers, who later mentioned his name in their writings: Isaac-Samuel Reggio of Gorizia, Samson Halevi, Luzzatto, Bloch, Geiger, and Daniel Hartenstein,¹¹⁶ to mention a few. Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), one of the most famous German maskilim, received from Leonowicz a manuscript copy of *Mikhtav Ahuz* by the Rabbanite (!) scholar Joseph-Solomon of Crete (a.k.a. Yashar or

¹¹⁴ Fahn, "Maskilei Yisra'el," 84. The whole story is narrated in detail in Krochmal's letter to Zeev-Wolf Shiff of 1816 (Krochmal, *Kitvei*, 413-416). This period was the time of ideological struggle among maskilim, Orthodox Jews, and Hassidim (Maggid, "Reshit davar," xiii).

¹¹⁵ Krochmal, *Kitvei*, 415.

¹¹⁶ Hartenstein helped the Karaites to transfer money from the Crimea to Galicia in 1834. The Karaites needed this money for construction of a new synagogue in Halicz (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 1654).

Delmedigo), which he published in Berlin in 1840.¹¹⁷ This again shows that the Karaites eagerly read and copied Rabbanite manuscripts – and, moreover, they were the only possessors of some unique manuscripts penned by European Rabbanite scholars. As was mentioned above, Leonowicz's tenure of the hazzan's office was marred by a few conflicts with the Rabbanites. This is why, perhaps, Reuven Fahn came to the conclusion that Leonowicz “did not reach the spiritual state of David Kukizów” in his relations with maskilim.¹¹⁸

Especially interesting is the question of the printing project of the Galician Karaites and their contacts with Samuel Löb (Shmuel Leib) Goldenberg (1807-1846). In 1830 a few important Karaite works were printed in Vienna in one volume by “Anton Edler von Schmid, k.u.k. priv. Buchdrucker” under the title “Dod Mordecai” (Mordecai's beloved [friend]).¹¹⁹ This compendium was edited by the Rabbanite scholar Solomon (Zalman) Stern of Rechnitz (Hungary), who, for some reason, did not indicate his name.¹²⁰ There is no direct evidence as to whether “Dod Mordecai” was printed at the initiative of the Karaite community or if it was a project realised by Solomon Stern and/or Anton von Schmid.¹²¹ The lack of information on the title pages of this book regarding the Karaites' participation, and its complete absence among the Karaite books collected in Halicz by Ivan Yurchenko, strongly suggest that this publication was *not* financed by the Karaites. Otherwise, their financial participation in printing would have been credited on the title pages of “Dod

¹¹⁷ Bałaban, “Karaici,” 22. *Mikhtav Ahuz* was a letter sent by Joseph Delmedigo to his disciple, Karaite scholar Zerah ben Nathan of Troki.

¹¹⁸ Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra'el,” 89.

¹¹⁹ *Dod Mordecai* [ed. Solomon Stern] (Vienna, 1830). This volume included two works by Galician-Volhynian authors: *Dod Mordecai* by Mordecai b. Nisan Kukizów and *Orah Tsaddiqim* by Simcha b. Moses Łucki. Other books were written by non-Galician Karaite authors: *Qitsur Inyan 'al- Shehita* by Joseph Malinowski of Troki; *Halikhot Shehita* by Israel Ma'aravi.

¹²⁰ The fact that it was he who edited *Dod Mordecai* is known from Josef Löwy, “Karaitische Aphorismen,” *Ben-Chananja* 1 (1858): 515-516.

¹²¹ For more information see the letter of A. Leonowicz to Joseph-Solomon Łucki, which largely discusses the Vienna edition of *Dod Mordecai* (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 899).

Mordecai”, and many copies of the book would have remained in Halicz (cf. e.g. the large number of copies of the Vienna Karaite *siddur* in the Yurchenko MSS in Halicz).

One can be certain, however, that the Karaites intended to publish a few other voluminous Karaite works with the same printer. For this purpose Abraham Leonowicz lent six precious Karaite manuscripts to Samuel Löb Goldenberg, who apparently promised to print them. Moreover, in 1830 Goldenberg commissioned the copying of Solomon ben Aaron’s *Appiryon ‘Asah Lo*.¹²² Goldenberg called the Karaite hazzan Mordkowicz, the copyist of this manuscript, his “beloved friend”; apparently he met Mordkowicz personally a few times.¹²³ By the end of 1831 all six manuscripts borrowed by Goldenberg were checked by the Royal *Central-Bücher-Revisions-Amt* and the *Wiener Zensur im Innern*,¹²⁴ and seemed to be ready for publication. Another important Galician maskil, Solomon Rapaport (Shir), also thoroughly approved this project.¹²⁵

Surprisingly, the manuscripts in question were never published. Karaite sources directly accused Goldenberg of taking these manuscripts for himself and selling them to Anton Schmid for the enormous sum of 800 Rhenish florins.¹²⁶ While the veracity of these accusations remains unclear, we may assume that Goldenberg, who, according to some sources, was more of a businessman than an enlightener,¹²⁷ indeed failed the Karaites’ expectations. About the same time, in the early 1830s, he started

¹²² Bod. MS Reggio 36 and 37 (cf. Neubauer, *Catalogue*, 190, nos. 891-892). The first part of *Appiryon ‘Asa Lo* was copied by a Rabbanite scribe in Tarnopol in 1830, the second one by Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz, also in 1830.

¹²³ Bod. MS Reggio 37, fol. 193r.

¹²⁴ Because of the fact that the censors deleted some of the manuscripts’ colophons, the verdict of censorship was “Imprimatur omissis deletis” (Schwarz, *Hebräischen Handschriften*, 138-142).

¹²⁵ M. Hendel, “Maskilim and Haskalah (Enlightenment) Movement in Bolekhov in the 19th Century,” in *Sefer ha-zikkaron le-qedoshei Bolechów*, ed. Y. Eshel (n.p., 1957), 194.

¹²⁶ Samuel Poznański, “Karäische Drucke und Druckereien,” *Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie* 21 (1918): 67, ft.1; Fahn, “Maskilei Yisra’el,” 89, ft. 6.

¹²⁷ Hendel, “Maskilim and Haskalah,” 195.

printing the famous maskilic periodical *Kerem Hemed*¹²⁸ – and, perhaps, abandoned his Karaite project. On the other hand, we may assume that there might have been some other reasons for the failure of this project. There is no doubt that the money for printing was supposed to be received from the Crimea. The Crimeans, however, started their own publishing house in Eupatoria, and perhaps could not simultaneously contribute to the publication in Vienna. Nevertheless, Goldenberg continued his negotiations with the Karaites even later. In 1837 he sent a letter to Abraham Leonowicz requesting the latter to send him a list of the works of Abraham Firkowicz.¹²⁹ In 1845 (i.e. one year before Goldenberg's death) Anton Schmid donated all of the aforementioned Karaite manuscripts to the Royal library in Vienna.¹³⁰

In 1844 Halicz was visited by the famous German scholar-maskil Julius Fürst, who published quite an enthusiastic report on the local Karaite community.¹³¹ The friendship between the Karaites and maskilim reached its apogee in the time of Abraham Leonowicz's son and successor, Joseph Leonowicz (1794-1867, *hazzan* from 1851-1867). Leonowicz maintained long and friendly relations with the Rabbanite scholar Moses-Joseph Löwy (1809-1882) of Groß Kanissa (Nagykanizsa) in Hungary. The correspondence between the Karaite sage and the Rabbanite scholar started in 1859 and lasted until Leonowicz's death in 1867.¹³² Their correspondence is perhaps the best source for understanding relations between the Karaites and maskilim in the nineteenth century. This exchange of letters was published in the

¹²⁸ Vols. 1-2 (Vienna, 1833, 1836); vols. 3-4 (Prague, 1838, 1843).

¹²⁹ NLR F.946, op.1, no. 19. Written in Tarnopol, 1837; Hebrew, 2 fols. Leonowicz forwarded this letter to Firkowicz.

¹³⁰ Hebr. 21-23 (Schwarz, *Hebräischen Handschriften*, 138-142). Karaite manuscripts continued to interest Austro-Hungarian Rabbanites well into the twentieth century: Bernard Munkácsi purchased an important Karaite manuscript from a poor Hungarian Jew in Kaschau as late as 1909 (Bernhard Munkácsi, "Karäisch-tatarische Hymnen aus Polen," *Keleti Szemle* 10:3 (1909): 185).

¹³¹ [Fürst], "Halicz," 307-308.

¹³² Löwy exchanged his first letters with Leonowicz ca.1859 (Josef Löwy, "Karaitische Aphorismen," *Ben-Chananja* 2 (1859): 266).

important Viennese Jewish periodical *Kokhve Yitshaq*,¹³³ and became one of the main sources of information on the Karaites for emancipated Jewish intellectuals of that time. Leonowicz's letters attest to his excellent command of Hebrew and his good acquaintance with Rabbinic and Karaite literature, as well as modern European maskil periodicals. In his letters Leonowicz mainly responded to the enquiries of his inquisitive Rabbanite interlocutor, while providing him with historical information on the development of Karaism and the specific nature of Karaite literature and religious tradition.

In one of his letters Leonowicz expressly stated that at some point in the future, during the coming of the Messiah, the people of Israel (*'am Yisra'el*) would not be divided between two kingdoms (i.e. Rabbanites and Karaites), but would be one people again (*'am ehad*).¹³⁴ This statement clearly shows that the Karaite *hazzan* believed in the possibility of the reunification of the Karaites and Rabbanites – if not today, at least during the End of Days. The position of the Rabbanite counterpart in this dialogue, Moses-Joseph Löwy, is less evident concerning this issue, but his knowledge of Karaite literature and interest in Karaite religious traditions clearly indicate his sympathy for this small group of Jewish scripturalists.¹³⁵ Their friendly dialogue was interrupted by the death of Joseph Leonowicz. Before his death, however, the Karaite *hazzan* presented Löwy with a book entitled *Imrei shefer 'al kelalei ha-diqduq* (Heb. “Lovely words on the rules of grammar”).¹³⁶ Another Hungarian maskil, Menahem Mendel Rosenthal, who was in contact with the Karaites of Łuck and Halicz, also expressed the idea that despite all their differences, the

¹³³ Or *Kochbe Jizchak* in the German transliteration.

¹³⁴ “Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom,” *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 81.

¹³⁵ “Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom,” *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (Vienna, 1865): 77-82; 32 (1865): 18-20; 33 (1866): 25-29; 34 (1867): 51-53; 35 (1868): 42-43; 36 (1869): 17-18. See also a MS copy made from the printed edition in MS LMAB, F.305, no. 250.

¹³⁶ Fürst, *Geschichte*, 139.

Karaites and Rabbanites were one people (*'am ehad*) because of their common recognition of the Written Law (i.e. the Hebrew Bible).¹³⁷

Leonowicz mentioned his friendly relations with Moses Tenenbaum, a Rabbanite scholar from Tarnopol, who visited his home in Halicz and brought him some Hebrew literature.¹³⁸ At Tenenbaum's request, Leonowicz sent him a letter with historical notes on the settlement of the Karaites in Halicz. This letter was published in *Ha-Nesher*, a supplement to the important maskil weekly *Ha-Mevasser* published in Lwów by Joseph Kohn.¹³⁹ In addition to his contact with maskilim, Leonowicz frequently met Rabbanite Jews during his work at the court of justice in Halicz, and even read Löwy's letters to some of them.¹⁴⁰

In his famous study on the history of the Polish Karaites, the renowned Jewish scholar from Lwów, Majer Bałaban, claimed that Leonowicz's successor, Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz, had tried to "unite the Karaites with the Rabbanites."¹⁴¹ The source of Bałaban's information concerning this matter is unclear. From other data we certainly know that Mordkowicz indeed seemed to maintain friendly relations with the Rabbanites, but information is lacking with regard to his attempts to reunite the Karaites with their Talmudic brethren. It is possible that Bałaban came to this conclusion on the basis of the fact that by the time of Mordkowicz's tenure in the hazzan's office (1867-1884), the Karaites had adopted many Rabbanite practices, such as wearing the *tallit qatan* and ear locks. However, again, this is not evidence of actual attempts by Mordkowicz to unite the Karaites with the Rabbanites. Perhaps Bałaban was referring to later close contacts between the Karaites and Rabbanites,

¹³⁷ Fahn, "Maskilei Yisra'el," 118-119.

¹³⁸ "Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom," *Kochbe Jizchak* 33 (1866): 28.

¹³⁹ Tenenbaum, "Le-qorot." In fact, this is a copy of (pseudo)historical notes by A. Leonowicz with some insignificant variations (see above, §4.1.2).

¹⁴⁰ "Divrei ha-brit ve ha-shalom," *Kochbe Jizchak* 31 (1865): 78.

¹⁴¹ "...spodziewał się może... połączyć karaitów z Żydami co mu się naturalnie udać nie mogło" (Bałaban, "Karaici," 22).

which he indeed could have interpreted as attempts to re-unite these two branches of Judaism (see §4.2.3).

4.2.5. *Abraham Firkowicz and the Austrian maskilim.*

Although Abraham Firkowicz was not a Galician Karaite, a few words should be said about his connection with the Austrian and Galician maskilim. Moreover, because of the fact that Firkowicz was undoubtedly the key figure in nineteenth-century Karaite history, his relations with the Rabbanite Jews might help us to understand the nature of Karaite–Rabbanite relations in general. According to Dan Shapira, Firkowicz’s biography was that of a Karaite maskil, and this is why he so eagerly maintained contacts with the Ashkenazic enlighteners throughout his whole life. Young Firkowicz contacted the Brody maskilim (especially Joseph Perl) as early as the second decade of the nineteenth century.¹⁴² Having unearthed hundreds of extremely precious and unique Hebrew manuscripts in the Crimea in 1839, Firkowicz started disseminating information about his sensational findings among European Christian and Jewish scholars. Especially important were his relations with Simcha Pinsker (1801-1864), a famous Austrian Hebrew scholar and pedagogue, whose son, Leon (Judah Leib) Pinsker (1821-1891), was one of the founders of the Zionist movement.

Firkowicz met Pinsker in Odessa, and suggested studying some of his manuscripts. These manuscripts were analysed by Pinsker in one of his most important studies – *Liqqute Qadmoniyot* (Vienna, 1860)¹⁴³ – in which Pinsker unquestioningly accepted all of Firkowicz’s discoveries and highly praised the Karaite’s scholarly qualities. Firkowicz continued his friendship with Russian and European maskilim until the end of his days. In 1873 Solomon Buber (1827-1906), an

¹⁴² Shapira, “Remarks,” 138-139, 145-146.

¹⁴³ Cf. also Judah Bardach (a.k.a. Julius Bardach, 1828-c.1897), *Mazkir li-vnei Reshef* (Vienna, 1869), which is largely dedicated to Pinsker and his Karaitica manuscripts.

Austrian scholar and editor of Hebrew works, tried to contact Firkowicz in order to obtain some Hebrew manuscripts from him.¹⁴⁴ In 1871, after his visit to the community of Halicz, Firkowicz spent a few days in Vienna, where he met a few Viennese Jewish scholars. At the same time, he printed there a collection of poems and essays with the help of Perez (Peter) ben Moses Smolenskin (1842-1885).¹⁴⁵ After Firkowicz's death in 1874, Adolf Jellinek (1821-1893), a famous Austrian rabbi and scholar, published in Vienna Firkowicz's regulations pertaining to the religious life of the Karaites of Halicz.¹⁴⁶

Having said that Firkowicz maintained good contacts with Jewish enlighteners, it is important to remember that relations between Firkowicz and the Rabbanite Jews in general were far from being friendly – often thanks to Firkowicz's difficult character, often due to the rigorism of Rabbanite circles. In 1834, during his stay in Berdyczów, Firkowicz quarrelled with the local Hasidic rabbi, and their ideological debate developed into a fist-fight. Consequently, Firkowicz wrote a few extremely bitter polemical treatises directed against the Hassidim and Rabbanite Jews in general. These treatises contained such grave and absolutely groundless accusations that even the Karaite authorities were forced to destroy the remaining copies of these books.¹⁴⁷ According to Ephraim Deinard, Firkowicz was somewhat surprised that during his trip through Europe in 1871 he was deeply respected by the local Rabbanites – and no one reminded him about his attacks against them in the 1830s.¹⁴⁸ Nevertheless, some maskilim, with their scholarly approach to Jewish history, were the first to doubt the veracity of Firkowicz's "sensational" epigraphic discoveries as early as the 1840s, long before the academic critique of Firkowicz's activity by Abraham Harkavy and

¹⁴⁴ Two letters of Solomon Buber to A. Firkowicz (Lwów, 1873; Hebrew) (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 19).

¹⁴⁵ Abraham Firkowicz, *Bene Reshef* (Vienna, 1871).

¹⁴⁶ Jellinek, *Abraham Firkowitsch*.

¹⁴⁷ Shapira, *Avraham Firkowicz*, 62-64.

¹⁴⁸ Deinard, *Toledot Even Reshef*, 19.

other famous Hebraists.¹⁴⁹ Indeed, in spite of the fact that no one can deny that Firkowicz gathered one of the largest European collections of Hebrew, Samaritan and Judeo-Arabic manuscripts, most of his epigraphic findings, and practically *all* documents and tombstone inscriptions related to Khazar history were either falsified or heavily interpolated.¹⁵⁰

4.2.6. *The nature of Karaite–Rabbanite relations: a conclusion*

The romance between the Karaite and Rabbanite enlighteners lasted, perhaps, until the end of the *Haskalah* in the 1880s. This, however, does not mean that Rabbanite scholars and men of letters stopped being interested in the Karaites. It is in that period, from the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century that a few important travel reports and scholarly studies on the Karaites by Ashkenazic authors appeared in print.¹⁵¹ Nevertheless, the overall tone of these publications and the attitude of their authors towards the Karaites significantly differed from that of the maskilim. The relations between the Karaites and maskilim were formed on the basis of reciprocal interest, mutual understanding and amicable dialogue. Moreover, maskilim often suggested that the rest of European Jewry should take the non-Talmudic Karaites as an example worthy of being imitated. Later Rabbanite authors, their sincere interest in the Karaites notwithstanding, seemed to be much less enthusiastic with regard to the Karaites, often looking upon them as a vanishing Jewish sect with strange customs and traditions. Perhaps the main feeling of the Rabbanite authors visiting the Karaites at this time was that of compassion for the tiny

¹⁴⁹ Their critical articles on this subject were published in such important maskil periodicals of that time as *Israelitische Annale*, *Zion*, *Kerem Hemed*, and *Literaturblatt des Orients* (see the analysis of these publications in Dan Shapira, “Yitshaq Sangari, Sangarit, Bezalel Stern and Avraham Firkowicz: Notes on Two Forged Inscriptions,” *Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi* 12 (2002-2003): 223-260).

¹⁵⁰ See the most recent discoveries in this field in: Shapira, “Yitshaq Sangari”; idem, *Avraham Firkowicz*; idem, “Nyneshnee sostoianie,” 102-130.

¹⁵¹ *Vide infra* references to publications by such authors as M. Bałaban and R. Fahn.

diminishing community. Most of them undoubtedly continued looking upon the Karaites as their religious brethren, albeit much more conservative and pious than their own co-religionists, the Talmudic Jews. Reuven Fahn thoughtfully asked in 1894: “In their love for Zion are they not our brethren?”¹⁵²

Karaite intellectuals, in turn, also continued looking forward to maintaining their contacts with Rabbanite scholars. It seems that from the end of the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, because of the apparent lack of charismatic leaders, Galician Karaite intellectuals were coming closer and closer to the Rabbanite tradition. Another reason for the decline of Karaite theological thought within the local community was the absence of spiritual support from the Crimea after the death of Abraham Firkowicz in 1874. As we have seen, Mordkowicz’s successor, Zarach Leonowicz (hazzan from 1884 to 1894), was intimately acquainted with Rabbinic literature and the Talmud.¹⁵³ Another Karaite intellectual of that time, Jacob-Joseph Leonowicz, also was knowledgeable in Jewish philosophy and the works of Rambam (Maimonides).¹⁵⁴ Among the books from which Simcha and Jacob Leonowicz taught Karaite children at the end of the nineteenth century, one can find only a few works by local and Byzantine Karaite authors! The rest of their curriculum included works by such authoritative Rabbanite authors as Ibn Ezra, Nachmanides, Maimonides, Abrabanel, David Kimchi, Ibn Tibbon, Rashi, and even the Talmudic treatise *Pirkei Avot*.¹⁵⁵

Thus, it seems that on the level of *intellectual* contacts, relations between the Galician Karaites and the Rabbanites from 1772 to 1918 continued to be friendly and

¹⁵² Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177. In another place he called the continuation of the Karaites’ existence “wonder of wonders” (Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 15 (1897): 119).

¹⁵³ For a discussion concerning the veracity of this story see § 4.2.3.

¹⁵⁴ He showed Fahn some Karaite manuscripts and prayer-books kept in the synagogue (Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 3:22 (1894): 177).

¹⁵⁵ Fahn, “Ha-Qara’im be-Halich,” *Ha-Magid* 6: 16 (1897): 130.

amicable. As has been shown above, *everyday* hostility between the Karaites and the Rabbanites was determined, first of all, by ongoing economic competition, in which the larger and more influential Rabbanite community always prevailed over the small Karaite qehilah. In this economic rivalry, however, the Karaites were always protected and supported by the Austrian government. The positive discrimination of the tiny Karaite community by the Austrian administration also caused much indignation and animosity towards the Karaites on the part of the Galician Ashkenazim. Differences in the ideological and religious doctrines of these two branches of Judaism also were often the reason for hostility, derision and reciprocal accusations of heretical corruption of what each side in the conflict called “true Judaism.” Very frequently these accusations were based on a lack of proper knowledge concerning each other’s religious practices, misunderstandings and negative stereotypical clichés. In general, the sources indicate that it was usually the Rabbanites who mistreated the Karaites, whereas the Karaite community had a much more tolerant and peaceful position with regard to their Talmudic brethren.

On the other hand, the same economic competition and the geographic proximity of these two communities, which normally lived next to each other, were also reasons why the Karaites were constantly engaged in financial dealings and commercial negotiations with their Talmudic neighbours. Personal contacts between the Karaites and Rabbanites, which were developed in the course of commercial activity, were often of a friendly and tolerant character. These love-hate relations between the Karaites and Rabbanites continued after the fall of the Austrian monarchy and Poland’s annexation of Galicia in 1918. For an analysis of the relations between the Karaites and the Ashkenazim in the interwar and post-war period see §5.3.2, §6.5, and §7.1.

Chapter 5. Karaites in Polish Galicia Between the Two World Wars

5.1. General state of the community after World War I

In 1919-1920, after the successful war with the Red Army and suppression of Ukrainian nationalists, Poland won back the Galician and Volhynian territory which had been taken during the partitions of the country at the end of the eighteenth century. The interwar period ushered in a new epoch for the Galician Karaites, an epoch which signified the end of their isolated existence as a small and obscure Jewish community in Austria, a time of modernisation of their communal life and their entrance into Polish society. At the same time, it also ushered in a time of growing religious and demographic decline of the community.

The ethnic and religious structure of interwar Poland was highly diverse: around one third of the population consisted of ethnic minorities whose legal status sometimes was not clearly defined.¹ The Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, whose number hardly exceeded a thousand souls, were one of the smallest ethnic minorities of the country. In this period they were often referred to by the Polish press as *najmniejsza mniejszość narodowa w Polsce* ("Poland's most minor ethnic minority").²

The five most important interwar Karaite communities in Poland and Lithuania were: Troki, Wilno, Łuck, Halicz, and Poniewież. Traditionally, the communities were divided into two main groups: the northern (Wilno, Troki, Poniewież) and the

¹ Michał Tymowski, Jan Kieniewicz, Jerzy Holzer, *Historia Polski* (Warsaw, 1990), 282, 286. In interbellum Poland there were about 11,792,200 representatives of non-Polish ethnicity (i.e. 36% of the whole population), whereas in contemporary Poland their number is estimated to be 1,487,600 – 2,141,800 (only around 3.5%-5.5%) (Gabriele Simoncini, "National Minorities of Poland at the End of the Twentieth Century," *Polish Review* 43:2 (1998)). Cf. Jerzy Tomaszewski, *Ojczyzna nie tylko Polaków* (Warsaw, 1985), 50.

² E.g. Jerzy Wyszomirski, "Z życia najmniejszej mniejszości," *Gazeta Polska* (10.02.1937); ks. Nikodem Ludomir Cieszyński, "Najmniejsza mniejszość w Polsce," *Roczniki Katolickie na Rok Pański 1930* (Poznań, 1930), 323-331; idem, "Najmniejsza mniejszość w Polsce," *Dziennik Poznański* (29.09.1929); Tadeusz Kowalski, "Karaimi – najmniejszy lud w Europie," *Radio 45* (8.11.1931); Wł. Rydzewski, "Najmniejsza mniejszość w Polsce," *Tygodnik Ilustrowany* 45 (5.11.1932).

southern (Galician and Volhynian) communities. Each of these communities had its own specific features. Linguistically, there were strong differences between the southern and northern dialects of the Karaim language. In terms of their cultural and liturgical traditions, the Galician-Volhynian Karaites tended to be more prone to Ashkenazic influence than their northern brethren. Furthermore, there also were state, economical, and political borders which divided them: after 1919 the northern Karaite communities (Poniewież, Nowe Miasto, Birża, Upity, Poswol, Kowno, and Kiejdany) were included in the territory of independent Lithuania and were thus separated from their co-religionists in Troki and Wilno. These northern Karaite communities were under Lithuanian cultural influence. The Karaites of Troki, mostly petty farmers and artisans, who were strict in their religious views, were rather looked down upon by the wealthy, well-educated and emancipated Karaites of the capital city of Wilno, who were much less rigorous in their religious practices. These two communities, together with the Karaites of Łuck, who from 1772 to 1918 lived in a territory under the Russian protectorate, seemed to be more Russified than Polonized.

The Halicz community suffered more than any other Karaite community in the course of World War I: its houses were heavily damaged during military operations; tombstones from the local cemetery were often used for military purposes or simply thrown into the Dniester; the lavishly decorated synagogue (kenesa) was sacked and destroyed by marauders.³ After World War I the Karaites of Łuck and Halicz found themselves to be residents of the so-called “Kresy” – eastern Polish territories bordering the Soviet Union. These regions, which were inhabited by a considerable number of non-Polish ethnic minorities, in the 1920s had been usually treated by the

³ The Karaite community of Halicz to the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Public Education (MWRiOP), 1919, Polish (AAN MWRiOP 1466, fols.18-19). See the full list of damaged houses together with the names of their owners, the precise enumeration of damages suffered during 1916/1917, and the estimate of costs needed for their restoration in AAN MWRiOP no.1466, fols.20-26; DAIFO F.18, op.1, nos. 376, 377, 533, 534, 616, 618.

Polish officials as “disputed territories” with a not very patriotic population. The Karaites of Russian Poland (Łuck, Wilno, Troki) – their previous active acculturation into Russian society notwithstanding – after 1919 started emphasizing their patriotic feelings with regard to Poland and Polish history. Their pro-Polish tendencies immediately evoked the interest of the Polish officials. An ardent Polish patriot, the Orientalist Jan Grzegorzewski, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs presented the Karaites as a small but loyal ethnic group in the *Kresy*.⁴ Again, as during Austrian times, the fact that the whole Karaite population of Galicia, Volhynia, and Lithuania did not exceed a thousand souls was simply disregarded. The Karaites represented an important example of pro-Polish patriotism to be imitated by other, less loyal, citizens of the Rzeczpospolita.⁵ The Rabbanite Jews, on the contrary, were accused of supporting the Bolsheviks and of being “anti-Polish and pro-Ukrainian.”⁶

Subsequently, in contrast to its treatment of the Rabbanite Jews, the Polish administration did not discriminate against the Karaites. On the contrary, the Polish government financially supported the tiny Karaite community in many of its endeavours. Thus, in distinction to Austrian times, when it was the duty of the community members to finance their leaders, the Karaite hazzanim and their head, the hakham, received their salaries directly from the state. Moreover, the Polish administration also subsidized such Karaite projects as renovation of their synagogues (kenesalar), and publication of Karaite periodicals.

A few introductory words should be said here about Seraja Szapszał (1873-1961), the last hakham of the East European Karaites, the key figure in the benevolent treatment of the Karaite community in interwar Poland, and later, during the Nazi

⁴ AAN MWRiOP 1461, fol.85.

⁵ A letter from a MWRiOP official, who mentioned that the Karaite community was “very small and did not show any conspicuous manifestations of Polish patriotism,” it seems, did not produce any effect (AAN MWRiOP, no.1461, fol.85).

⁶ A.I.Solzhenitsyn, *Dvesti let vmeste*, vol. 2 (Moscow, 2002), 137.

occupation. A secular person, an Orientalist scholar, and a former Russian secret agent, Szapszał drastically changed the life and identity of his flock in Eastern Europe, not only in the interwar period, but also throughout the twentieth century. The hero of several novels, whose life-story is often enshrouded in the mist of the most unbelievable myths, Seraja ben Mordecai Szapszał (or Seraya Shapshal / Şapşal⁷) was brought up in his native Crimea and in 1901 graduated from the faculty of Oriental languages in St. Petersburg. In 1908 he was instrumental in suppressing the constitutionalist *coup d'état* in Persia, where he worked as a tutor to the Shah's son and, apparently, as a high-ranking Russian secret agent.⁸ He played an important role in Imperial Russia's Oriental politics – and was personally acquainted with the family of Tsar Nicholas II. In 1915, somewhat surprisingly, his notoriety⁹ and lack of proper religious education notwithstanding, he was elected hakham of the Crimea and Odessa, i.e. the highest spiritual authority in the Russian Karaite community. In 1919 he left the Crimea, which was by that time occupied by the Red Army, and fled to Georgia and then to Turkey, where he worked as a clerk in a stagnating local bank.

The Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, who at that time were trying to recuperate from the physical and moral losses of the First World War, were desperately looking for a new hakham. It was hoped that a new holder of this position (the position of the Polish-Lithuanian hakham had remained unoccupied after 1911) would represent the Karaites to the Polish government and would obtain for the community the same privileges as those granted by the Russian administration. Indeed from 1863 to 1917 the Karaites of Russia, although a non-Christian minority, were completely excluded

⁷ Seraya/Sergei Markovich Shapshal in Russian.

⁸ For details see K.N. Smirnov, *Zapiski vospitatelia persidskogo shakha. 1907-1914 gody*, ed. N.K. Ter-Oganov (Tel-Aviv, 2002), 20-24, 43-44, and passim; Edward Granville Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910), 170-171, 198-200, 418-420 and passim.

⁹ He even received the nickname *krovavyi Shapshal* (Rus. "bloody Shapshal") for his role in the suppression of the constitutionalist uprising in Persia in 1908.

from the burdensome Jewish laws, received full rights of citizenship, could freely move and settle around the country, were able to enter universities, and enjoyed many other legal privileges.¹⁰ This was the ideal position which the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites hoped to acquire for their community in interwar Poland.

Alas, the local Karaites apparently lacked Szapszał's diplomatic talents and charisma, which this is why on 23rd October 1927 representatives of the four main Polish-Lithuanian Karaite communities unanimously elected Szapszał to be their hakham as the only worthy candidate for this position.¹¹ His election was also enthusiastically welcomed by the Polish officials, who stated that in the event of Szapszał's election to the hakham's office, he would receive a salary of 12.000 złoty per annum. If some other candidate were elected, the hakham's salary was supposed to be reduced to only 6,000 złoty.¹² The Wilno administration also expected Szapszał to improve the level of the teaching of Oriental history and languages in the city. One may suggest that Szapszał's international reputation and his political connections in Islamic countries, such as Turkey and Persia, also produced quite a strong impression on the Polish regime.

Almost immediately upon his arrival in Poland in May 1928, in order to secure a better, non-Jewish status for the local community, Szapszał began a series of dejudaization reforms which were essentially aimed at the Turkicization of Karaite religious life and ethnic identity. Szapszał's dejudaization policy opened a new epoch in the history of the local Karaites, which resulted in the formation of an absolutely different, Turkic, identity of the East European Karaites. It is after Szapszał's arrival in Poland that the Galician Karaite community, with its traditional approach to the study of the Hebrew language and religion, stopped playing a role in the cultural life

¹⁰ See *Sbornik starinnykh gramot*; Miller, *Karaite Separatism*.

¹¹ AAN MWRiOP 1465, fols. 131-135, 139-140; see also N.S., "Zjazd w Trokach," *MK* 2:1 (1929): 49.

¹² AAN MWRiOP 1464, fols. 101, 111, 115-117.

of the Polish Karaite community. Szapszał's reforms and the process of endogenous and exogenous dejudaization of the local Karaites will be discussed at length in Chapter 6.¹³

After the annexation of Galicia by Poland in 1919-1920, Galicia was officially called *Małopolska Wschodnia* (Eastern Little Poland). It was divided into three *województwo* (administrative districts/voivodships), those of Lwów, Stanisławów, and Tarnopol. These were further divided into 55 *powiaty* (counties).¹⁴ Interwar Halicz, with its five thousand inhabitants, remained the second largest town in the Stanisławskie województwo.¹⁵ Nevertheless, in the period of the Second Polish Republic Halicz certainly became even less significant than in Austrian times. Approximately half of the interwar population of Halicz was Ruthenian/Ukrainian (2,300 persons, ca.50%); the second largest group were the Talmudic Jews (1,060 persons, ca.20%). The Poles (300 persons, i.e. ca.6% of the population) were in the minority. Nevertheless, linguistically, when grouped together with the Polish speaking Karaites and the *Latynnyky* (Polonized Ukrainians/Ruthenians), the Poles also constituted an important part of the town's population.¹⁶

Zarach Zarachowicz estimated that, for various reasons, about 25% of the

¹³ A citizen of Tsarist Russia, Persia, Poland, and Soviet- and Nazi-occupied Lithuania, he ended his days as a Soviet scholar in Wilno (Vilnius) in 1961. Apart from his activity as the leader of the Karaite community, he is also known as an Orientalist, the author of several valuable academic studies. Later Karaite authors often tend to mythologize and over-romanticize many aspects of his biography, whereas his opponents are usually too hypercritical of his activities and achievements. While his complete biography is a desideratum, see now Mikhail Kizilov, "New Materials on the Biography of S.M.Szapszał (1928-1939)," in *Materialy Deviatoi Mezhdunarodnoi Konferentsii po Iudaike* (Moscow, 2002), 255-273; Dan Shapira, "A Jewish Pan-Turkist: Seraya Szapszał (Şapşaloğlu) and His Work 'Qırım Qaray Türkleri'," *Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae* 58:4 (2005): 349-380. See his photos in Illustrations, figs. 9.7-9.9.

¹⁴ Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy*, xx.

¹⁵ Ibid., 82. The population of Stanisławów, the centre of the district, was 64,000.

¹⁶ This is according to the official statistics of 1939 (ibid.). These statistical data do not mention anything about a few other minor sectarian groups that supposedly lived in Halicz between the two wars (cf. Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13).

Karaite population of Halicz died from 1915 to 1920.¹⁷ According to the official estimates of 1919 there were around 150 Karaites living in the towns of Halicz and Lwów, and in the adjacent villages of Załukiew, Żyrawa and Bóbrka.¹⁸ These data were corroborated by Corrado Gini's expedition, which found about 145-150 Karaites in Halicz in 1934.¹⁹ The Karaites (about 3% of the town's population) were the smallest ethnic minority of Halicz. Thus, in the interwar period the Karaite community of Halicz became even smaller than before. Furthermore, the community continued shrinking because of natural decrease, emigration, and conversion to Christianity. According to a Jewish journalist who visited Halicz in 1937, there were apparent traces of physical degradation among members of the community.²⁰ An interwar report on the Karaite community of Troki in Lithuania provided similar information.²¹ Both of these accounts, however, possess a certain anti-Karaite bias and cannot be fully trusted. Some other observers testified that in the 1920s the tendency toward physical degradation was not very noticeable.²²

In general, however, it seems that in many respects the everyday and spiritual life of the community became much better off than during the Austrian period. The Galicians re-established close contacts with their Volhynian and Lithuanian brethren, whereas the younger Karaites began attending Polish schools, colleges and universities.²³ In contrast to the local Rabbanite Jews, who continued suffering from public and state anti-Semitism, the Karaites were treated by the interwar Polish government on the same legal footing as Christian citizens of the Rzeczpospolita,

¹⁷ Zarachowicz, "Listy z Halicza," 27-28. 44 Karaites died from 1915 to 1920, which indeed seems to be around a quarter of the community (Z.Z., "Ze statystyki," 32-33).

¹⁸ AAN MWRiOP 1461, fols. 1-2.

¹⁹ Gini, "I Caraimi," 25. For more information on this expedition, see § 6.3.

²⁰ Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13.

²¹ M.Blum, "Ha-qara'im bi-Troki bi-shnat 5695/1934," *Ha-Davar* (Jerusalem, 3 Tishri 1935).

²² "Physisch und geistig unentwickelte Individuen habe ich nur selten beobachtet" (Kowalski, *Karaimische Texte*, x). Corrado Gini, unfortunately, did not mention the problem of physical degradation in his "I Caraimi."

²³ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 15.

without any ethnic or religious limitations. During Polish times many Halicz Karaites started their careers as clerks and lawyers. In addition to their official jobs, most Karaites maintained large plots of land under their ownership.²⁴ Many Karaites worked on the railway. According to a Jewish traveller of the 1930s, it was often the case that the trains running in the vicinity of Halicz were staffed exclusively with Karaites. The traveller even quoted a local Galician saying (perhaps in his translation from Polish): “Wenn ein Karäer zur Welt kommt, wird er gleich in das Eisenbahnerregister eingetragen.”²⁵

Indeed, altogether 14 Karaites worked at the railroad station. Moreover, one of them, Szymon Ickowicz, was the stationmaster.²⁶ Nevertheless, most Karaites remained agricultural workers; many were artisans; some worked in the public sphere. Three worked as lawyers, one of whom (Zarach Zarachowicz) was a secretary to the local court of justice; five had the title of “Ribbi” and thus were allowed to fulfil the duties of the hazzan.²⁷ According to Zarach Zarachowicz, the Karaite peasants of Załukiew possessed more land and agricultural equipment than their Slavic neighbours.²⁸

In 1919, in accordance with the modernization of Karaite society, the local community elected a board of administration which, for the first time, consisted of secular and not spiritual authorities. Its members were: Joseph (Józef) Eszwowicz (chairman), Abraham Leonowicz (vice-chairman), Leon Szulimowicz, David Abrahamowicz, Zarach Zarachowicz, and Joshua (Ezua) Leonowicz.²⁹ In 1923 a new

²⁴ Eszwowicz, “Halyts’ka karaïms’ka hromada,” 6-7.

²⁵ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13.

²⁶ Eszwowicz, “Halyts’ka karaïms’ka hromada,” 6.

²⁷ Ibid., 6-7.

²⁸ Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 26.

²⁹ Elected on 5 Apr. 1919 (Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 28).

board was elected, while Joseph Eszwowicz remained its head. Nevertheless, because of the conflict between Eszwowicz and hazzan Samuel Mordkowicz, other members of the board resigned from their duties.³⁰ A new board of administration was elected in 1925, and its head was Ezua Leonowicz.

In spite of its small number, in the 1920s, before the arrival of Seraja Szapszał, the role of the Galician community in the life of the Karaite communities of Poland was very significant. The leader of the Galician community, Zachariah Nowachowicz, was the chairman of the all-Karaite conference that took place in Wilno on 30 February 1924.³¹ During the official assembly of representatives of the Karaite communities of the Rzeczpospolita on 28 December 1923, the Galician community showed itself to be perhaps the most conservative Karaite qehilah in Eastern Europe. On that day the Karaites of Halicz rejected the projects of other communities for the establishment of a Karaite Religious Union in Poland on the grounds that, in their view, Karaite spiritual authorities should hold their positions permanently, until death, and not for some temporary period as was suggested by other communities.³² In spite of the fact that other Polish communities (those of Troki, Wilno, and Łuck) composed a unified statute for the Karaite Religious Union of Poland, the Galician Karaites did not accept it until 1925. Only in May 1925, when the Polish administration started becoming anxious about the situation and suggested that the Galicians develop their own independent statute, the Halicz Karaites decided to join the project proposed by the other communities.³³ It seems, however, that the Halicz community joined

³⁰ J.Eszwowicz to the *starostwo* in Stanisławów, Autumn 1923, Polish (AAN MWRiOP 1461, fols. 111, 114).

³¹ Szymon Pilecki, "Rol' karaimov Galicha v ustanovlenii yuridicheskogo statusa karaimskikh obshchin v 1920-30 gody," in *Karaimy Halycha*, 96.

³² AAN MWRiOP 1461, fols.30, 47-48; cf. *ibid.*, fol. 288.

³³ Z.Z. [Zarach Zarachowicz], "Organizacja gminy," *MK* 1:3 (1926): 26.

Związek Gmin Karaimskich w Polsce even later, in May 1927.³⁴ Soon after this, Halicz became the meeting place of representatives from all the Karaite communities in Poland, on 11 and 12 June 1927.³⁵

According to Szymon Pilecki, the present chairman of the Karaite Religious Union in Poland, the main problem in the formation of a unified statute was of a legal and not a religious character: it was necessary to incorporate elements of the former Austrian code of law together with the Russian legal system, which was valid in Poland even in the 1930s.³⁶ Another problem that remained unresolved during the meetings of representatives of the Karaite communities in the 1920s was that of women's electoral rights. Karaite modernists (and hakham Szapszał) were inclined to grant women the right to vote, whereas traditional believers (especially those of Troki) were against it. Nevertheless, in spite of the modernisation of the Karaite community in the interwar period, in 1936 Karaite women were denied this right. Some authors suggest that this "undemocratic" decision was taken under the influence of the not very democratic Polish constitution of 1935.³⁷

In the interwar period most Karaite children attended Polish schools. Thus, there was an obvious need to teach the younger Karaites Hebrew, Karaim, and religion, as these subjects were, of course, not studied in Polish schools. Leon Eszwowicz fulfilled the duties of teacher of the Karaim language and religion from 1924 to 1926, most likely on a non-paid basis.³⁸ It seems that the enthusiastic report by Zarach Zarachowicz about the opening of a Karaite religious school in Halicz on 19 April

³⁴ Sz.Firkowicz to the *wojewoda* (=palatine) of Wilno district, 1927 (AAN MWRiOP no.1465, fol.110); Pilecki, "Rol' karaimov," 97.

³⁵ "Konferencja w Haliczu," *MK* 2:1 (1929): 48.

³⁶ Pilecki, "Rol' karaimov," 97, 100.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 99.

³⁸ Z.Z. [Zarach Zarachowicz], "Nauczanie religii karaimskiej," *MK* 1:2 (1925): 41-42.

1925³⁹ was not really true: letters of Isaac Abrahamowicz and other archival documents show that there were still major problems with teaching the Hebrew language and Karaite religion in the Halicz community in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1927 members of the community started worrying about a proper education for their children and asked the government for additional subsidies. Unfortunately, the representative of the Ministry for Religious Confessions and Public Education (*Ministerstwo Wyznań Religijnych i Oświecenia Publicznego*; hereafter: MWRiOP) who investigated the situation on the spot came to the conclusion that because of the presence of only seven children of school age, “there are no conditions either for establishing [the office] of a teacher of the Karaite religion in Halicz, or for carrying out religious study for this confession at the [state] school at all.”⁴⁰ Therefore, the Karaites had to rely on their own means to maintain the religious education of children on the proper level. In his letter of 11 June 1929, the local hazzan, Isaac Abrahamowicz, informed Seraja Szapszał that he had started to teach children (2 boys and 7 girls) in the house of Zarach Zarachowicz. Later, in 1933, he informed Szapszał that 11 children were taught by the shammash Moses Szulimowicz upon the latter’s election to the office of teacher (*melamed*).⁴¹

In general, the number of mixed marriages between Jews and Christians grew considerably in the interwar period. During this era in many cities of Western and Central Europe a full third of the Jews married outside the Jewish community.⁴² In Eastern Europe (apart from the Soviet Union), however, the percentage of mixed marriages among the Jews was relatively small: 1% in Galicia, 2.64% in Latvia, and

³⁹ Z.Z. [Zarach Zarachowicz], “Otwarcie szkoły parafjalnej,” *MK* 1:3 (1926): 26.

⁴⁰ AAN MWRiOP 1466, fol. 102.

⁴¹ MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fols. 23, 40.

⁴² In Trieste in 1927 there were as many as 56.1% of mixed marriages among the local Jews (Ruppin, *Jewish Fate*, 107).

only 0.2% in Lithuania.⁴³ In spite of the fact that the Galician Karaite community tried to preserve the religious traditionalism of their forefathers, it seems that because of the lack of potential Karaite brides, members of the community started to be much more flexible concerning the rigidity of their matrimonial laws. In 1922 the local hazzan, Isaac Abrahamowicz, registered the marriage between Isaac Ickowicz and Zofja Abrahamowicz, who was a sister of Ickowicz's first wife.⁴⁴ According to traditional Karaite laws, such marriages were not allowed. Furthermore, having discovered that Isaac Abrahamowicz winked at such "minor" violations of religious law, a few Karaites from other communities brought their non-Karaite fiancées to Halicz for conversion to Karaism and subsequent marriage. Thus, a Łuck Karaite named Rutkowski (Rudkowski) arrived in Halicz with a Polish woman, Barbara Majewska, who was converted to Karaism and accepted into the Karaite community.⁴⁵

In May of 1923 Abrahamowicz converted to the Karaite faith another Polish woman, Marja Stankiewicz of Wilno. It is of interest that the sources have preserved a description of the rite of conversion. As the report of Joseph Eszwowicz has it, in order to convert Marja Stankiewicz to Karaism, Abrahamowicz "did not ask her whether she knew any Karaite prayers; he only read to her the Ten Commandments in Hebrew, which she did not understand at all."⁴⁶ After her conversion, Stankiewicz

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ J. Eszwowicz to the *starostwo* in Stanisławów, Autumn 1923, Polish (AAN MWRiOP no. 1461, fol. 112).

⁴⁵ Ibid., fol. 113. This was undoubtedly Sergjusz (Sergei/Simcha) Rudkowski (1873-1944), an important Łuck author and journalist, who published in the Russian, Karaim and Polish languages. In the 1930s T. Kowalski heard rumours that Majewska, Rudkowski's wife, was from the sect of the Russian Judaizing Subbotniks (T. Kowalski to S. Szapszał, MS LMAB F.143, no. 384, fol. 55). This, however, does not seem to be very likely, since Majewska was Polish. Those interested in the biography of Poland's greatest poet, Adam Mickiewicz will perhaps immediately recall the fact that Mickiewicz's mother, allegedly of Frankist origin, also was called Barbara Majewska (Jadwiga Maurer, *Z matki obcej* (London, 1990), 43-66).

⁴⁶ J. Eszwowicz to the regional government in Stanisławów, 3 Feb. 1924, Polish (AAN MWRiOP 1461, fol. 120).

received a new Karaite name: “Tamar.”⁴⁷ Both conversions were made with one pragmatic purpose: to enable these “proselytes,” who apparently did not care very much about the tenets of Karaite creed, to marry Karaite men. Thus, in the 1920s, against all religious prescriptions, there were cases of proselytism in the Karaite communities of the time. It seems that in spite of the opposition on the part of Halicz traditionalists, all of the aforementioned not too scrupulous legal acts were considered legitimate, and, moreover, the Polish “proselytes” soon married their Karaite partners.⁴⁸

Especially interesting is the legal aspect of this problem. Why would Karaites from such remote regions as Wilno and Łuck bring their “converted” fiancées as far as Halicz to be married? The answer may be found in the inconsistent character of the Polish legal system after 1918, which had to incorporate elements of Russian and Austrian laws into a single unified code of law. Somewhat surprisingly, in the 1920s the Polish administration of former *Russian* territories considered as binding the Russian regulation of 17 April 1905, which prohibited the conversion of Christians to a non-Christian faith.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, Polish administration of former *Austrian* territories (i.e. of Galicia) continued following Austrian laws, and allowed mixed Christian–Jewish marriages.⁵⁰ This is why the only way around this official ban on such marriages was to have a mixed marriage performed in former Austrian lands, i.e. in Halicz. This may explain why, in addition to permission from the hazzan, two aforementioned Polish Catholic women were officially allowed to convert to the

⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁸ S.Rudkowski continued living with his converted wife, B.Majewska, in the 1930s (T. Kowalski to S. Szapszał, MS LMAB F.143, no. 384, fol. 55).

⁴⁹ A copy of the new confirmation of this Russian regulation by Polish law was sent to the Troki hakham in 1924 – which means that the Karaites could not simply ignore it (“Zarządzenie władz w sprawie przechodzenia na wiarę niechrześcijańską,” MK 1:2 (1925): 38-39).

⁵⁰ Ruppin, *Jewish Fate*, 106.

karaimskie wyznanie (=Karaite faith) by the local Polish administration (*starostwo*) in Stanisławów.⁵¹

In most other interwar Karaite communities there were similar tendencies. Many secularized Karaite intellectuals clearly understood the danger of demographic decline, and saw mixed marriages as the only solution to this problem.⁵² In the interwar Crimea, where the atheist Soviet authorities officially abolished all religious laws, there was a growing number of mixed marriages, often between Karaites and their Rabbanite neighbours.⁵³ Nevertheless, the Polish Karaite authorities seemed to keep to the letter of the law and did not allow such marriages. This, however, as the aforementioned Galician cases clearly show, does not mean that such marriages did not take place.⁵⁴

An important role in the internal life of the community was played by Zachariasz Nowachowicz (5.03.1883-25.03.1960), the son of the late hazzan, Shalom Nowachowicz. Nowachowicz took an active part in the general renaissance of Karaite spiritual life in Poland after the First World War.⁵⁵ He was nicknamed “Maecenas Nowachowicz” because of his active financial support of many community projects and events. He was also the friend, host, and guide of the famous Polish Orientalist

⁵¹ A report by a police officer from Halicz to MWRiOP, 1923 (AAN MWRiOP no. 1461, fol. 118).

⁵² E.g. the author Alexander Mardkowicz (Łuck) and the poetess Lidia Poziemska (Łobanos) of Troki ([Alexander Mardkowicz], “Bitik da karuw” [Letter and response], *KA* 12 (1938): 9-12a; Konstanty Pilecki, “Cień z przeszłości,” *Awazymyz* 1 (4) (2000): 3-7).

⁵³ The author of this dissertation personally knows a few descendants of such mixed marriages between Crimean Karaites and their Ashkenazic, Tatar, and Slavic neighbours. Especially interesting were the cases of mixed marriages between Karaites and Subbotniki, a group of unendorsed Slavic converts to Karaite Judaism (Oleg Belyi, “K voprosu ob etnicheskikh i konfessional’nykh kontaktakh krymskikh karaimov i subbotnikov (“russkikh karaimov”) v XIX – nachale XX vv.” (in preparation)).

⁵⁴ E.g. a most curious case of the Karaite Inna Maykapar (Riga) and a young Rabbanite, Horacio Bernhardt (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1016, fols .1, 7-10). The German report to the effect that at the turn of the twentieth century a number of Karaite men married Volga German women seems to be pure fantasy and is not corroborated by any other source (B. Adler, “Die Krim-Karäer in geschichtlicher, demographischer, und volkskundlicher Beziehung,” *Baessler-Archiv* 17 (1934): 116, 120).

⁵⁵ Zacharjasz Nowachowicz, “Zagadnienie chwili obiecznej,” *MK* 1:2 (1925): 1-4.

Tadeusz Kowalski (1889-1948) during his visits to Halicz in 1925 and 1937.⁵⁶ In spite of his secular position in society, he seems to have been very knowledgeable in religious matters and possessed many valuable Hebrew and Karaite manuscripts.⁵⁷

In the 1920s, prior to the arrival of Seraja Szapszał in Poland, the Galician Karaite intellectuals (especially, Z.Zarachowicz, N.Szulimowicz, and Z.Nowachowicz) took an active part in the work of the most important Karaite interwar periodical, *Myśl Karaimska* (Pol. "Karaite Thought"). Two of them, Zarachowicz and Nowachowicz, became members of the editorial board of this periodical. The very first issue of *Myśl Karaimska* published an article by Zarachowicz: a programme for the development of the Karaite community in the years to come.⁵⁸ In the 1930s, however, the views of local traditionalists, with their emphasis on the study of the true Hebrew nature of Karaism, apparently started to contradict a general "pro-Turkic" agenda of this periodical. This is why in the 1930s their participation in the publishing activity of *Myśl Karaimska* was reduced to a minimum. Some of them, though, continued publishing their contributions in the less Turkicized Karaite periodical, *Karaj Awazy* (Kar. "Karaite Voice").⁵⁹ This journal, which was published in the Karaim language in nearby Łuck, was perhaps the most popular interwar Karaite periodical in Halicz. In passing, it is important to mention that Szapszał himself published only one (!) contribution to *Karaj Awazy*.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Anna Sulimowicz, "Znaczenie Halickich Karaimów dla rozwoju Polskiej turkologii," *Karaïmy Halycha*, 41.

⁵⁷ Kowalski, "Zu den türkischen Monatsnamen," 8.

⁵⁸ Zarach Zarachowicz, "Kilka uwag o naszych zadaniach w chwili obecnej," *MK* 1 (1924): 5-6.

⁵⁹ See a full list of Z. Zarachowicz's publications in the bibliography.

⁶⁰ Seraja Szapszał, "Kabakłarynda Aziz Saharnyn (Chadży-Aha Babowicznin ucuru)," *KA* 1 (1931): 3-8. This story had been originally composed by Szapszał in Russian, and most likely translated into GVKar by Mardkowicz (cf. [Seraja Szapszał], "Prikliucheniya Gakhama Khadzhi Aga Babovicha," Russian: MS LMAB F.143, no. 836, 4 fols.). This shows that Szapszał could not write in Karaim, only in Turkish or in his native Crimean Tatar. Moreover, most of his early Polish articles for *MK* were also originally written by Szapszał in Russian and then translated into Polish. It seems that it was only in the second half of the 1930s that Szapszał started writing in Polish by himself, without the mediation of Russian.

Zarach Zarachowicz (*alias* Zerach Zerachowicz/Zoruchowicz or Zarach, son of Moses and Ester Zarachowicz (21.12.1890-11.12.1952))⁶¹ was perhaps the most learned member of the community in the interwar period. Being well-versed in Polish, Russian, Karaim, and Hebrew, Zarachowicz composed articles in the first three of these languages. In addition, he copied many important Hebrew manuscripts and translated some of them into Karaim.⁶² In the 1920s and 1930s Zarachowicz was actively engaged in the publishing activity of *Myśl Karaimska* for which he supplied important data on the current state of the Halicz community. Around 1930 he helped Alexander Mardkowicz to edit his famous “Zemerler” – one of the best collections of Karaim poetry to date.⁶³ In 1927, together with Nowach Szulimowicz,⁶⁴ he prepared for publication a translation of the biblical book of Jeremiah in the Galician-Volhynian dialect of Karaim.⁶⁵

As a traditional Karaite believer, Zarachowicz apparently did not accept any of Szapszał’s dejudaization reforms. Though never opposing them publicly, in all of his publications Zarachowicz praised and supported traditional Karaite values and customs, without a hint of the Turkic identity popularized by Szapszał in the 1930s. Both before and after the war Zarachowicz maintained correspondence with Boris Kokenay, A. Zajączkowski, T. Kowalski, A. Mardkowicz, Szemaja Firkowicz,

⁶¹ See his tomb in Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms’ke kladovyshche*, 229, no. 140; Mourad El-Kodsi, *The Karaite Communities in Poland, Lithuania, Russia and Crimea* (Lyons, 1993), 32.

⁶² Shapira, “Turkic Languages,” 688. *Eilon Moreh* (Ben-Zvi Institute, Karaite collection, no. 77) copied by Zarachowicz in 1931 is the only extant copy of the eighteenth-century pedagogical treatise by Simcha Isaac Łucki (now published by Golda Akhiezer and Daniel Lasker, “*Sefer Eilon Moreh*,” 7-38). In the 1920s he copied translations of several biblical books and some other texts into GVKar for Tadeusz Kowalski (AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:2, fols. 56-100, 193-233; AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:1).

⁶³ *Zemerler* (*Karaj sezinde*), ed. Alexander Mardkowicz (Łuck, 1930). In Karaim *zemerler* means “religious songs/hymns” (from Heb. “zemer”).

⁶⁴ In the 1920s Nowach Szulimowicz dictated several important texts and poems in GVKar to Tadeusz Kowalski (AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:1, fols. 52-58, 81-83).

⁶⁵ *Yirmiyahu*, transl. Joshua-Joseph b. Moses Mordkowicz, ed. Zarach Zarachowicz (Halicz, 1927, 47 fols.). Only 28 copies of this unique publication were produced hectographically by Noah (Nowach) Szulimowicz. See Illustrations, fig. 6.9.

Pinehas Malecki, Abraham Szyszman, Seraja Szapszał and many other important scholars and Karaite leaders.⁶⁶

In accordance with the *Zeitgeist* of modernity, the local community also founded a few civic organizations, such as the Union of Karaite Women (*Koło pań Karaimskich*) with Sabina (Deborah) Nowachowicz (20.01.1885-16.01.1960, the wife of Zachariah Nowachowicz) as its head.⁶⁷ The young Karaites formed an association called *Koło Młodych Karaimów*,⁶⁸ which was responsible mainly for dramatic performances and similar presentations.⁶⁹ In 1937 the Union of the Young Karaites organized a series of cultural events dedicated to the enlightening activity of the greatest interwar champion of the Karaim language and editor of the periodical *Karaj Awazy*, Alexander Mardkowicz. On 5 May 1937 Mardkowicz himself arrived in Halicz and read his poem "Halic," which was dedicated to the local community and its role in the history of the East European Karaites.⁷⁰

The Karaites of Halicz preserved memories of their abandoned settlement in Kukizów. In the 1930s they organized a few expeditions to the Karaite cemetery of the town. One of these, undertaken on 25.10.1932 under the aegis of the hazzan Isaac

⁶⁶ His private documents, together with printed and manuscript materials, are currently held in a few archival collections. The largest part of Zarachowicz's archive is kept among the Yurchenko MSS in Halicz (a few hundred items, including his private correspondence, diaries, photos, printed books, publications in the Karaite press *et al.*). In 1994 his daughter, Ada Zarachowicz, donated some of her father's manuscripts and rare printed books to the Eupatorian Karaite community. Some of Zarachowicz's manuscripts are kept in the Karaite manuscript collection recently acquired by the Ben-Zvi Institute (Jerusalem) (Shapira, "Turkic Languages," 688; *idem*, "A New Collection of Documents on the Karaites in Eastern Europe at the Ben-Zvi Institute," *Pe'amim* 90 (2002): 155 (Hebrew)). For his letters to Szapszał, see MS LMAB F.143, nos. 723 and 724 (Russian).

⁶⁷ See more on its activity in Zarach Zarachowicz, "Koło pań Karaimskich," *MK* 11 (1936): 119; "Wycieczka z Halicza," *MK* 10 (1934): 121 (a report on the trip made by fifteen members of *Koło pań Karaimskich* to Łuck in 1933).

⁶⁸ *MK* 12 (1938): 148.

⁶⁹ The Yurchenko manuscript collection has preserved a copy of an invitation to one such Karaite evening that took place in Halicz on 17 Apr. 1938. The event consisted of a lecture on the role of theatre by Z. Nowachowicz and a recitation of Karaite poetry in Karaim (verses by Z. Abrahamowicz, Sz. Kobecki, and A. Mardkowicz) by members of the Union. Cf. J.S. [Józef Sulimowicz], "Karaimski teatr amatorski," *MK* 12:2 (1939): 148.

⁷⁰ This poem was published in Łuck in 1937. Cf. J.S. [Józef Sulimowicz], "Alexander Mardkowicz członkiem honorowym gminy karaimskiej," *MK* 12:2 (1939): 148; Zarach Zarachowicz, "Jały ułus-
iścinin," *KA* 10 (1936): 22-28.

Abrahamowicz, was crowned with an important archaeological and epigraphic discovery. In the course of this expedition the Karaites found the earliest tomb in the cemetery, dated to 1711.⁷¹ Another excursion to the cemetery was organized by the hazzan Marek (Mordecai) Leonowicz in September 1938.⁷²

Before the beginning of World War II there were 122 Karaites living in Halicz (59 men, 53 women, 10 children). Fourteen families lived in their ancestral home, the quarter on Karaite Street, eight families in other parts of Halicz, and eight in Załukiew.⁷³ According to Z. Abrahamowicz their numbers were even fewer: 102 souls.⁷⁴ Official statistics of 1939 provided the number of 140 Karaites in Halicz.⁷⁵

5.2. *Interwar hazzanim, Isaac Abrahamowicz, and the conflicts of the 1920s and early 1930s.*

The internal state of the community after the end of World War I might be best illustrated by the highly ambivalent figure of the hazzan, Isaac (Izaak) Abrahamowicz, and a few conflicts developed partly because of his somewhat unscrupulous activities and partly because of the modernisation of Karaite society in the interwar period.

The first serious conflict took place from 1923 to 1924. In this period the whole community became divided between the followers of the acting hazzan, Samuel Mordkowicz, together with the official head of the community, Joseph Eszwowicz, on one side, and Isaac Abrahamowicz, who was also nominated hazzan, together with his numerous relatives, on the other. The conflict unfolded in the following way. From

⁷¹ [Mardkowicz], "Zeretlerinde," 12. See Illustrations, figs. 4.11, 4.12-13.

⁷² J.S. [Józef Sulimowicz], "Pielgrzymka na cmentarz karaïmski w Kukizowie," *MK* 12 (1939): 149. For more information on the Kukizów cemetery, see §2.2.2.

⁷³ This is according to Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 6; cf. Janina Eszwowicz, Natalia Yurchenko, and Ivan Yurchenko, "Halyts'ki karaïmy," *Dnistrova Khvyliia* 38 (151) (17.09.1998): 7.

⁷⁴ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 16.

⁷⁵ Kubijovyč, *Etnichni hrupy*, 82.

1900 to 1922 the duties of the local hazzan were fulfilled by Shalom Nowachowicz.⁷⁶ In 1922, however, a short while before his death, Nowachowicz resigned from his office, and Isaac Abrahamowicz was elected deputy hazzan, or acting hazzan. Zarachowicz wrote that the Galician community had “great hopes regarding this new hazzan because he had just arrived from overseas [i.e. from America]; he seemed to be independent, energetic, and properly educated in religious matters.”⁷⁷ In 1923, however, for reasons which Zarachowicz did not want to discuss in his article, Abrahamowicz left his office and a new hazzan, Samuel ben Mordecai-Shalom Mordkowicz, was elected.⁷⁸ While examining community registers of births, Joseph Eszwowicz, the administrative head of the community, discovered that during his tenure as deputy hazzan, Abrahamowicz registered three questionable marriages and one questionable child. He allegedly did so because of bribes that had been given to him. The new hazzan, Samuel Mordkowicz, as well as Joseph Eszwowicz, decided to consider these marriages unlawful.⁷⁹

On the holiday of *Shevuot* (Pentecost) Isaac Ickowicz (one of the persons who had allegedly paid a bribe to Abrahamowicz and whose marriage was declared to be illegal) entered the synagogue during the prayers and swore at the hazzan (i.e. Mordkowicz), shouting, “Kusz ty nie jesteś rabinym” (dialectal Polish: “Shut your mouth, you are not a rabbi”). According to Eszwowicz, Ickowicz “was squealing so shrilly that people were asking whether there was a fight in the shrine [i.e. synagogue]

⁷⁶ Concerning him, see §2.1.4.

⁷⁷ Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 29.

⁷⁸ M. Bałaban incorrectly stated that Abrahamowicz left Halicz for good and the office of the hazzan remained unoccupied (Bałaban, “Karaici,” 23). Samuel Mordkowicz was the shammash during G. Smólski’s visit to Halicz in 1903. It was he who provided Smólski with important data about the state of the community, and translated some of the Karaite prayers and proverbs for him (Smólski, “U Karaimów,” 538 and passim). During the fire of 1913 Mordkowicz saved from the flames a few important MSS kept in the local synagogue. According to the same source, at that time he was 80 years old (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1334, fol. 2). This would mean that in 1923 he was about 90.

⁷⁹ J. Eszwowicz to the regional government in Stanisławów, 3 Feb. 1924, Polish (AAN MWRiOP 1461, fol. 120). Eszwowicz mentioned that I. Abrahamowicz received the sum of 500,000 Prussian marks as a bribe (ibid.).

or not.”⁸⁰

Eszwowicz suggested punishing Abrahamowicz and Ickowicz for their unlawful actions, but the community’s board of administration, which according to Eszwowicz consisted mostly of Abrahamowicz’s relatives, refused to do so. Moreover, scandalous behaviour involving Eszwowicz, hazzan Mordkowicz and Abrahamowicz’s followers continued to occur during other sessions of the board, thus making it impossible to approve a new legal statute for the community. In his letters to the regional government in Stanisławów, Eszwowicz asked the officials to settle this matter so that “other people would not make a laughing stock of the Karaite religious community.”⁸¹ However, it seems that the government was not really interested in untangling this knot of internal controversies and, most likely, was on the side of Isaac Abrahamowicz and his party.⁸² The official statute of the community was signed by the community’s board of administration on 10 July 1925, but Eszwowicz was not listed among its members. Moreover, from 1925 to 1933, the duties of hazzan were fulfilled by Isaac Abrahamowicz, whose lobby apparently had won this battle.

According to official Karaite documents (in which there is no mention of this conflict and Mordkowicz’s tenure in the hazzan’s office from 1923 to 1925), Isaac ben Moses Abrahamowicz (27.11.1868-21.12.1946⁸³) fulfilled the duties of the community’s hazzan from 20 July 1922 to 28 May 1934.⁸⁴ A few words should be said about this

⁸⁰ Joseph Eszwowicz to the regional government in Stanisławów, ca.1923, Polish (ibid., fols. 113-114).

⁸¹ See his letters to the regional government in Stanisławów in ibid., fols. 111-122.

⁸² A Polish police officer from Halicz reported to AAN MWRiOP that Eszwowicz’s letters did not reflect the real situation in the community (ibid., fol. 118).

⁸³ Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms’ke kladovyshche*, 234, no. 210.

⁸⁴ In fact, he had resigned from his duties already in Dec. 1933. See his photos in Illustrations, figs. 4.12-13, 9.7.

individual's biography and personal qualities. Eszwowicz characterized Abrahamowicz as a most irresponsible person:

In spite of his repeated resignation from the [office of the] hazzan, [Abrahamowicz] appeared whenever there was any sort of financial matter, and after settling it, did not care about the fact that the shrine [i.e. synagogue/kenesa] stood closed throughout the whole week because there was nobody to read prayers in the morning and in the evening, as is our custom; he was also not concerned that children were growing up without any religious education.⁸⁵

Bohdan Janusz sarcastically remarked that Abrahamowicz, who had spent many years in America, was “a frequenter of society, [who] did not correspond to the somewhat old-fashioned and perhaps too modest Galicians.”⁸⁶

Indeed, his traditional upbringing notwithstanding, Isaac Abrahamowicz apparently was not the easiest person to deal with. His correspondence and some other sources attest that he often preferred his own (usually purely pragmatic) interests to religious matters. Unfortunately, the sources provide virtually no information on Abrahamowicz's stay in America.⁸⁷ While the exact reasons for his voyage to that country remain unclear, one should bear in mind that the beginning of the twentieth century was a time of mass emigration of Russian Jews to America. Abrahamowicz probably stayed there with his Karaite emigrant relatives while being engaged, most likely, in some business activity. According to oral reports gathered by me in Halicz in May 2002, he was a quite well-educated and rather well-to-do person. One of my informants mentioned to me that while in America, Abrahamowicz “became too Jewish.” According to Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, Isaac Abrahamowicz's nephew, the

⁸⁵ AAN MWRiOP no.1461, fol. 113.

⁸⁶ Janusz, *Karaici*, 101-102.

⁸⁷ While delivering the paper, “The History of the Karaite Community of Halicz in the Interwar Period,” to the conference *The Halych Karaims: History and Culture* (Halicz, 4.09-6.09.2002), I was informed by Anna Sulimowicz that Abrahamowicz travelled to America a few times, first around 1903 to 1905. She also informed me that Abrahamowicz spent the whole of WW I in America.

latter “was inclined to [accept] certain reforms in the religious sphere similar to those that he had seen in Jewish communities of New York.”⁸⁸

Paradoxically enough, more reliable archival data attest that Abrahamowicz, on the contrary, wanted to abolish some local practices, which he found to be too Rabbanite. He appeared to be especially concerned about the “cult of the dead,” i.e. noisy and ceremonious funeral repasts. His attempts to abolish this extremely popular by that time tradition caused much animosity on the part of ordinary members of the community with regard to Abrahamowicz.⁸⁹ It is very likely that this fact, together with Abrahamowicz’s constant anxiety concerning his salary and his tendency to be involved in conflicts, forced Seraja Szapszał, the official head of the interwar Polish-Lithuanian community, to dismiss Abrahamowicz from the office of hazzan in 1933.

The development of the quarrel between Abrahamowicz and Szapszał may be best observed through the correspondence between these two community leaders from 1928 to 1933.⁹⁰ In his letters to Szapszał, Abrahamowicz constantly complained about his lack of money and his poverty.⁹¹ He also criticized the local community for its irreverent and irresponsible behaviour:

Our Karaites do not want to pay anything, they refuse to be blessed, and do not pay even money for the Torah scroll and *chazantyk*.⁹² I teach children and [they] also do not pay me for this. They owe me [payment] for two and three months, I remind them, but this does not help. Is it at all possible for

⁸⁸ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 15. It is highly probable that because of the absence of Karaite houses of worship in America, Abrahamowicz could have visited Rabbanite synagogues there.

⁸⁹ This is according to T.Kowalski’s personal observations (AN PAN, K III-4, no. 122:1, fol. 28).

⁹⁰ This correspondence is kept in Szapszał’s archival collection in Vilnius (MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a).

⁹¹ These complaints of his contradict information from oral reports collected by me in Halicz. According to these reports, Abrahamowicz was comparatively well off. Moreover, members of the local Karaite community informed Szapszał that Abrahamowicz had some savings in America; Abrahamowicz stated that these rumours were false (I. Abrahamowicz to S. Szapszał, 24 June 1929: MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fol. 9). It is known that he had a shop in his possession (Eszwowicz, “Halyts’ka karaïms’ka hromada,” 6). Nevertheless, according to his own account he was working in the fields as well (I. Abrahamowicz to S. Szapszał, 8 Oct. 1929: MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fol. 12).

⁹² Apparently, GVKar term to denote the “office of the hazzan.” This word is absent in *KRPS*.

me to do everything gratis and work for the community for free [?].⁹³

In his letter of 4 February 1929 Abrahamowicz added: “Our Karaites say the following: ‘The government pays for the maintenance of the hazzanim, therefore we will not pay.’ Is it at all possible...?”⁹⁴ The small amount of money paid him by Szapszał made Abrahamowicz demand the following: “I am asking His Excellency [i.e. Szapszał] to esteem me and to treat me properly as a human being, as other hazzanim, because I am not worse than they...”⁹⁵

It seems that after 1929 the financial situation improved and Abrahamowicz started receiving his hazzan’s salary more regularly. In the same year, 1929, after Szapszał’s visit to the community, most likely in order to show the latter his skill and proficiency as hazzan, Abrahamowicz sent a letter in which he described in detail the marriage of Zarach Zarachowicz.⁹⁶ So far I have been able to locate only one letter from Szapszał to Abrahamowicz (August 1933; in fact, a draft of a letter: the original letter sent to Abrahamowicz has not survived). This letter shows that around this time there was another major conflict between Abrahamowicz and the local Karaites. The community complained about Abrahamowicz’s behaviour and his constant cursing of them with foul language.⁹⁷ Abrahamowicz, in response, accused practically the whole community of being intriguers and wrongdoers. Szapszał sarcastically noted that Abrahamowicz “scrupulously mentions the surnames of each member of the community apart from his relatives. How is that possible?”⁹⁸

⁹³ MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fol. 4.

⁹⁴ Ibid., fol. 21v.

⁹⁵ Ibid., fol. 21.

⁹⁶ Ibid., fols. 14-15.

⁹⁷ Szapszał sarcastically said: “There is no *qlalah* [Heb. “curse”] in our prayer-books, only *berakhah* [Heb. “blessing”] for the believers.” He also rebuked Abrahamowicz for his constant references to later *sifrei ha-mitsvot* (Heb. “books of precepts”) instead of quoting the TaNaKh (S.Szapszał, letters and drafts from 1925 to 1953: MS LMAB F.143, no. 149, fol. 22).

⁹⁸ Ibid.

At some point, for personal reasons, Abrahamowicz decided to move to Załukiew. At the same time, his duties as hazzan required him to stay in Halicz, at the centre of Karaite life. It needed the arrival of Szemaja Firkowicz in August 1933 to persuade Abrahamowicz to move back to Halicz.⁹⁹ Nevertheless, soon afterwards he resigned from the office of hazzan. The exact circumstances of Abrahamowicz's resignation remain unclear. Some sources suggest that the public (and, certainly, Szapszał) disapproved of his attempts to introduce elements of Rabbanite practice into the Karaite liturgy.¹⁰⁰ Some of the aforementioned factors (his scandalous character, frequent conflicts, and unwillingness to follow Szapszał's dejudaization reforms) undoubtedly played their role as well. It remains unclear, though, whether he resigned his duties voluntarily or was *forced* to do so at Szapszał's directive.

Whatever the case may be, none of the later Karaite authors (apart from his nephew, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz) mention Abrahamowicz's name after 1933, and only a few archival documents document his activity in the late 1930s. In 1938 Szapszał requested that he come to Łuck for the celebration of *Hag ha-Shevuot* (=Pentecost). However, Abrahamowicz did not accept the invitation, under the pretext of not having enough money to undertake such a journey.¹⁰¹ In 1939 Szapszał sent him another letter, also from Łuck.¹⁰² This shows that at least in the late 1930s there was no open conflict between Szapszał and Abrahamowicz, the former religious head of the Halicz community.

On 10 December 1933 a general assembly of the community elected Marek

⁹⁹ MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fols. 36-37.

¹⁰⁰ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 15; Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13.

¹⁰¹ Or perhaps he really did not have money for travel? (Isaac Abrahamowicz to Rafael Abkowicz, 8.05.1938, Karaim: MS LMAB F.143, no. 1023, fol. 268). The language of this letter is highly interesting (GVKar. with a few Hebrew and Slavic loanwords, such as "kartopliłer" – potatoes (from Ukr. *kartoplia*), "wypełnitme" – fulfil (from Pol. *wypełnić* + Kar. *etme*).

¹⁰² MS LMAB F.143, no. 1529, fol. 121.

(Mordecai) Leonowicz to the office of hazzan.¹⁰³ He began his duties only on 28 May 1934.¹⁰⁴ In the meantime, after Abrahamowicz's resignation in 1933 and until May 1934, the duties of the hazzan were temporarily carried out by Zarach Zarachowicz. Szapszał's archival collection in Vilnius contains several letters in Polish and Karaim which were sent by Leonowicz to Szapszał from 1934 to 1939. They provide some details regarding the internal life of the local community, which, after the dismissal of Abrahamowicz, seemed to go rather smoothly, without any major conflicts and problems.¹⁰⁵ In addition to the duties of the hazzan Leonowicz also was an instructor of religion and Hebrew grammar in the local religious school (*midrasz*).

5.3. The Karaites and their ethnic neighbours

5.3.1. The Karaites, the Poles, and the Ukrainians.

In the interwar period a few significant changes occurred in the relations between the local Karaites and their Slavic neighbours. These changes were caused, on the one hand, by objective factors: first of all by the resurrection of an independent Polish state in 1918 and the growing Polonization of Galicia. On the other hand, the local Karaite community was ready to react to these changes and reconsider its own position with regard to the local Poles, Ruthenians/Ukrainians, and Ashkenazic Jews.

In the interwar period, the tiny Karaite community again became a pawn in the political game – this time, however, played by the Polish government. Like the Austrian officials who had tried to use the Karaites as an example to be imitated by

¹⁰³ "Wybory kandydata na wakujące stanowisko hazzana," *MK* 10 (1934): 120. His full name was Mordecai b. Abraham-Zachariah Leonowicz (1885 (or 1894?)-1940). He was apparently another scion of Abraham Leonowicz's clan. Already in 1914 "młody rebbi Mardocheusz Leonowicz" (Pol. "the young Rabbi Mordecai Leonowicz") provided important linguistic and ethnographic information to Jan Grzegorzewski (Grzegorzewski, "Caraimica," 288; Kowalski, "Materjały karaimskie," 28). In 1914 he was recruited to the army (Zarachowicz, "Listy z Halicza," 29).

¹⁰⁴ AAN MWRiOP no. 1464, fol. 30.

¹⁰⁵ MS LMAB F.143, nos. 424, 425, 425a.

other Jews, the Polish administration endeavoured to use the Karaites in ideological combat against anti-Polish sentiments in Galicia. Indeed, after the disintegration of Austro-Hungary in 1818, the local Ukrainian nationalists established the so-called “West Ukrainian People’s Republic” (Ukr. *Zakhidno-Ukraïns’ka Narodna Respublyka*), a short-lived republic that existed in late 1918 and early 1919 in eastern Galicia, Bukovina, and Transcarpathia. In the summer of 1919 the Polish army under the command of Józef Piłsudski managed to reconquer Galicia and most of Volhynia. In this Ukrainian–Polish conflict the Karaites, who were very Polonized and, moreover, as part of the Jewish population, had no sympathy for militant Ukrainian nationalism with its anti-Semitic agenda, joined the stronger, Polish side. As one of the interwar Rabbanite journalists sarcastically remarked, the Karaites “dienten den Oesterreichern so treu, wie sie heute gute ‘Polen karäischer Nationalität’ sind.”¹⁰⁶

As may be observed from official archival data, the local Karaites had the reputation of being good citizens in the eyes of the Polish administration, mostly because of the fact that “during the Ukrainian invasion their behaviour was immaculate.”¹⁰⁷ Having settled her problems with the Ukrainian nationalists in Galicia and Volhynia, Poland also had to deal with the issue of the emergence of an independent Central Lithuania (Pol. *Republika Litwy Środkowej*). In 1921 Poland suggested conducting a plebiscite on the future of Central Lithuania. In order to emphasize their loyalty to Poland, in 1922 the Karaites of Halicz composed an official appeal to their “Karaites brothers and sisters in the north, especially in Troki and Wilno.” In this document they expressed the hope that during the forthcoming plebiscite the northern Karaites would vote for the union between Lithuania and Poland. Moreover, they also mentioned that even Kowno Lithuania (Pol. *Litwa*

¹⁰⁶ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13.

¹⁰⁷ AAN MWRiOP no. 1466, fols. 28-29.

kowieńska) would also join Poland “as it was in the days of old.”¹⁰⁸ The Polish mass media enthusiastically accepted this manifestation of patriotism on the part of a non-Polish ethnic group.¹⁰⁹ In return for their exemplary behaviour, the Polish administration often rewarded distinguished Karaite leaders and financially supported their endeavours.¹¹⁰

Because of the Polonization of Galicia, there was a marked growth of Karaite integration into Polish society. In the interwar period the Galician Karaites started attending local Polish schools. As a consequence, those who were born and received their education during those years usually had a native command of both Karaim and Polish. The former was normally used within the family, the latter – outside the community.¹¹¹ The Nowachowicz cousins took an active part in the Polish patriotic movement during World War I and even became members of Polish armed organizations.¹¹² As a consequence of the Karaites’ growing assimilation into Polish society, a few Halicz Karaites converted to Catholicism and left their community.¹¹³ The Poles also showed more interest in the Karaites than before. As was mentioned above, in spite of resistance by religious traditionalists, in the interwar period at least two Polish women converted to Karaism and were thus accepted into the Karaite community.

The Karaites made great efforts to present themselves to the local administration as faithful patriots of Poland. On 28 May 1929, for example, the local community

¹⁰⁸ The full text of the document is published in Janusz, *Karaici*, 102-103.

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.*; Grzegorzewski, “Karaimi haliacy a plebiscyt litewski,” *Wiek nowy* 6185 (Lwów 1922).

¹¹⁰ E.g. J.S. [Józef Sulimowicz], “Odznaczenia,” *MK* 12:2 (1939): 148.

¹¹¹ This is according to the late Ms. Janina Eszwowicz, who was born in Halicz in 1931 (private communication, Halicz, Sep. 2003).

¹¹² Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 15.

¹¹³ According to one of the interwar reports, Karaite converts to Christianity had the audacity to invite their relatives to be witnesses at their baptism in a church (Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13). Nevertheless, this information, which contradicts many other testimonies concerning the preservation of Karaite religious traditions in interwar Halicz, can hardly be trusted. Ms. Janina Eszwowicz informed me that even in the interwar period Karaite children and adults were not allowed to enter Christian churches at all, whatever the reason might be (Halicz, May 2002).

arranged a special solemn service in the synagogue dedicated to the “thriving of the homeland.” This liturgical service was attended by such important representatives of the Polish government as Chowaniec, the mayor of Halicz, Bronisław Nakoniecznikow-Kulikowski, the governor of the Stanisławów district, and general Łukowski, the commander of the district garrison.¹¹⁴

On many occasions the Karaites demonstrated their loyalty to the memory of famous Polish rulers, such as Stefan Batory, Vitold, and Jan III Sobieski.¹¹⁵ It is also highly significant that during the interwar period the local Karaites completely ignored the “Daniel” version of their settlement in Galicia, which was so popular in their community in Austrian times. Already in 1919, i.e. immediately after the annexation of Galicia by Poland, the Halicz Karaites mentioned in their petition to the Polish government that they were settled in the region by Vitold.¹¹⁶ They changed their historical views for the simple reason that in the Polish period it became rather inexpedient to be associated with Daniel, the champion of the local Ruthenian and Ukrainian population. Vitold, perceived as one of the most valorous Polish rulers, was a much more politically correct person to be associated with.¹¹⁷

The pro-Polish sentiments of the Galician Karaites are also evident in their attitude towards the term “Karait.” In the 1920s the Karaites of Halicz preferred the forms “Karait” (sg.), “Karaici” (pl.), and the adjectives “karaicki/karaitski” instead of the traditional Polish “Karaim(i)/karaimski.” As we have shown before, in all other communities, however, the form “Karait” was considered to be pejorative.¹¹⁸ This

¹¹⁴ “Historyczne dni w Haliczu,” *MK* 2:2 (1929): 42-44.

¹¹⁵ E.g. [Szulimowicz], “Karaimi Haliccy,” 118-120.

¹¹⁶ AAN MWRiOP 1466, fols. 48-49.

¹¹⁷ The “Daniel” version reappeared again after the end of the war, when Galicia became a part of Soviet Ukraine, and Daniel started to be construed as a “Ukrainian” prince and hero (see more in §7.1).

¹¹⁸ Antoni Nowosielski [Marcinkowski], *Stepy, morze i góry. Szkice i wspomnienia z podróży*, vol. 2 (Wilno, 1854), 193; Kowalski, *Karaimische Texte*, viii; AAN MWRiOP no. 1461, fol. 17; Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 14. See more in §4.2.2. The only correct form in modern Polish is “Karaim / Karaimi.” The English language, on the contrary, traditionally uses the form “Karaite/Karaites,”

unusual Galician linguistic preference is to be explained by the specific local issue directly related to the Polish–Ukrainian controversy. As one of the official documents has it, “in *Małopolska* Polish people apply the name “Karaimi” to the Ukrainians, who are fiercely hostile to Poland; they also consider this word to be offensive.”¹¹⁹ Because of this local attitude to the word “Karaim,” on the early seal of the community one can see the inscription “Rada delegatów Karaitkiej [not *karaimskiej*!] gminy wyznaniowej w Haliczu.”¹²⁰ Seraja Szapszał also stated that “in the eastern part of *Małopolska* the word “Karaim” is a synonym for the Ukrainian bandit, *haydamak*.”¹²¹ Thus, it is evident from all these testimonies that the term “Karaim” indeed had some sort of additional (and rather pejorative) meaning in Eastern Poland, the exact origins and meaning of which remain unclear.¹²² In our context it is much more interesting that for a while (until the beginning of the 1930s) the Galician Karaites rejected the ethnonym “Karaimi” in order not to be associated with Ukrainian nationalists. However, during the later 1930s, they started using the term

derived most likely from Latin “Caraita/Caraiti.”

¹¹⁹ AAN MWRiOP no. 1461, fol. 11.

¹²⁰ I.e. “The council of deputies of the Karaite religious community of Halicz” (AAN MWRiOP no. 1466, fols. 20–21, 26). See Illustrations, 7.2.

¹²¹ Seraja Szapszał, *Nauchnyi obzor predmetov material'noi kul'tury, khraniashchikhsia v karaimskom otdele Istoriko-Etnograficheskogo muzeia AN Litovskoi SSR* (1953) (MS LMAB, F.143, no. 859, fol. 32).

¹²² Stepan Pushyk (Ivano-Frankivsk / Stanisławów) mentioned that in his youth inhabitants of the Galician village of Komarów used to tease inhabitants of the adjacent village, Wiktorów, with the offensive term “karaimy.” The latter called them “reusy” in return (the meaning and etymology of both words is unclear, only their pejorative connotation is evident: Pushyk, “Karaïms'kyi poet,” 113). Similarly, the famous Polish Jewish scholar Mosze Altbauer mentioned that in Przemyśl (Galicia), in pre-war times, local youths nicknamed each other with the pejorative “huki” and “karaimi” (Mosze Altbauer, *Wzajemne wpływy polsko-żydowskie w dziedzinie językowej* (Kraków, 2002), 94). In our opinion, this offensive use of “karaimi,” which was apparently common in Eastern Poland, could hardly be connected with the term “qara'im” as the endo- and exoethnonym to designate the very small non-Talmudic Jewish community. Most likely, the origins of the offensive “karaimi” should be sought in “q(k)ara” (“black”) as a term in Turkic languages to designate the lower (“black”) social classes. Later, this Turkic term may have been borrowed by Polish and Ruthenian. It seems that the surname “Karaim,” often met with among people who have no relationship to the Karaite community whatsoever, should be connected with this pejorative term. E.g. while browsing through the Austrian official documentation of 1787 I found a Ukrainian Christian inhabitant of the Galician village of Ponikowica whose name was Hryts'ko Karaim (Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv; Staatskanzlei, Provinzen: Galizien 1, Konv.D., 1787, fol. 181r). The American author Reed Karaim is another example (I am indebted to Leonard Fox for this reference).

“Karaimi” as the most correct form accepted in interwar Poland.

As was mentioned above, the first half of the twentieth century was marked by the growth of national awareness on the part of the local Ruthenians concerning their Ukrainian national and cultural identity. This tendency was accompanied by the manifestation of their explicit separatist and anti-Polish sentiments. It was only after the decisive defeat and persecution of the Russophile movement, and also in the aftermath of the establishment of the short-lived West Ukrainian People’s Republic, that the Galician Ruthenians adopted a homogeneous and clear-cut Ukrainian self-identification. It is also only in this period that they started feeling (and calling) themselves “Ukrainians” – the term I will use to designate the Ruthenian population of Galicia in the interwar and post-war period.

In 1919 Galicia was occupied by the troops of Symon/Semen Petliura (1879-1926), a Ukrainian nationalist and one of the military leaders of Ukraine’s unsuccessful fight for independence after the Russian revolution of 1917. In the course of Petliura’s military activity, his troops massacred an estimated 100,000 Jews, though Petliura himself is said not to have had any anti-Semitic convictions.¹²³ In 1919 the Karaite quarter of Halicz was sacked by Petliura’s pogromists; fortunately, they did not kill anyone.¹²⁴ The invasion by Ukrainian nationalists considerably worsened the attitude of the Karaites to their Ukrainian-speaking neighbours. Their Polish patriotism, it seems, also contributed to the deterioration of their relations with the Ukrainians. According to one interwar Karaite informant, in the 1930s the

¹²³ In 1926 he was assassinated by the Jewish anarchist Sholom Schwartzbard, whose family had perished in Petliura’s pogroms (see Henry Abramson, *A Prayer for the Government: Ukrainians and Jews in Revolutionary Times, 1917-1920* (Cambridge, Mass., 1999)).

¹²⁴ J.Grzegorzewski to MWRiOP, Halicz, 5 Nov. 1921 (AAN MWRiOP no. 1461, fol. 39); Zarachowicz, “Listy z Halicza,” 28. Zarachowicz’s information concerning Petliura’s invasion was also corroborated by one of the elderly Halicz Karaites (private communication of 5 May 2002).

Karaite had much better relations with the Poles than with the Ukrainians.¹²⁵

5.3.2. *The Karaites and the Ashkenazim.*

Some changes also occurred in the Karaites' relations with the Talmudic Jews. Indeed, the Polish state continued the Austrian policy of legal separation of the Karaites from the Rabbanites. For example, in contrast to the Karaites, the local Rabbanite Jews were not allowed to work at the local railway station at all.¹²⁶ When, in the 1930s, the Polish government decided to forbid the Rabbanite *shehitah* (=ritual slaughter of animals) under the pretext of its alleged "sadistic" character, this ban was not applied to the Karaites.¹²⁷ This is why some sources state that after the Polish annexation of Galicia, relations between the Karaites and Rabbanites worsened. According to one of the local Rabbanite merchants, in the 1930s the Karaites lost their "fear of the Jews," the fear that they had had during Austrian times. According to this informant, because of this "loss of fear," relations between the two groups deteriorated.¹²⁸ Another interwar source states that the Halicz Rabbanites, on the contrary, developed some sort of irrational fear of the Karaites. As the local superstition had it, a Rabbanite who met a Karaite on the way to a shop or after the end of the Sabbath would not have any success in his trade for a day or even during the course of a whole week.¹²⁹ One of the interwar Jewish journalists mentioned that the Karaites considered themselves as the "Elite-gemeinde." Furthermore, according to the same report, some of the local Karaites were rather "anti-Semitic."¹³⁰

¹²⁵ Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 73.

¹²⁶ Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13.

¹²⁷ "Karaimi pomagają Żydom? Projekt zniesienia polowań wnoszą Żydzi do Sejmu," *ABC – Nowiny codzienne* (9.03.1936); [Alexander Mardkowicz], "Taślar Karaj bachcasyna," *KA* 9 (1936): 24; "Karaimi nie uznają uboju rytualnego," *Wieczór warszawski* (27.03.1936).

¹²⁸ Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 73.

¹²⁹ Wachsmann, "Halitsch," 13.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

On the other hand, many sources testify to the continuing interest of the local Karaites in many Rabbanite practices and traditions. Isaac Abrahamowicz and Zarach Zarachowicz, two very learned and educated Halicz Karaites of the interwar period (for a while, both fulfilled the duties of hazzanim), are known for their interest in the Qabbalah and Rabbanite religious literature and customs. Zarachowicz copied and translated into Karaim some Rabbanite liturgical works,¹³¹ while Abrahamowicz apparently tried to introduce some Rabbanite elements into the Karaite liturgy (see §5.2). Furthermore, one Karaite informant from the 1930s stated that the Karaites had excellent relations with the Rabbanites, less friendly dealings with the Poles, and even less amicable ones with the Ukrainians. He also added that the little Karaites played mostly with Rabbanite children and even spoke Yiddish with them.¹³²

Moreover, it was the Rabbanite Jews who were hired by the Karaites to repair their synagogue after the destruction of 1913-1918. In the 1920s the community made the first, superficial, renovation of the synagogue (kenesa). Nevertheless, it needed more financial support to make a complete restoration.¹³³ The final repairs to the synagogue were carried out only in 1927 by a group of local Ashkenazic Jews (Abraham Wohl, Perly Rosenman, and Israel Spund).¹³⁴

To sum up, if the nature of Karaite-Polish and Karaite-Ukrainian relations in interwar Galicia was considerably transformed, Karaite–Rabbanite contacts represented just an extension of the relations that were formed between these two groups already during the period of Austrian domination, with the same set of

¹³¹ Shapira, "Turkic Languages," 688.

¹³² Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 73. As has been mentioned before, the East European Karaites normally did not use Yiddish at all (cf. Kizilov, "Faithful Unto Death," 76). Therefore, this testimony regarding Karaite children's everyday use of Yiddish is highly important.

¹³³ In 1924 the Karaite community asked the Polish government to grant them 10,000 *złoty* for the restoration of the kenesa (Z.Z. [Zarach Zarachowicz], "Restauracja kienesy," *MK* 1:2 (1925): 42; idem, "Restauracja kienesy," *MK* 1:3 (1926): 27).

¹³⁴ AAN MWRiOP no. 1466, fols. 43-44, 71.

traditional controversies. Thus, it seems that Szapszał's dejudaization policy (see Chapter 6) did not have a very significant effect on the character of Karaite–Rabbanite relations in interwar Galicia.

Chapter 6. Khazar Theory vs. Racial Anthropology: Interwar Turkicization of the Galician Karaites and Its Outcome During World War II

6.1. Seraja Szapszał's visit to Halicz in 1929.

Until the end of the 1920s, i.e. before the arrival of Seraja Szapszał in Poland, the Galician community was perhaps the most traditional and conservative of all Karaite communities in Eastern Europe. Its elders still took an active part in the religious life of the community, read Karaite and Rabbinic literature, and maintained close contacts with their Talmudic neighbours. A few verses, composed, most likely, by Mordecai (Marek) Leonowicz for Karaite children in the late 1920s, attest to the fact that the Galician Karaites still maintained their Jewish (or "Israelite") identity within the community:

Biz ułanlar	We are children,
Kici Karajlar	Little Karaites,
Jisraeł ilisi	A part of Israel,
Onca ułusu.	A chosen nation.
[...]	[...]
Karyndaslar biz biz	We are brethren,
Dostlar barymyz	We are all friends.
Ribbi-atamyz	The <i>Ribbi</i> ¹ is our father,
Midrasz-jiwimiz.	The <i>midrash</i> ² is our house
[...]	[...]
Anda jiwrenebiz	There we study,
Anłajbiz, bilebiz	Understand and perceive
Ki Adonaj Tenrimiz	That the Lord is our God
Adonaj birdi.	The Lord is One. ³

The spiritual life and ethnic identity of the Galician Karaites, however, were

¹ *Ribbi* (rarely: *erbi*) is the Karaim term for rabbi; in this case it is used to designate the teacher of religion and language.

² *Midrasz* (*midrash*) is Karaim for the Hebrew *beit ha-midrash*, i.e. a religious school.

³ Halicz, 1929 (?) (the Yurchenko MSS). I may cautiously suggest that this verse was composed as a greeting for S. Szapszał in 1929. For the full text of this poem, see Appendix 3.3.

soon to experience the same dramatic changes that affected all the Polish-Lithuanian and Russian Karaite communities in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Most of these changes were implemented by Seraja Szapszał (1873-1961), who, as has already been mentioned, in 1927 was elected hakham, i.e. the religious head of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite community.⁴

The first contact between the Galician Karaites and Szapszał took place in 1929. In 1928, soon after Szapszał's election to the office of hakham, one of the Galician Karaites published a welcoming speech in his honour.⁵ Szapszał decided to visit the Galician community in May 1929, about a year after his arrival in Poland. From 16 to 21 May 1929 he visited Łuck⁶ and from 22 to 28 May, Halicz. Szapszał's visit was certainly a major event in the life of the Halicz community in the 1920s. A Karaite witness to Szapszał's visit compared it to the arrival of Joseph ha-Mashbir in Halicz in the seventeenth century and to the visit of Abraham Firkowicz in 1871.⁷ Indeed, this event, which was a watershed in the history of the local community, was arranged with a pomp and solemnity unusual for provincial Halicz. In addition to representatives of the local community, Szapszał was welcomed at the railway station in Halicz by the governor (=wojewoda) of the Stanisławów district, Mr Winiarski. A group of local Karaites covered his path from the station with flowers. During his visit Szapszał was accompanied by the hazzanim of Łuck and Troki, Rafał Abkowicz and Szemaja Firkowicz. Moreover, during his stay in Halicz he met such important representatives of the Polish administration as the mayor of Halicz and the commander of the Stanisławów garrison.⁸

Within the community Szapszał was greeted with a few verses in Karaim,

⁴ See more in § 5.1.

⁵ Zacharjasz Nowachowicz, "Witaj, Pasterzu!" *MK* 1:4-5 (1928): 1-4.

⁶ S.Sz-n [Szymon Szyszman?], "Wizytacja Arcypasterska," *MK* 2:2 (1929): 41-42.

⁷ "Historyczne dni w Haliczu," *MK* 2:2 (1929): 42.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 42-44.

composed, most likely, by Mordecai (Marek) Leonowicz. One of these verses, as well as the one cited above, clearly attests to the preservation of Judeo-Israelite identity by the local Karaites:

Tadzy basymyznyn	The crown of our heads,
Bijimiz biżnin	Our master,
<i>Adonenu</i>	Our lord,
<i>Morenu</i>	Our teacher,
<i>Werabbenu</i>	And our Rabbi,
<i>Wa ateret roshenu.</i>	And the crown of our heads. ¹⁰
Karaj ułanłarny	He greatly loved
Kici <i>tałmidłerni</i>	The Karaite children,
Astry siwedi.	The little pupils.
Hammese ałarny	He always
Esinde tutady,	Remembered them,
Da bahady,	And observed
Ki <i>Torany</i> uchuhajłar	That they would read the Torah
<i>Karaj</i> dinin sakłahajłar.	And keep Karaite faith.
Da jıldan jılga	And from year to year
Bu sahyncıy kinde	He has been sending presents to his
Kacan ułıu jarlyhas	children,
Bołdu <i>Jisraelde</i> ,	His little friends,
Ijedi ułanłaryna,	On this memorable day
Kici dostłaryna	When great joy
Berneıer! ⁹	Was in Israel!

During his visit to Halicz Szapszał met another outstanding historical personality, the scholar and political leader Isaac Ben Zvi (1884-1963; president of Israel from 1952 to 1963). Ben Zvi, then an ethnographer interested in the Jewish communities of Eastern Europe, visited Halicz and Seraja Szapszał in order to become acquainted with the local Karaite community.¹¹ Szapszał did not miss this opportunity to disclose his Turkic doctrine to the scholar and “enlighten” him concerning the Khazar origins of the Karaites. It is evident from Ben Zvi’s memoirs

⁹ The Yurchenko MSS. I have italicized Hebrew loanwords. The official report on Szapszał’s stay in Halicz also mentioned the fact that local Karaite youths sang “ethnic Karaite songs” to the hakham (“Historyczne dni,” 43). Cf. another poem composed as a greeting for Szapszał in Appendix 3.3.

¹⁰ The same honorary title is repeated twice, first in Karaim and then in Hebrew.

¹¹ In 1951 he visited the colony of Crimean Karaite emigrants in Istanbul (Yitzhaq Ben Zvi, *Niddehey Yisra’el* (Tel Aviv, 1956), 138; idem, “Karaites in the Soviet Union,” *Palestine Post* (8 Dec. 1949); the author is grateful to Dr Dan Shapira and Mr Alfred Eidlisz for pointing out these valuable sources.

that he, an ethnographer and historian deeply convinced of the Karaites' belonging to Jewish cultural milieu, was not particularly impressed by the information received from Szapszał.¹²

Having spent about a week in Halicz, Szapszał left the community on 28 May 1929. He never visited Halicz again – either because of its remote location or due to his unwillingness to encounter local traditionalism *de visu*. We do not possess any direct written evidence regarding Szapszał's impressions of his stay in Halicz. One may assume, however, that the Turkic *hakhan* (as he now called himself) Szapszał was not particularly happy to be addressed with such traditional Hebrew terms as “adonenu, morenu ve-rabbenu” (see the verse above). The fact that the Galician Karaite intellectuals (Z. Zarachowicz, Z. Nowachowicz et al.) stopped being published in *Myśl Karaimska* soon after 1929 also strongly suggests that the hakham apparently did not approve of the spiritual and cultural state of the local community.

In the 1930s Szapszał started introducing his dejudaization reforms in all Polish-Lithuanian Karaite communities, including Halicz. Before examining the implementation of Szapszał's reforms in Halicz, though, we will analyse the essence and main features of his Turkic doctrine (including the changes that were made to Szapszał's doctrine under the influence of Corrado Gini's expedition of 1934).

6.2. *Seraja Szapszał's reformist activity of the 1930s.*

As has been mentioned, in 1927 Szapszał became the last Karaite hakham in Eastern Europe, who guided the community until the Soviet and German occupations of Galicia, Volhynia, and Lithuania in 1939-1944. While managing the community,

¹² Ben Zvi, *Niddehey Yisra'el*, 133-134, 137-138; idem, “Karaites,” 8. Ben Zvi continued being interested in the Karaites after the war as well. Strangely enough, he did not know that after 1945 Szapszał renounced his position of the hakham, changed his official name to Sergei Markovich Szapszał and became a Soviet scholar. This is why Ben Zvi thought that the “Soviet Professor M.S. Shapshal” (*sic*) and the pre-war Karaite hakham Seraja Szapszał were two different persons.

Szapszał introduced a number of radical religious and linguistic reforms, which considerably transformed the ethnic identity of the East European Karaites. In general, this process might be defined as “endogenous dejudaization,”¹³ i.e. the internal policy of the community directed at the conscious and deliberate replacement of traditional Jewish values and practices. One of the interwar Rabbanite journalists called this process “Reformbewegung.”¹⁴

The reasons which prompted the Karaite leader to start his dejudaization reforms were quite understandable. It became rather awkward and even dangerous to be a Jew in Europe in the interwar period. It was the time of the emergence of fascist and Nazi ideology in many European countries, and even though none could predict the Holocaust until its actual beginning Szapszał, with his amazing political acumen and prudence, apparently could feel the growing danger of Nazism for his people. Already in the second half of the 1930s he started to receive communiqués from his Karaite brethren living in Germany and Italy, who provided him with detailed information regarding persecution of the Rabbanite and Karaite population of these countries. It seems that in this respect Szapszał turned out to be much more prudent and far-sighted than the Rabbanite leadership, which could not foresee the danger that was coming.

Growing anti-Semitism in Poland, where the Jews were constantly publicly and privately humiliated, and suffered from numerous legal limitations, was another important factor which influenced Szapszał’s decision to start his reforms. In addition to these objective factors, as an absolutely secular person and a great devotee of Turkic languages, Szapszał did not have any particular sentiments with regard to the Karaite Jewish past at all.

¹³ This term was coined by Roman Freund in his *Karaites and Dejudaization*.

¹⁴ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13.

In the 1930s Szapszał introduced a number of dejudaization reforms in the religious sphere. Practically all of them were aimed at Turkicization of the Karaim language and religious tradition. In order to achieve this, Szapszał put a ban on most traditional Hebrew terms and replaced them with their Turkic equivalents. Thus, Hebrew *beit ha-knesset* (=synagogue) was replaced with the Turkic *kenesa/kenasa* (=temple, non-Muslim shrine),¹⁵ whereas *hakham* now became the non-existent pseudo-Turkic *hakhan*. This alteration of just one letter made a great difference. First, the traditional Hebrew form was practically dropped; second, the connotation, which is humorous to the Slavic ear, was avoided (in Russian and Polish the word *cham/kham* means a “rude and insolent person of low origin”). In addition, for anyone knowledgeable about European history this term would immediately be linked to the Tatar khans – or to the Khazar rulers (*kagans*). Szapszał started actively using the term *hakhan* immediately after his arrival in Poland in the spring of 1928.¹⁶

Perhaps the most radical of Szapszał's reforms was related to the Karaite calendar. In accordance with Szapszał's new calendar, the names of the Hebrew months were replaced with Turkic names, which were supposedly used by the Karaites in preceding centuries. Szapszał's new official Turkic calendar system was for the first time disclosed in Alexander Mardkowicz's “Calendar for four years.”¹⁷

The names of religious holidays also underwent Turkic replacements. For example, *Pesach* (a.k.a. *hag ha-matsot* or Passover) was referred to as the *chydzy tymbyłarnyn* (=the holiday of *tymbyłs*; *tymbył* is a Karaim word to denote Heb.

¹⁵ This term began to be widely used already before WWI (see “O naimenovanii ‘kennasa’ [sic],” *KZh* 1 (1911): 109). Nevertheless, it is only during Szapszał's time that it became the *only* term to designate Karaite synagogues.

¹⁶ E.g. “List Pasterski J.E. Hachana Karaimów w Polsce,” *MK* 2:1 (1929): 3-4.

¹⁷ See esp. the article [Alexander Mardkowicz] “‘Mekabbe’ da bižnin łuwachłarymyz,” in *Łuwachłardert jıltha* (5693-5696), ed. Alexander Mardkowicz (Łuck 1932), 10. For the story of the “discovery” of the Turkic names of the months by Szapszał in Istanbul, see Kowalski, “Zu den türkischen Monatsnamen,” 3-26.

matsah). The traditional holiday of *Sukkot* was called *alacych* or *chydy alacychlarnyn* (=the holiday of huts), *Yom Kippur* – *bosathych kini* (=the Day of Atonement), *Simchat Torah* – *bijency Toranyn* (=joy of the Torah), etc.¹⁸ It is not difficult to notice that most of these new Turkic names of the holidays represented direct Karaim calques from original Hebrew names. Sometimes Szapszał replaced traditional Hebrew terms with Arabic and Turkic words which were *phonetically* close to Hebrew, but had absolutely different meanings. Thus, for example, the day of *Khurban* (Heb.; lit. "destruction") was replaced with Turkic *Kurban* (= [day of] Sacrifice). Szapszał's explanation that the Karaite holiday of *Kurban* (*sic*) comes from sacrifices made on that day¹⁹ is absolutely false: in genuine Karaite tradition *Khurban* was a day of commemoration of the destruction of the First Temple by Nebuchadnezzar on the 10th of Av. It certainly had nothing to do with the Muslim holiday of "Eid ul-Adha" (10th of *Zhul Hidja*) known in Turkish as the "Kurban Bayramı" (=Feast of Sacrifice).

The beginning of the calendar year was moved from the Hebrew month of *Tishrei* (called according to Szapszał's new terminology *ajryksy aj*; both correspond to September-October) to *Nisan* (according to Szapszał's calendar – *artaryk aj* or March-April). Perhaps this was done in order not to celebrate the holiday of the New Year at the time when the Rabbanites celebrated *Rosh ha-Shanah* (=New Year).²⁰ The aforementioned Turkicization of the calendar terminology was intended to produce on an external observer the impression that Karaite religious tradition was somewhat

¹⁸ I provide here the names of the months and holidays according to the Galician-Volhynian spelling. See the list of the Karaite holidays with new Turkic names in AAN MWRiOP, no.1464, fols.71-72; Szymon [Szemaja] Firkowicz, *Karaj Koltchalary. Krótkie modlitwy karaimskie* (Wilno, 1935), 22-27. Cf. Appendix, 5.1.

¹⁹ This is how he explained it to Tadeusz Kowalski (Kowalski, "Zu den türkischen Monatsnamen," 14).

²⁰ In fact, the tradition to start the calendar year in *Nisan* had been an ancient Karaite custom (in accordance with Ex. 12:2), which was later replaced by the tradition to start the year in *Tishrei* (most likely under the influence of Rabbanite environment). For more information on the Karaite calendar, see Magdi Shmuel, "The Karaite Calendar: Sanctification of the New Moon by Sighting," in *Karaite Judaism*, 591-629.

similar to that of the Muslim Turks and Arabs, and thus make Karaite religion look less similar to Judaism. The artificial character of this reform is obvious to anyone knowledgeable about the Karaite religious tradition and calendar. In spite of the fact that educated Karaites did know the Arabic and Turkic names of the months, before Szapszał's time the Karaites of Eastern Europe used exclusively the Hebrew calendar system. Furthermore, as is clear from archival materials, in the second half of the 1930s the great founder of the new Turkic Karaite calendar himself continued using the Hebrew names of religious holidays in his private diaries.²¹

Even more important, the Karaite liturgy was also supposed to be celebrated mostly in Karaim, and the study of Hebrew was rather unwelcome. Already in 1928 Tadeusz Kowalski remarked that despite the bilingual Hebrew-Karaim character of praying, the Hebrew language was gradually being ousted by Karaim "as a consequence of the growing national consciousness."²² Equally important were changes in the sphere of literary and colloquial Karaim. First, in spite of the fact that the Hebrew alphabet was still used for writing letters and other private documents, official interwar publications were printed only in Latin characters.²³ Second, from the end of the 1920s Karaim started to be purged of most Slavic and (especially) Hebrew borrowings,²⁴ which were supposed to be replaced by "pure" Turkic words. Thus, for example, the terms traditionally used by the Karaites for "table" (Heb.

²¹ S.Szapszał's private diary, 1920s-30s: MS LMAB F.143, no. 917, fol. 128r. In his letter to Zarach Zarachowicz of 1948 Szapszał greeted the latter on the holiday of *Yom Kippur* (*sic*) and inserted a phrase in Hebrew (S. Szapszał to Z. Zarachowicz, Wilno/Vilnius, 8 Oct. 1948, Russian; the Yurchenko MSS). Perhaps the only genuine Karaite Turkic tradition in the calendar sphere was its usage of Turkic names to designate the days of the week (see Appendix, 5.2).

²² Kowalski, *Karaimische Texte*, xiii-xiv.

²³ Apart from some short verses published in *MK*, perhaps the only known interwar publication in Hebrew characters was the Karaim *targum* of Jeremiah (*Yirmiyahu*, ed. Z.Zarachowicz (Halicz, 1927)). For more information regarding this book, see § 5.1, ft. 65.

²⁴ The role of Hebrew loanwords in Karaim has not yet received proper scholarly attention. See a preliminary analysis: Mosze Altbauer, "O tendencjach dehebraizacji leksyki karaimskiej i ich wynikach w 'Słowniku karaimsko-rosyjsko-polskim'," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 3-4 (1979-1980): 51-60; idem, "Al ha-'ivrit she-be-fi Qaraye Lita ve-'al ha-yesodot ha-'ivriyot she-bi-leshonam," *Leshonenu* 21 (1957): 117-126; 22 (1958): 258-265.

shulkhan, or Slavic *stol*) were replaced with Turkic *tirki*; *wyspa* (a loanword from Polish meaning “island”) started to be referred to as *otrac*, and “book” (Heb. *sefer*) – as *bitik*.

One cannot help noticing the apparent similarity between the development of the Karaite community and the modernisation of Turkish society in the 1920s-30s. There is no doubt that Szapszał’s radical changes were copied from the linguistic and calendar reforms which were occurring at about the same time in Turkey during the rule of Mustafa Kemal “Atatürk” (1881-1938). Szapszał, an Orientalist interested in Turkic languages, who lived from 1920 to 1928 in Turkey, was well informed about the transformation of Turkish language and society and took an active part in many linguistic congresses in the country.²⁵ Szapszał’s calendar reform, the essence of which was the replacement of traditional Hebrew terms with Turkic ones, was also evidently cloned from the Kemalist calendar reform (save for the fact that, unlike Szapszał, who was eradicating Hebrew terminology, the Kemalists replaced the Persian and Arabic names of the months). After his emigration to Poland in 1928 Szapszał apparently decided to apply the Turkish experimental model to the Karaite community, which of course drastically differed from Turkish society.

The most important aspect of his reform activity, however, did not have parallels either in Turkey, or in any other country in Europe. It was directed at introduction of a Turkic ethnic self-identification among the East European Karaites. This new identity denied all historical links that throughout the centuries had connected the Karaites with Jewish civilization and with Jews in general. In order to “prove” the non-Semitic racial origin of the Karaites to the Karaites themselves and to

²⁵ The fact that Szapszał’s reforms were cloned from those of Mustafa Atatürk is mentioned by one of his younger contemporaries, Alexander Dubiński, also a famous Polish Orientalist of Karaite origin (Alexander Dubiński, “Obnovlenie karaimskogo yazyka v pervoi polovine nashego stoletiya,” *Rocznik Orientalistyczny* 49:2 (1994): 59-63).

a non-Karaite audience, Szapszał used a few pseudo-scholarly eugenic theories attesting to the Karaites' supposedly Khazar-Cuman-Chuvash anthropological origins.²⁶ Moreover, according to Szapszał and his followers, even the Karaite religion was not a non-Talmudic variety of Judaism, but an absolutely separate faith – some sort of quaint mixture of Mosaic Judaism, Islam, and Christianity, with elements of pagan practices. Szapszał proclaimed that the early Karaites – and particularly their founder Anan ben David – recognised the prophetic nature of Jesus and Mohammed.²⁷ Needless to say, the main postulates of these theories were invented by Szapszał himself and were not based on any historical evidence.²⁸

In passing, one cannot help noticing that part of Szapszał's agenda involved making the Karaite religion appear somewhat similar to Christianity. This is why Karaite religious holidays were sometimes called by Christian Polish names: *Pesakh* = Wielkanoc (Pol. Easter); *Shevuot* = Zielone Świąto (Pol. "Green holiday," i.e. Pentecost).²⁹ Szapszał also tried to introduce a new terminology for Karaite spiritual officials. As one visitor to Troki noticed, there was a tendency to replace traditional Hebrew terms with Polish-Catholic ones: *hazzan* was called "ksiądz" (priest), *hakham* – "biskup" (bishop), *shammash* – "zakrystjan" (sacristan).³⁰ These pro-Christian tendencies caused much excitement on the part of Christian missionaries. In 1928 Szapszał had been visited by the Rev. I.E. Davidson, who later sent him a copy of the

²⁶ For an analysis of one such theory, that of Corrado Gini, see § 6.3.

²⁷ See Seraja Szapszał, "Przeszłość i terażniejszość Karaimów," *Wiedza i Życie* 3 (1934): 215; cf. his statements in AAN MWRiOP no. 1462, fol. 2; *ibid.*, no. 1464, fol. 129.

²⁸ See most important: Szapszał, "Przeszłość i terażniejszość Karaimów;" *idem*, "Corrado Gini, 'I Caraimi di Polonia e Lituania' (Recenzja)," *MK* 12 (1938): 111-112; *idem*, "Alexandre Baschmakoff, 'Cinquante siecles d'evolution ethnique autour de la Mer Noire' (Paris, 1937) (Recenzja)," *MK* 12 (1938): 112-118; *idem*, *Qırım Qaray Türkleri* (Istanbul 1928). This last publication seemed to play a highly important role in forming a pan-Turkic ideology in general (see Cafer Seydahmet's introduction to Edige Kırimal, *Der Nationale Kampf der Krimtürken* (Emsdetten, 1952), xvii-xviii, xxiii). For a critique of Szapszał's historical concept, see Tadeusz Kowalski, "Turecka monografia o Karaimach krymskich," *MK* 2:1 (1929): 2-8; Shapira, "A Jewish Pan-Turkist"; Kizilov, "New Materials."

²⁹ AAN MWRiOP, no. 1464, fols. 71-72.

³⁰ Blum, "Ha-qara'im bi-Troki."

New Testament in Hebrew and wrote: "I was interested to learn that you accept the person of the Lord Jesus, as being the Son of God, Who made the Vicarious sacrifice for the sins of the whole World..."³¹ In 1936, in an interview with the French journalist Abel Moreau, Szapszał said: "We call him Yeshua ha Tzadik, that is the "Just". For us Christ did not modify the Old Testament. On the contrary, he affirmed it... Christ is for us a great prophet, but not the messiah."³² This "Polish-Christian" tendency, however, was much less conspicuous than the "Turko-Muslim" one.

It is important to mention that in the interwar period a similar tendency to secession from Judaism due to fear of religious and racial persecution was also present among Ashkenazic Jews.³³ However, secessions among the Ashkenazim represented individual decisions that never had such an elaborate ideological background as Szapszał's policy of dejudaization.

It is worthwhile contemplating here why Szapszał's radical reforms were so easily implemented in such a conservative religious community as that of the Karaites. Indeed, somewhat surprisingly, the sources have not preserved a single testimony regarding any firm open public protest or opposition to Szapszał's reforms, only scattered data regarding mild resentment on the part of some traditionalist intellectuals.³⁴

One should not forget that in spite of the growing secularization of the Karaite community, there was a traditional reverent fear and veneration of the hakham, the

³¹ Rev. I.E. Davidson to S. Szapszał (29.07.1929, English) (MS LMAB F.143, no. 218, fol. 1).

³² Abel Moreau, "En Pologne à Troki, chez le Hachan des Karaimes," *Revue Bleue* 6 (1936): 392 as quoted in Warren Green, "The Karaite Community in Interwar Poland," *Nationalities Papers* 14: 1-2 (1986): 107.

³³ Ruppin, *Jewish Fate*, 282-290.

³⁴ E.g. "Czy Karaimi zamierzają emigrować do Palestyny?" *Dziennik Wileński* 64 (7.03.1934). We also possess some other information on public opposition to Szapszał's reforms in Wilno and Troki in the 1930s. In 1930, for example, the Troki community did not allow Szapszał to perform a mixed marriage between a Karaite woman and a Rabbanite man (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1016, fols. 1, 7-10).

highest spiritual authority of the East European Karaites. This is why, even though Troki and Halicz traditionalists certainly did not like Szapszał's innovations, they accepted and followed them anyway. Moreover, Szapszał's charisma as an outstanding Karaite politician and Orientalist scholar was perhaps too intimidating for there to be any attempt to oppose him. Furthermore, as will be shown later, in the 1930s Szapszał and some of his non-Karaite colleagues found a variety of anthropological and historical "evidence" supporting his Turkic theories. With today's historical and ethnographic knowledge one can easily prove the nonsensical nature of this "evidence," but in the interwar period, especially among the less educated members of the Karaite community, this was much less apparent.

It is also important to remember that Szapszał's authority and the dissemination of his ideas were largely dependent on his closest associates and assistants – the hazzanim of Troki, Łuck, and Wilno. Paradoxically, all of them (Szemaja Firkowicz, Joseph Łobanos, and Rafael Abkowicz) happened to be young and quite secularised persons, who enthusiastically accepted Szapszał's reforms and the new Turko-Karaite identity. The only exception, Isaac Abrahamowicz of Halicz, who was representative of the older generation – and who apparently felt some mild opposition to Szapszał's reforms – was soon replaced by Marek (Mordecai) Leonowicz, another young supporter of the hakham's theories. Thus, Szapszał's directives were normally given to the hazzanim, who then disseminated them among the members of their communities. Again, in spite of the growing secularization of the community, it was rather unthinkable to disobey the word of a hazzan, who had the power of excluding one from the synagogue, could excommunicate, refuse to perform a marriage, not register a child, etc. Furthermore, the younger Karaites apparently had a much less reverent attitude to the religion than their traditionalist forefathers, and were quite

happy to get rid of the obsolete Jewishness of their ancestors.

In addition to oral instructions and written directives given to the hazzanim, Szapszał and his associates published a number of leaflets and articles in the Polish language aimed at the dissemination of his Turkic doctrine not only among the Karaites, but also among the Poles.³⁵ Today many readers of these interwar publication would simply ignore them because of their appallingly non-academic, amateur character. However, in the interwar period the attitude towards the printed word was much more reverent and less critical than it is now.

In addition to his spiritual and administrative power over the community, Szapszał was also responsible for the distribution of financial support provided to the Karaites by the Polish state. We lack exact financial documentation regarding funding of the Karaite community by the state in the 1930s, but in 1928 the total amount of money for its maintenance was supposed to be 30,000 złoty per annum. 12,000 złoty of this sum was supposed to be paid annually to Szapszał as his hakham's salary.³⁶ Furthermore, the Polish administration provided additional funding and supported various Karaite community projects, such as publication of the periodical *Myśl Karaimska* and renovation of their synagogues (kenesalar). It seems that it was Szapszał who was in charge of distributing state money among the various communities; furthermore, it was he who paid salaries to the interwar hazzanim out of this money.

Thus, to sum up, there were several factors which helped Szapszał to

³⁵ E.g. Szymon Firkowicz, *O Karaimach w Polsce* (Troki, 1938) (this book was, *nota bene*, translated into German by the Nazi authorities and served them as a textbook on the Karaites: idem, *Die Karaimen in Polen*, transl. Harald Cosack (Berlin, 1941)); Ananjasz Zajączkowski, *Elementy tureckie na ziemiach polskich* (Zamość, 1935); idem, "Karaimi na Wołyniu (pochodzenie i dzieje)," *Rocznik Wołyński* 3 (1933): 149-191; Alexander Mardkowicz, *Synowie zakonu (Kilka słów o Karaimach)* (Łuck, 1930); idem, *Ogniska karaimskie (Łuck, Halicz, Wilno, Troki)* (Łuck, 1932); idem, *Karaim, jego życie i zwyczaje w przysłowiach ludowych* (Łuck, 1935). Cf. also references to Szapszał's and A.Baschmakoff's publications above and numerous pro-Turkic articles in *MK*.

³⁶ AAN MWRiOP 1464, fols. 101, 111, 115-117.

successfully carry out his reformist activity and drastically change Karaite identity in the course of only a few years – an unparalleled event if one thinks about the static conservative life-style of the Karaite community in preceding centuries. Among these factors were Szapszał's charismatic personality and academic prestige; the growing secularization of Karaite society and its readiness to abandon its Jewish past; dissemination of Szapszał's ideas through the press and his closest associates, hazzanim; increasing anti-Semitism in Poland; and, finally, the financial support and enthusiastic welcome of his reforms by the Polish state. As will be shown later, many of his innovations were first accepted only on a highly superficial level, especially in the community of Halicz. Nevertheless, later, after the Second World War, the horrors of the Holocaust, and Soviet anti-Jewish policy of the 1950s to the 1970s, Szapszał's doctrine of their rejection of Jewish past became deeply rooted in the Karaites' consciousness – and today's East European Karaites indeed consider themselves to be some sort of Turkic people, even though their knowledge of Turkic languages and history is usually almost non-existent.

6.3. The visit of Corrado Gini's anthropological expedition and its impact on the development of Szapszał's Turkic theory.

Before proceeding to an analysis of the process of implementation of Szapszał's dejudaization policy in Halicz, it is important to examine another historic event, which forced the hakham to alter his ideological doctrine in the second half of the 1930s. In the summer of 1934 the leading Italian statistician, demographer, and anthropologist, Corrado Gini, started negotiations with the Polish government and the head of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaite community, Seraja Szapszał, concerning his research trip to Poland. The main objective of this trip was to study the local Karaite

community from the sociological, anthropological, and statistical point of view. It is worthwhile contemplating what prompted Gini, a scholar interested largely in general statistical and economic studies, to do ethnographic research on such a small and inconspicuous East European group of Jewish origin. We might assume that his curiosity was stimulated by the general interest of Italian and German scientists in racial and eugenic questions, especially those pertaining to the racial composition of the European Jews. In spite of the fact that many such ethnographic and anthropological studies of the 1930s had some scholarly value, most of them were stimulated and sponsored by local Nazi and fascist authorities – and had rather sinister implications and consequences. We may also suggest that it was Gini's Jewish colleagues of Polish origin who recommended that he study the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites in 1934. A small and closed group of non-Talmudic Jews, which had lived on Polish territory since the end of the fourteenth century, certainly represented an interesting case study for the Italian demographer. Moreover, he was also interested in another tiny non-Talmudic Jewish group, the Samaritans.³⁷

Before attempting a critical evaluation of the results of Gini's expedition, a few words should be said about Gini himself and the general atmosphere of the development of demography in Italy under Mussolini. Corrado Gini (1884-1965) was indeed one of the leading twentieth-century Italian scientists, who developed the so-called "Gini coefficient," a measure of income inequality in a society. In the 1920s-30s he founded the statistical journals *Metron* and *Genus*, and in 1929 he established the Italian Committee for the Study of Population Problems (*Comitato italiano per lo studio dei problemi della popolazione*). In the 1920s, however, he became closely associated with Italian fascist circles and, according to some sources, maintained a

³⁷ Gini, "I Caraimi," 6, fts. 1-2.

close friendship with Mussolini himself.³⁸ In 1927 he even published a theoretical work entitled “The Scientific Basis of Fascism,” which discussed the role of power and science in Gini’s conception of a fascist state.³⁹ In 1926 Mussolini personally appointed him president of the Central Institute of Statistics in Rome. According to Giovanni Favero, it was Gini’s political role as Mussolini’s “adviser” on demographic issues that initially protected this institution from pervasive propaganda exploitation.⁴⁰ Nevertheless, in 1932, apparently as the result of a conflict with Mussolini’s close associates, Gini resigned from his position and afterward, it seems, discontinued his close contacts with the fascist authorities.

According to archival documents, Szapszał was far from being enthusiastic about Gini’s arrival.⁴¹ Moreover, Polish officials, while being aware of Gini’s closeness to Italian fascist circles, also were rather alarmed at his sudden interest in the local Karaites. A letter from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of 10 August 1934 warned MWRiOP:

Professor Corrado Gini is a prominent Italian scholar knowledgeable in population issues, which are highly topical in the context of fascist national policy... It would be, however, most desirable to turn our attention to the research activity of [his] committee in order to make sure that it indeed does not exceed the officially determined limits of its activity. Professor Gini’s stay in Poland should be arranged in such a way that he will not be able to establish any undesirable contacts.⁴²

Szapszał’s answer to the Director of the Department of Religious Confessions in Warsaw clearly indicated that in addition to purely academic purposes, Gini’s

³⁸ AAN MWRiOP no. 1464, fols. 44-45.

³⁹ Corrado Gini, “The Scientific Basis of Fascism,” *Political Science Quarterly* 42:1 (1927): 99-115.

⁴⁰ Giovanni Favero, “Corrado Gini and Italian Statistics under Fascism,” a paper presented to the XIII Congress of the International Economic History Association (Buenos Aires, July 23 2002). <http://www.eh.net/XIIICongress/Papers/Favero.pdf>

⁴¹ See numerous documents related to Gini’s arrival in Poland in AAN MWRiOP no. 1464, fols. 42-56.

⁴² AAN MWRiOP no. 1464, fol. 49.

expedition indeed might pursue (as the Polish authorities stated in their letter) political or perhaps even espionage functions.⁴³ Indeed, while visiting the Karaite centres in Poland (Łuck and Halicz), Polish Lithuania (Wilno, Troki), and independent Lithuania (Poniewież), the members of his expedition could have easily gathered some other, non-academic data. However, if the scientific side of this expedition is well known, its tentative “political” mission, to my knowledge, was not documented by any written source apart from the aforementioned letter. Until further documentation is gathered, one might well presume that this expedition remained purely scientific.

In the course of its visit to Poland in August-October 1934, Gini’s expedition investigated 549 Karaites, i.e. approximately 60 percent of the whole Karaite community in Poland and Lithuania. The expedition measured and recorded such parameters as skull dimensions, proportions of body members, weight, height, finger- and footprints, blood groups, colour of eyes, hair, and skin. In addition, each examined Karaite was photographed, and his/her genealogy was documented. Furthermore, some members of the expedition asked Karaite respondents about their world-views, the historical and ethnic origins of the Karaites, and their religious and everyday traditions.⁴⁴ Apart from Professor Corrado Gini, the expedition included a few other important scholars: Nora Federici (1910-2001), who together with Gini was one of the founders of demographic science in Italy; Annibale Del Blue (Rome);

⁴³ S. Szapszał to the Director of the Department of Religious Confessions in Warsaw, 16.07.1934, Polish (AAN MWRiOP no. 1464, fols. 44-45).

⁴⁴ The anthropological and demographic materials of Gini’s expedition were partially published as Gini, “I Caraimi;” S. Saggese, “I Caraimi di Polonia e Lituania,” *Genus* 23 (1967): 43-180; Nora Federici, “Caratteristiche demografiche di alcuni gruppi di Caraimi e di un gruppo di Ebrei dell’Europa orientale,” *Genus* 9 (1950-1952): 138-175; Corrado Gini, Nora Federici, *Appunti sulle spedizioni scientifiche del C.I.S.P.* (Rome, 1943). Nevertheless, the most important part of the expedition’s work, the sociological questionnaires, still remains unpublished. Furthermore, they remain uncatalogued and are currently kept in the basement of the Nora Federici library at the University of Rome (for a preliminary analysis see Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 63-77).

Liebmann Hersch (Geneva);⁴⁵ Benjamin Freilichmann (a Polish citizen and student in Rome; after his emigration to Israel, a.k.a. Benjamin Zvi Gil).⁴⁶ A few Polish scientists assisted them in Poland. Among these were Dr Izabella Wojkowska of Lwów and, surprisingly, the Karaite physician Konstanty Łopatto of Wilno.⁴⁷

The Galician Karaites, as the Karaite community geographically located closest to Rome, were the first to be visited. Unfortunately, the circumstances of the sojourn of Gini's expedition in Halicz received much less attention in the press than did those of its stay in all the other Karaite communities.⁴⁸ The expedition arrived in Halicz during the last days of August 1934. Research in Halicz was conducted mainly by Hersch and Freilichmann. Altogether 86 Halicz Karaites in 37 families (ca. 65% of the community) were examined. After studying the local Karaites, Freilichmann, himself an Ashkenazic Jew of Galician origin, also examined 197 Halicz Rabbanites.⁴⁹ The work of the members of the expedition was overseen by the most influential leaders of the Halicz community – Zachariah Nowachowicz and Samuel Samuelowicz. On 28 August 1934 the expedition donated 270 złoty towards the construction of a Karaite National House (*dom narodowy*), which was later erected in the vicinity of the kenesa.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ For his biography, see G. Frumkin, "From Conventional Demography to Potential Demography – in Memoriam of Liebmann Hersch (1882-1955)," *Population Investigation Committee* 9:3 (1956): 276-277.

⁴⁶ He was the head of the Statistics department in the Israeli government in the 1950s (Ben Zvi, *Niddehey*, 134). According to Trevisan Semi, he was the author of the still unpublished Master's dissertation, "Indagine demografica su alcune comunità ebraiche della Polonia" (Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 64, ft. 103).

⁴⁷ In passing, it is interesting to note that one of the young Karaite reformists, Ilya Aaronovich Totesh, a student in St. Petersburg, requested help in his anthropological research as early as the end of the nineteenth century. Thus, already at this time young Karaite nationalists were hoping that anthropological research might prove their non-Semitic origins! (I.A. Totesh to the Troki Karaite Consistory, Kherson, 17.12.1898, Russian: MS LMAB F.301, no. 302, fol. 33).

⁴⁸ On Gini's stay in other communities, see [Alexander Mardkowicz], "Isi icin Prof. Cininy [sic]," *KA* 9 (1936): 24a; "Üvriatiuv ekspedicijasy Italjanlarnyn," *Onarmach* 2 (1938): 22-24; "Nauka bada Mohikanów," *Słowo* 255 (18.10.1934).

⁴⁹ Gini, "I Caraimi," 36, 52 (ft.).

⁵⁰ Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 6.

After their stay in Halicz, Gini and his colleagues also visited the Karaite communities of Łuck, Wilno, and Poniewież. The expedition left Poland and Lithuania in autumn 1934. The Karaite community and its leaders anticipated the publication of the results of Gini's expedition with anxiety. Especially anxious, undoubtedly, was Seraja Szapszał. He knew that Gini and his colleagues' conclusion that the Karaites belonged to the Semitic anthropological type would seriously jeopardize his dejudaization policy, especially in the eyes of Polish officialdom. Undoubtedly, as well, the presence of two Jewish anthropologists among the members of the expedition strengthened his fears. During Gini's stay in Poland, in order to provide the Italian scholar with the "proper" Turkic perspective on Karaite history, Szapszał gave him a few articles by himself and other interwar Karaite nationalists – all of them attesting to the Turkic origin of the East European Karaites and their historical development from the Khazars and Cumans.⁵¹

In spite of the fact that the influence of Szapszał's historical information is evident throughout the whole of Gini's work, the anthropological results of the expedition, which were published in the Italian periodical *Genus*, nevertheless, were rather unexpected. Gini and his colleagues came to the following conclusions: First, the Karaites who lived in different parts of Poland, Lithuania, and the Crimea did not represent a unified anthropological type. Surprisingly, in terms of their anthropological composition, the Karaites of Halicz were distant from their nearest neighbours, the Karaites of Łuck, and were very close to their brethren from Troki and Wilno. Moreover, even more surprising, the Karaites of Halicz and Wilno turned out to be highly similar to the Indo-Aryans (*sic*), Chuvashes, Permyaks, Manchus, Buryats, and several other Turkic, Mongol, and Finno-Ugric ethnic groups of

⁵¹ Gini, "I Caraimi," 3-4 (ft. 2), 39.

European Russia and Siberia! The Karaites of Łuck (another surprise) were almost identical with the Oriental Jews, and very close to the Crimean Karaites and the Finno-Ugric Votes (Votyaks). On the whole, Gini came to the conclusion that the general anthropological type of the East European Karaites was most similar to that of the Chuvashes, whom he considered to be a group of Finno-Ugric origin. As a consequence, the scientists came to the “learned” conclusion that the Karaites were not of Turkic Cumano-Khazar but of Finno-Ugric origin. Gini explained the predominance of Finno-Ugric anthropological features in the Karaites by the fact that their ancestors were the Tauro-Cimmerians. According to Gini, the latter were Ugric tribes, who had lived in the Crimea and were later assimilated by the Khazars. On the other hand, he admitted the possibility that the Khazars themselves might have been Finno-Ugrians, who had accepted a Turko-Tatar language.⁵²

The naiveté of Gini’s historical arguments is more than obvious from today’s standpoint. They cannot withstand any critique from either the historical or the anthropological perspectives. Historically, the Tauri and Cimmerians (two absolutely different ethnic groups!), whose origin is still being debated, certainly were not of Finno-Ugric origin. Moreover, they could hardly have been assimilated by the Khazars, whose influence in the medieval Crimea also seems to be considerably exaggerated by nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholarship. Moreover, the Chuvashes (a.k.a. Čavaš/Çuvaş), who according to Gini were Finno-Ugric, are considered today to be a Turkic (or Turkic-speaking) people of mixed Finno-Turkic anthropological composition.⁵³ There certainly were some Finno-Ugric tribes among

⁵² Ibid., 52-56, fig. 1.

⁵³ In Gini’s times, however, the theory of the Finno-Ugric origin of the Chuvashes prevailed (see *Chuvashi. Etničeskaia istoriia i traditsionnaia kul’tura*, ed. V.P. Ivanov, V.V. Nikolaev, V.D. Dmitriev (Moscow, 2000)). The closest ancestors of the Chuvashes seem to be the Turkic Volga Bulgars

those belonging to the Khazar Kaganate, but their impact on the ethnic composition of the Khazar state is also rather murky. Furthermore (if we follow Gini's line of argumentation), why would the Karaites assimilate only the Finno-Ugric anthropological features of the Khazar tribes and "ignore" the Turkic features of the Savirs, Khazars, K  k-Turks (G  kt  rklar), and other Turkic groups which lived in Khazaria?

Anthropologically, the veracity of the results of Gini's expedition also may be questioned. Why would the Karaites of Halicz be *so* different from their immediate neighbours, the Karaites of Łuck, with whom they intermarried and were closely connected historically and linguistically? Why did Gini decide to correlate the Karaites with Finno-Ugric groups from remote parts of Russia and not compare them to the Armenians, Italians, Greeks, and other Mediterranean peoples who are usually found to be highly similar to the Oriental and European Jews? Furthermore, the results of Gini's expedition did not correspond to those of other pre-war anthropologists who studied the East European Karaites. Most of these studies came to the conclusion that the Karaites, who were indeed somewhat different from their Ashkenazic neighbours (quite an expected conclusion when taking into consideration the prohibition of Karaite–Rabbanite marriages), possessed mixed Semitic, Mediterranean, Slavic, and even Armenoid features.⁵⁴

Finally, ethnic self-identification is understood today as a phenomenon of social and psychological nature that often has nothing (or very little) to do with physical or

(John R. Krueger, *Chuvash Manual. Introduction, Grammar, Reader, and Vocabulary* (Hague, 1961), 7-8).

⁵⁴ See most important: Solomon Czortkower, "Pochodzenie i struktura rasowa Karaim  w," *Przegl  d Antropologiczny* 12:4 (1938): 678-680; idem, "Na marginesie pochodzenia Karaim  w," *Nasza Opinia* 182 (309). 05.02.1939; idem, "Karaimi," *Kuryer Literacko-Naukowy* (addendum to *Kuryer Codzienny* 208 (29.07.1935)); Talko-Hryniewicz, "Charakterystyka fizyczna"; idem, *Karaimi vel Karaici*; Micha   Reicher, "Sur les groupes sanguines des Caraimes de Troki et de Wilno," *Anthropologie* 10 (1932): 259-267; Schreiber, *Badania*; "Antropologia karaimov," *KZh* 1 (1911): 2-29.

anthropological characteristics. From this standpoint, the Judeo-Israelite identity of the nineteenth-century Karaites and their understanding of the Karaites' indisputable affiliation with Jewish civilization and "the people of Israel" (*'am Yisra'el*) seem to be much more important than the aforementioned dubious results of the anthropological expedition which "discovered" that in terms of their genetic composition the Karaites were very close to the "Finno-Ugric" Chuvashes (about whom they had not even heard before).

In passing, a few words should be said about a part of Gini's work which was usually ignored by Karaite nationalists, especially by Szapszał.⁵⁵ Surprisingly, Gini came to the conclusion that the Polish and Galician Rabbanite Jews were closely related to the Hungarians, the Turks of Macedonia, and a few Turkic groups living in the Soviet Union. On the basis of this similarity, Gini came to another "learned" conclusion and suggested that the Ashkenazic Jews were descendants of "the Turko-Tatar converts to Judaism."⁵⁶ Again, Gini's historical theory concerning the proselytic, Turko-Tatar origin of the Ashkenazim is not corroborated by any historical evidence either. It is important to note that in contrast to the Karaites, the presence of evident Turkic, Slavic, and Mediterranean features in the Ashkenazic Jews, which is

⁵⁵ Referring to Gini's work as to alleged "proof" of the veracity of Szapszał's Khazar theory is a commonplace in the writings of modern Karaite authors (e.g. Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 15). Evidently, most of them never saw this rare pre-war publication *de visu* and based their arguments on Szapszał's distorted retelling of Gini's work (Szapszał, "Corrado Gini").

⁵⁶ Gini, "I Caraimi," 55.

attested in many recent anthropological studies,⁵⁷ nevertheless did not give the Ashkenazim grounds to claim that they were of non-Semitic origin.⁵⁸

What was the reaction in Karaite circles to Gini's discoveries? Immediately after the publication of Gini's work, his theory was bitterly mocked in Łuck in a poem by Alexander Mardkowicz, who considered this hypothesis to be another journalist fabrication.⁵⁹ Alas, Mardkowicz apparently did not know that Szapszał at that moment was seriously contemplating new changes in his Turkic doctrine. It seems that Szapszał found the results of Gini's expedition somewhat frustrating. Indeed, they did not prove the Turkic origins of the Karaites! On the other hand – and this was much more encouraging – they did not show any Semitic racial affiliation either. This is why the conclusions reached by Gini's expedition, which found a resemblance between the Karaites and the Chuvashes, forced Szapszał to considerably alter his theory.⁶⁰ In 1938 he published a small article, a review of Alexander Baschmakoff's

⁵⁷ E.g. recent research carried out by the team of Michael Hammer showed that the Ashkenazic Jews correlate best with the Greeks and Turks (Michael F. Hammer *et al.*, "Jewish and Middle Eastern non-Jewish Populations Share a Common Pool of Y-chromosome Biallelic Haplotypes," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 97:12 (2000): 6769-6774). This fact, however, does not make them descendants of these two peoples. For differences in the racial composition of the Jews and the presence of non-Semitic elements in the Jewish anthropological type, see also a classical work by the father of Jewish anthropology, Arthur Rupp (1876-1943) (Rupp, *Jewish Fate*, 11-20).

⁵⁸ The theory of the Turko-Khazar origin of European Jewry is not corroborated by any historical source and is purely conjectural. Gini was not the only one to suggest the Turkic origin of the Ashkenazic Jews. Indeed, there were some Jewish authors who claimed that the Ashkenazim were the descendants of the Khazars, or of the mixed Slavic-Khazar population (e.g. Avraham Poliak, *Khazaria. Toledot mamlakha yehudit be-Eiropa* (Tel Aviv, 1951); Arthur Koestler, *The Thirteenth Tribe* (New York, 1976 (see esp. Chapter VIII. Race and Myth, pp. 181-200)); Kevin Alan Brook, *The Jews of Khazaria* (Northvale, NJ-Jerusalem, 2002), 281; Paul Wexler, *The Ashkenazic Jews: a Slavo-Turkic People in Search of a Jewish Identity* (Columbus, Ohio, 1993). Nevertheless, these "extravagant" authors have always been in the minority and the vast majority of European Jews have never claimed to be of alleged "Khazar" origin. See more in Mikhail Kizilov, Diana Mikhaylova, "The Khazar Kaganate and the Khazars in European Nationalist Ideologies and Scholarship," *Archivum Eurasii Medii Aevi* 14 (2005): 31-53; idem, "Khazary i Khazarskii kaganat v evropeiskikh natsionalisticheskikh ideologiyakh i politicheski orientirovannoi nauchno-issledovatel'skoi literature," *Khazarskii Al'manakh* 3 (2004): 34-62; Dan Shapira, "Khazars and Karaites, Again," *Kara Deniz Arařtırmaları* (4/13) (*Black Sea Studies in memoriam of Omeljan Pritsak (1919-2006)*) (2007): 43-64.

⁵⁹ Alexander Mardkowicz, "Ebgełer" [Ancestors], *KA* 11 (1937): 20.

⁶⁰ Szapszał, "Corrado Gini," 111-112.

pseudo-scholarly anthropological monograph, in which Szapszał announced that the Chuvashes were also to be included in the list of non-Semitic ancestors of the East European Karaites. He explained the presence of Chuvash blood in the Karaites by the fact that the Chuvashes were assimilated by the Khazars, and thus became ancestors of the Karaites. Moreover, in this article Szapszał also stated that the Karaite religious doctrine, which in his view included elements of pre-Talmudic Judaism together with the recognition of the prophetic nature of Jesus and Mohammed, also comprised elements of pagan practices typical of the Chuvashes. These non-existent “Karaite” (and Chuvash) practices consisted of the veneration of trees, specifically of the so-called “sacred oaks” growing in the Karaite cemetery near Çufut-Qale in the Crimea.⁶¹

The nonsensical nature of these statements is more than evident. Indeed, the pagan beliefs of the Chuvashes did include the veneration of trees. However, the Karaites, rigorous monotheists, never practised such superstitious rituals.⁶² Nor did the Karaites recognize the prophetic nature of Jesus and Mohammed.⁶³ Furthermore, the participation of the Chuvashes, Khazars, and Cumans in the Karaites’ ethnogenesis, which is not reflected in any written or archaeological source, also seems to be out of the question.⁶⁴ Nevertheless, in the 1930s-40s the questionable nature of Gini’s and Szapszał’s argumentation concerning the Karaites’ closeness to

⁶¹ Szapszał, “Alexandre Baschmakoff,” 112-118. In this article for the first time Szapszał used the toponym *Balta Tiymez* (“The axe may not touch”) to designate the Jehosaphath valley near Çufut-Qale in the Crimea. This toponym, which is not attested in any historical source prior to Szapszał, was most likely simply invented by the Karaite leader. Cf. Alexandre Baschmakoff, *Cinquante siècles d’évolution ethnique autour de la Mer Noire* (Paris, 1937); idem, “Les origines ethniques des Caraïtes de Crimée,” *Journal Officiel de la République Française* 232 (3.10.1935). Like Gini’s study, the aforementioned absolutely ignorant and pseudo-scholarly book by Baschmakoff was later often used by the Karaites to prove their non-Jewish origins to the Nazi authorities of various countries.

⁶² For a critique of the non-existent cult of “sacred oaks” see Kizilov, *Karaites*, 124-126.

⁶³ E.g. the statement of today’s Eupatoria hazzan, Victor Tiriya (as recorded by Vladimir Matveyev in his “Karaites in Crimea,” *Frontier* 11 (2006): 30-32).

⁶⁴ For a critique of the Khazar theory of the origins of the East European Karaites see Kizilov, Mikhaylova, “Khazar Kaganate”; idem, “Khazary i Khazarskii kaganat;” Dan Shapira, “The Khazars and the Karaites, Again” (in preparation).

the Chuvashes and the Khazars seemed far less evident than today, since the scholarship of that time possessed much less information about Khazar history and the methodology of anthropological work.

Whatever the case may be, in spite of Mardkowicz's irony (see above), Gini's "scientific" approval of Szapszał's Khazar theory also produced a strong impression on many members of the East European Karaite community. From this point on, many of those who earlier doubted the possibility of the non-Semitic origin of the Karaites started to believe it – mainly because of the fact that after Gini's discoveries, not only Szapszał's directives, but also secular scientific "evidence," forced them to do so.

6.4. Implementation of Szapszał's Turkic doctrine in Halicz and its outcome

Analysis of the Karaite press of the 1930s is, perhaps, the easiest way to follow the Turkicization of Karaite life in interwar Poland. Nevertheless, these official publications do not provide enough information on the actual mode of introduction of the main postulates of Szapszał's doctrine in different Karaite communities. Furthermore, they normally do not say anything regarding the public reaction and opposition against these reforms. Apparently, there were no straightforward written directives suggesting abandoning Judeo-Karaite identity and appropriating a new, Turko-Karaite one. Turkicization of the interwar Karaite community was a gradual process that started from initial, seemingly small and insignificant terminological reforms, and later resulted in a complete transformation of Karaite society. Turkicization found its first followers among the most emancipated segment of the Karaite intelligentsia, and only then was it disseminated amongst ordinary members of the community, who often failed to understand the necessity of eliminating

“obsolete and inconvenient” Jewishness. As will be shown later, complete Turkicization of Karaite society was achieved, perhaps, only after the Second World War – and it seems that in Halicz the opposition to this process was strongest.

Active implementation of Szapszał’s reforms in Halicz began about the same time as in other communities – in the early 1930s. As has been mentioned above, Szapszał could control the Halicz community through both financial and spiritual channels. The Karaites of Halicz (especially the local hazzan and members of the community’s board of administration) often received his written directives by post, and read the pro-Turkic publications by Szapszał and his associates in the press. It was through Szapszał that the Halicz hazzan received his salary, while the community was obtaining additional subsidies for its religious school, public centres, renovation works, etc.

Szapszał’s directives were often introduced through his faithful emissaries, the hazzanim of other communities. In 1933 Halicz was visited by the Troki hazzan Szemaja Firkowicz, one of the most active proponents of Szapszał’s doctrine. According to Isaac Abrahamowicz, he arrived in Halicz to introduce some changes in the internal order of the local kenesa and the manner of praying.⁶⁵ Abrahamowicz did not explain the exact nature of these “changes.” Nevertheless, one may assume that they were related to the wider usage of Karaim for liturgical purposes and the removal of some conspicuously “Jewish” decorative elements from the synagogue.

Indeed, in the 1930s, in order to avoid any association with the Ashkenazic Jews, the Karaite authorities, undoubtedly instructed by Seraja Szapszał, started removing traditional Jewish symbols (Stars of David, Tablets of the Law, inscriptions in Hebrew characters, etc.) from their houses, cemeteries, and places of worship.

⁶⁵ I. Abrahamowicz to S. Szapszał, 22 August 1933 (MS LMAB F.143, no. 172a, fols. 36-37).

Thus, for example, the Stars of David were removed from the top of and entrance to the Karaite synagogue in Troki.⁶⁶ The Galician Karaites were also forced to follow these instructions. As a consequence, in the 1930s the Stars of David were removed from the top of the Halicz synagogue.⁶⁷ We may assume that they were removed after 1933, most likely after the aforementioned visit of Szemaja Firkowicz. Furthermore, the Star of David was removed from the official seal of the Halicz community; its later variant contained a depiction of the Karaite kenesa of Wilno.⁶⁸ In the interwar period most Hebrew inscriptions disappeared from the walls of the Halicz synagogue (it is unclear whether this happened during the renovation of the synagogue in 1927 or later, in the 1930s). One interwar Jewish visitor remarked, with disapproval, that “in früheren Zeiten waren sie [the interior sides of the synagogue walls] vielfarbig mit Bibel- und Gebetssätzen bemalt, heute mutet das Haus wie das Zimmer eines kleinstädtischen Hotels an.” The same person noted that a certain “national Karaite house” was built in the vicinity of the synagogue.⁶⁹

However, the empty space (in the physical and metaphorical senses of the word), which appeared as a result of the removal of Stars of David and other traditional symbols was supposed to be filled by something else. In the late 1920s to early 1930s Szapszał invented a new symbol for the East European Karaites which was intended to imitate the heraldic coats of arms of Polish-Lithuanian noble families on the one hand, and show the Karaites’ military valour and Turkic origin, on the

⁶⁶ Mikhail Kizilov, Tat’iana Shchegoleva, “Troki glazami evreia. Evreiskie zhurnalisty 30-ykh godov XX veka o gorode Troki i ego obitateliakh,” *Paralleli* 4-5 (2004): 393-394.

⁶⁷ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13. See the photo of the Star of David on the top of the Halicz kenesa in Illustrations, fig. 3.2. Ivan Yurchenko informed me that he had seen the Star of David, supposedly originating from the local Karaite synagogue, in a private collection in Halicz in 2002 (private communication, May, 2002).

⁶⁸ Illustrations, fig. 7.1, 7.2, 7.3. The personal seal of the Halicz hazzan, however, still contained the depiction of Tablets of the Law (ibid., fig. 7.4.).

⁶⁹ Wachsmann, “Halitsch,” 13. On the other hand, the synagogue’s exterior design became much more expressive: it now also included elegant reliefs in the form of the Karaite *tallit gadol* (=prayer-shawl) on the corners of the building (see Illustrations, fig. 3.2). On the tragic post-war destiny of this architectural monument see § 7.1.

other. In the centre of this “coat of arms” Szapszał placed the signs of Tatar clans (the so-called *tamghalar*) from the Crimean fortress of Çufut-Qale. In spite of the fact that these signs represented nothing but symbols of Crimean Tatar clans, Szapszał stated that they were depictions of Karaite military weapons – a bicorn and a shield.⁷⁰ Surprisingly, Szapszał did not fully exclude traditional Karaite symbols, and placed a rendering of the hakham’s headgear and *tallit gadol* above these two Tatar emblems. Later, these symbols, depicted above a symbolic representation of the Eastern wall of Çufut-Qale (or the Troki castle), became the official “coat of arms” of the East European Karaites.⁷¹

In the 1930s (most likely, between 1933 and 1935) these Tatar emblems replaced traditional Karaite symbols – Stars of David and Tablets of the Law in the Troki and Wilno Karaite synagogues-*kenesalar*.⁷² In Halicz the local Karaites simply removed the Star of David, but did not replace it with these *tamghalar*. However, the Galicians were perhaps the first to show the new coat of arms to a wide Polish audience. In 1933 Poland celebrated the 250th anniversary of the victory in the battle of Vienna (1683). On 17 September 1933 the city council of Stanisławów organized a solemn ceremony for commemoration of this event. The Karaite delegation, which consisted of a few Galician Karaites, was dressed in slightly modified traditional clothing and carried a “Karaite banner” of white, blue, and yellow colours.⁷³ Moreover, they carried a large shield with a depiction of the aforementioned “coat of arms” with the inscription “Karaimi Haliccy opiekunowi swemu królowi Janowi III-mu w hołdzie” (The Halicz Karaites in homage to their patron Jan III Sobieski).

⁷⁰ Kowalski, “Turecka monografia,” 6. Already during the ceremony of his inauguration into the office of Polish-Lithuanian hakham in 1928, Szapszał was given a sceptre with these two symbols.

⁷¹ See MK 2:3-4 (1931), figs. 5-6; Illustrations, fig. 7.5.

⁷² Illustrations, fig. 7.6.

⁷³ Again, this “banner with national colours” (=chorągiew o barwach narodowych) seems to be Szapszał’s invention.

According to an eyewitness report, the Karaite delegates were greeted with the words “Bravo and long live our Karaites!”⁷⁴

As was shown above, in 1933-34 the senior hazzan, Isaac Abrahamowicz, stepped aside and his place was taken by the young Marek (Mordecai) Leonowicz, who was much more enthusiastic with regard to Szapszał’s innovations than his traditionally oriented predecessor. Under the pressure of Szapszał’s directives, members of the Galician community, as well as those of other Karaite communities in interwar Poland, inevitably had to master the art of Orwell’s “doublespeak.” For example, the Karaites living in interbellum Halicz were taught within the community that they were Jewish. Outside their homes, however, they were supposed to tell strangers that they were of Turkic origin.⁷⁵ This policy of “double standards” is especially evident in the unpublished materials of Corrado Gini’s expedition of 1934. The official administrative leaders of the community, Ezua Leonowicz and Zachariah Nowachowicz, told the members of the expedition about the Tatar origins of the local community, its loyalty to the local government, and its difference from the Ashkenazic Jews. Ordinary members of the community, though, perhaps less informed about Szapszał’s policy, stated that the Karaites had excellent relations with the Jews. Another informant mentioned that the term “Karaites” had an exclusively religious (and not national) meaning, since the Karaites themselves were descendants of the Israelites.⁷⁶

To sum up, it seems that the Galicians and many other East European Karaite traditionalists accepted most of Szapszał’s innovations only superficially. In spite of the fact that the Karaites of Halicz were obliged to use the Latin script, Szapszał’s

⁷⁴ Illustrations, fig. 7.7; [Szulimowicz], “Karaimi Haliccy,” 118-120; cf. the draft of this article in MS LMAB F.143, no.1587. On the relations between Jan III Sobieski and the Karaites, see § 2.2.1.

⁷⁵ Oral communication by the Karaite Magdi Shemu’el (Ashkelon) (Akhiezer, Shapira, “Qara’im be-Lita,” 52, ft. 173).

⁷⁶ Trevisan Semi, *Gli ebrei Caraiti*, 73.

Turkic calendar, and his religious terminology in official public documents and publications, the Hebrew alphabet and names of the months were still normally used in internal community documents. The hand-written Karaite calendars composed in Halicz in Hebrew characters in 1944/45 and 1949/50 contained *only* Hebrew terms.⁷⁷ Moreover, the Galicians continued to begin the calendar year in *Tishrei* and not in *Nisan*, as was prescribed by Szapszał.⁷⁸

As has been shown above, many local Karaites preserved their “Judeo-Karaite” identity and religious traditionalism. In 1932 one Halicz author (most likely, Z.Zarachowicz), sorrowfully complained that the works and writings of Shalom Zacharjasiewicz, a pious leader of the community at the beginning of the nineteenth century, stood in drastic contrast to current developments in Karaite society.⁷⁹ A highly interesting example of the continuing interest in the study of the Hebrew language in the Galician community was a celebration of the hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Karaite enlightener Elijah Kazaz (1832-1912) in 1933. On that day Karaite children gathered under the guidance of their teachers (Z. Zarachowicz, L. Eszwowicz, and M. Leonowicz) and recited Kazaz’s Hebrew poems.⁸⁰ In 1935 Karaite children performed a play in Karaim entitled “Mescheracyłany-Purimnin,” which was apparently a Karaite analogue of the Ashkenazic “Purimspiel” – a special comic performance dedicated to the traditional Jewish holiday of Purim.⁸¹ The curriculum of the Karaite religious schools, which functioned in Łuck and Halicz up

⁷⁷ See the calendar for 1944/1945 and “Luah roshei hodashim / Karaimskii kalendar’ na 5710 god ot sotvoreniya mira (1949-1950)” (the Yurchenko MSS; Illustrations, fig. 5.6). Members of a Polish Karaite family in Warsaw informed me that they were still using traditional Hebrew terms (*Yom Kippur*, *Pesakh* etc.) in spite of the fact that celebrating these holidays was not important for them any longer (private communication, November, 2001).

⁷⁸ The author himself celebrated a Karaite New Year in Halicz together with the local Karaites in *Tishrei* 5762 (Sep. 2002) within the framework of the conference, “The Halicz Karaites: History and Culture” (6-9 Sep. 2002).

⁷⁹ Karaucu, “Unutkan Ribbimiz,” *KA* 4 (1932): 17.

⁸⁰ “Dzymatynda Halicnin,” *KA* 7 (1934): 25.

⁸¹ M.Leonowicz to S.Szapszał, 1935, Polish: MS LMAB F.143, no. 425, fol. 1. According to *KRPS* the word *miskhara* means “joke, fun” (*KRPS*, 408).

until the Soviet annexation of Eastern Poland in 1939, also attests that Hebrew language and literature were still taught to Karaite children at that time.⁸²

Some Galician intellectuals continued copying Hebrew manuscripts and translating Hebrew texts into the local variety of Karaim. Isaac ben Joshua Szulimowicz was translating Hebrew prayers into Karaim as late as November 1940, when Galicia had already been annexed by the Soviet Union.⁸³ Zarach Zarachowicz (1890-1952) copied not only Karaite, but also Rabbanite liturgical works in Hebrew in the 1930s.⁸⁴ Even in 1942, during the Nazi occupation (!), the local Karaites were not afraid to draw up a marriage contract in Hebrew, using the traditional Hebrew calendar, and such terms as “the land of Israel,” “qahal ha-Qara'im,” etc.⁸⁵ All this shows that even at that time, despite Szapszał's dejudaization reforms, the Karaites continued studying the Hebrew language, TaNaKh, and Karaite liturgy in its original form. Moreover, the Galician Karaites apparently did not lose the notion that their ancestral home was in the Holy Land of Israel, which is clearly attested by the emigration of at least one of its members, Marek (Mordecai) Abrahamowicz, to Jerusalem ca.1935.⁸⁶

Nevertheless, Szapszał's reforms certainly did not pass unnoticed. In the interwar period the spiritual and intellectual life of the community became much more secular, and there was a clear tendency to abandon many traditional Jewish practices

⁸² See this curriculum in MS LMAB F.143, no. 1023, fol. 147.

⁸³ Moreover, he did this from 7 to 10 Nov. 1940, when the whole Soviet Union was celebrating the holiday of the October revolution. His translations were written on the empty folios of *Seder tefillot ha-Qara'im*, vol. 3 (Vienna, 1854) (now the Yurchenko MSS). These translations are analysed in Henryk Jankowski, “Two Prayers for the Day of Atonement in Translation into the Łuck-Halicz Dialect of Karaim,” in *Karaites in Eastern Europe in the Last Generations. Proceedings of the First International Karaite Colloquium*, ed. Dan Shapira et al. (Jerusalem, 2008) (in print).

⁸⁴ Shapira, “Turkic Languages,” 688.

⁸⁵ The marriage contract between Mordecai-Shalom b. Joshua Mordkowicz and Esther bat Joseph, Halicz, 6.08.1942, Hebrew (the Yurchenko MSS, Z.Zarachowicz's collection).

⁸⁶ He stayed at the home of the Karaite hazzan of Jerusalem (M.Abrahamowicz to his parents, Jerusalem, 21.10.193[5]; Polish; the Yurchenko MSS). He continued living there even after the end of the war and the establishment of the State of Israel. In 1950 he met Mordecai Abraham Alfandari (1929-1999), a future enlightener and hakham of the Israeli Karaites (Nehemia Gordon, “The Death of a Karaite Hacham” (http://www.light-of-israel.org/death_of_a_karaite_hacham.shtml)).

and to acquire more and more numerous “Turkic” features. In Halicz this process was, however, much less evident than in any other community. Furthermore, the ban imposed on the use of Hebrew provoked a sudden rise of literary activity in Karaim. It is in this period that Karaim started to become a full-fledged literary language used for secular poems, stories, historical and polemic articles, translations from foreign languages, and even for fairy-tales.⁸⁷ The Karaites’ use of a Turkic language for literary and historical purposes was certainly noted by their Tatar and Turkish contemporaries. In my opinion, it is not a coincidence that in December 1937 the Karaites of Halicz were visited by a group of the Crimean Tatars from Romania and Turkey headed by Hacı Fazıl and Bekir Akcar, editors of the Turkish periodical *Emel*.⁸⁸

The renaissance of literary Karaim was stopped in 1939, with the Soviet occupation of Eastern Poland and Lithuania, and the beginning of the Second World War. A famous Karaite Orientalist, Alexander Dubiński, who himself witnessed Szapszał’s reforms as a young pupil in interwar Troki, claimed that Szapszał’s radical changes in the linguistic sphere could not have been fully introduced in such a short period of time. Nevertheless, in his opinion, in spite of the fact that it is very difficult to call this process a “linguistic revolution,” one may define it at least as the beginning of the “evolution” of the Karaim language, which was hindered by the beginning of the war.⁸⁹

Public and official reaction to Szapszał’s reformist activity also deserves to be

⁸⁷ The tiny Karaite community of interwar Poland-Lithuania published a number of periodicals in Karaim: *Karay Awazy* (12 issues; Łuck 1931-1938), *Sahyszymyz* (parallel text in Russian and Karaim, 1 issue, Wilno 1927), *Przyjaciel Karaimów / Dostu Karajнын* (no.1 in Karaim and Polish; nos.2-3 in Karaim; Troki, 1930-1934), and *Onarmach* (3 issues; Kaunas-Poniewież, 1934-1939). The most important one was, perhaps, *Myśl Karaimska*, published in Wilno in the Polish language with some materials in Karaim (12 issues, 1924-1938).

⁸⁸ J.S.[Józef Sulimowicz], “Tatarzy krymscy w Haliczu,” *MK* 12 (1939): 148.

⁸⁹ Dubiński, “Obnovlenie,” 63.

discussed. Polish officialdom enthusiastically welcomed the patriotism of the Karaites and their apparent distancing of themselves from the Rabbanite Jews. The “discovery” that the Karaites were descendants of the Khazars, of obscure Turko-Ugric origin, produced quite a strong impression on official structures and public opinion in Poland, Italy, and, later, in Nazi Germany. Practical application of the Karaite-Khazar theory became evident quite soon. Already in the second half of the 1930s a few Polish Karaite émigrés living in fascist Italy started experiencing the same “racial” problems as the German Jews. In 1938 two of them, Michele (Michał) Łopatto and Raissa Juchniewicz, in order to avoid their being identified as Jews, received a certificate which stated that they were of *religione caraima e di razza casara* (Ital. “of Karaite religion and from Khazar race”) and did not have any connections either with the Jewish race or Jewish religion (Ital. *ne con la razza giudaica ne con la religione ebrea*).⁹⁰ Gini’s and Szapszał’s publications, which attested to the Karaites’ non-Semitic origins, were one of the main factors that helped them to procure this important document.⁹¹

6.5. *The Karaites of Halicz during the Second World War and the Holocaust*

For the Halicz Karaite community, the period from 1939 to 1945 was a time of trials and tribulations, when one occupying regime was replaced by another. Three times during this period they had to change their citizenship: from Polish to Soviet in 1939, from Soviet to German in 1941, and back to Soviet in 1944. All this time they lived in constant fear of persecutions, be it Stalin’s anti-bourgeois purges or the Nazi “Solution” of the “Jewish question.” Like other inhabitants of Eastern Europe, the

⁹⁰ MS LMAB F.143, no.1023, fol.371. It was in 1938 that the Italian authorities introduced the law restricting the rights of the Jews (Ruppin, *Jewish Fate*, 10).

⁹¹ For the further application of Szapszał’s Khazar theory and the “Turkicization” of the East European Karaite community during the Second World War and the Holocaust, see below.

Karaites suffered from the atrocities of the war, starvation, the cruelty of the occupiers, and the general destruction of community life. After long debates, the Karaites were, with some hesitation, recognized by the Nazis as non-Jews. Thus, they were spared the fate of other European Jews during the time of the Shoah. This is why the period of World War II and the Holocaust was perhaps the last act in the drama which completely dissociated the East European Karaites from their Rabbanite brethren-in-faith. The behaviour of the Karaites during the Holocaust became a sensitive topic after the war, especially in Israel. One of the Rabbanite survivors from Troki protested in a letter to the *Jerusalem Post*: "The Karaites gladly accepted non-Jewish status... they were loyal servants of the Nazis... I do not know even a single case of a Karaite who was prepared to shelter a Jewish child".⁹² In spite of the fact that much has been written on the problem of the Karaite question during the Second World War in the course of the last few decades, the topic is still far from being thoroughly examined.⁹³

In September 1939 most of Eastern Poland (Galicia, Volhynia, and some other regions) was annexed by the Soviet Union as a result of the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact, formally known as the "Treaty of Nonaggression between Germany and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics."⁹⁴ The annexed territories of Eastern Poland became the

⁹² Dan Ross, *Acts of Faith. A Journey to the Fringes of Jewish Identity* (New York, 1982), 135.

⁹³ See most important: Freund, *Karaites*, 84-96; Warren Paul Green, "The Nazi Racial Policy Towards the Karaites," *Soviet Jewish Affairs* 8:2 (1978): 36-44; idem, "The Fate of the Crimean Jewish Communities: Ashkenazim, Krimchaks and Karaites," *Jewish Social Studies* 46 (1984): 169-176; Emanuela Trevisan Semi, "L'oscillation ethnique: le cas des Caraïtes pendant la seconde guerre mondiale," *Revue de l'Histoire des Religions* 206 (1989): 377-398; eadem, "The Image of the Karaites in Nazi and Vichy France Documents," *Jewish Journal of Sociology* 32:2 (1990): 81-93; Philip Friedman, "The Karaites Under Nazi Rule," in *On the Track of Tyranny*, ed. Max Beloff (London, 1960), 97-123. The present author envisages undertaking his own study of this problem, based on materials from Crimean, Polish, and Lithuanian archives.

⁹⁴ This pact was signed in Moscow on 23 August 1939 and was valid until the German invasion on 22 June 1941. The Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact included a secret protocol according to which a few

western part of the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic, with Lwów (now called “L’viv”) as the largest city of the region.

As soon as the Soviet administrative system was introduced in Halicz, Soviet authorities started purges and repressions of the local “bourgeois” population. Their attitude to the Karaites, with their comparatively well-to-do status and loyalty to the Polish state, was certainly highly negative. The Soviets started by renaming the centuries-old Karaite Street “Nikolai Shchors Street.”⁹⁵ Soon afterwards they arrested a wealthy Karaite, the administrative head of the community, Ezua (Eszwa/Joshua) Leonowicz. After a public trial Leonowicz was sent to Siberia, where he died ca.1940-1941.⁹⁶ The same destiny awaited a Karaite train driver (most likely, Leon Sulimowicz), who was found guilty of such crimes as sabotage on the railway – a typical accusation of the Soviet “judicial” system of the 1930s.⁹⁷ In addition to the head of the community, Ezua Leonowicz, the Karaites also lost their religious leader, hazzan Marek (Mordecai) Leonowicz, who died in 1940.⁹⁸ After that, the duties of the hazzan were fulfilled by shammash Moses Szulimowicz.

After the beginning of the German offensive in June 1941, the Soviet authorities started recruiting Polish citizens who lived in the Soviet-occupied territories to the Red Army. A future Orientalist, Halicz Karaite Józef Sulimowicz, was forced to abandon his plans to complete his master’s dissertation, and was drafted into the

European countries (the Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Finland; Poland, and Romania) were divided into “spheres of interest” between Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union.

⁹⁵ Nikolai Alexandrovich Shchors (1895-1919) was a Bolshevik field military commander during the Civil War in Russia. He was killed in the vicinity of Kiev.

⁹⁶ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 15.

⁹⁷ Ibid., 15; cf. Sulimowicz, “Znaczenie,” 40-41.

⁹⁸ According to Ms. Janina Eszwowicz, Leonowicz died of anaemia in 1940. Leonowicz was her teacher in the pre-war religious school for Karaite children in Halicz (private communication, June 2003, Halicz). Cf. Janina Eszwowicz, “Svetlaia pamiat’ o gazzane Galicha,” *KV* 3 (61) (March 2001); Yurchenko *et al.*, *Karaïms’ke kladovyshche*, 229, no. 139. Some less reliable sources state that Leonowicz died in 1942 (“Pamięci tych, co odeszli,” *MK* s.n. 1 (1946): 141).

Soviet Army.⁹⁹ In the early stage of the war, the German army swiftly progressed into Soviet territory, due to the general unpreparedness of the Red Army, which had been decimated by Stalin's purges. This is the reason that already in the summer of 1941, Halicz was occupied again, this time by the German army. Soviet Galicia was reorganized into the German *Distrikt Galizien* belonging to the *Generalgouvernement* (i.e. former Poland). The German authorities of Galicia had come across the Karaites in August 1941 while discussing the racial definition of the term "Jew" in the *Generalgouvernement*. The Nazis received a report on two Karaite communities in Galicia (Halicz and Załukiew) with as many as 300 members.¹⁰⁰ Surprisingly, they accorded them a status that was different from that of the "Rassejuden."¹⁰¹

The Galician Nazi authorities undoubtedly followed the general line of benevolent treatment of the Karaites accepted earlier by the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung* (Reich Agency for Investigation of Families). The Nazis had begun seriously discussing the Karaite question in the late 1930s, with the preparation of the regulations for enforcement of the Nuremberg laws. According to Teofil Szanfary, German officialdom started investigating the Karaite case in 1938-1939. At this time, while organizing an anti-Bolshevik detachment composed of former Russian officers, the Nazis came across a few Karaite officers with Hebrew names, such as Abraham, Isaiah, and Ezekiel.¹⁰² Naturally, the first reaction of the Nazi officials was absolutely negative: for them it was simply unimaginable to employ people of obscure Jewish

⁹⁹ His military destiny took him as far as Stalingrad. Only in 1944 was he transferred to the Polish army (see the article by his daughter: Anna Sulimowicz, "Znaczenie," 42; cf. Alexander Dubiński, "Józef Sulimowicz," *PO* 4 (88) (1973): 365).

¹⁰⁰ I.e. twice as many as according to Polish statistics.

¹⁰¹ Dieter Pohl, *Nationalsozialistische Judenverfolgung in Ostgalizien 1941-1944* (München, 1996), 102 (with reference to the "unbetitelte Politikübersicht für den Distrikt Galizien," ca. August 1941, kept in *Derzhavnyi arkhiv L'vivs'koï oblasti* R-35/13/109, fol. 5). For the history of the Holocaust in Galicia, see Friedrich Katzmann, *Lösung der Judenfrage im Distrikt Galizien / Rozwiązanie kwestii żydowskiej w Dystrykcie Galicja*, ed. Andrzej Żbikowski (Warsaw, 2001).

¹⁰² Teofil Szanfary, "Najmniejsza mniejszość narodowa," *W drodze* 9 (1.09.1943) (courtesy of the late Mr Bogusław Firkowicz).

descent for such an important task. Nevertheless, already in October 1938 Hanns Kerrl, the *Reichsminister für die kirchlichen Angelegenheiten* (State Minister for Ecclesiastical Affairs), received a petition from French and German Karaite émigrés requesting provision of a legal status different from that of the Rabbanite Jews.¹⁰³ In this petition, as well as in their later appeals to Nazi authorities, the Karaites presented themselves as Turkic-speaking people of mixed Turko-Mongol-Ugrian descent, who at some point had been converted to the Mosaic religion with an admixture of Muslim, Christian, and pagan traditions. They substantiated their claims with references to a few interwar publications (primarily, by such Karaite authors as S. Szapszał, A. Mardkowicz, and Sz. Firkowicz) and the results of anthropological studies by Corrado Gini and Alexander Baschmakoff as “conclusive” proofs of their non-Semitic origins.¹⁰⁴

Surprisingly, their rather naïve argumentation produced the proper impression on the Nazi authorities. After examination of the Karaite claim and issuing the first provisional decision (22.12.1938), on 5 January 1939, the *Reichsstelle für Sippenforschung* came to the conclusion that the Karaites should not be considered a part of the Jewish *religious* community. Nevertheless, it was decided that the *racial* classification of the Karaites should be decided not according to their belonging to a specific ethnic group, but according to the personal genealogy of each Karaite in question.¹⁰⁵ This important addendum shows that in spite of the generally positive

¹⁰³ *Der Reichsminister für die kirchlichen Angelegenheiten* to Serge von Duvan (14.10.1938, German) (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1081, fol. 45).

¹⁰⁴ For a critique of the aforementioned publications and the Khazar theory of the Karaites' origin, see §6.2 and 6.3.

¹⁰⁵ See the photocopy of the document in MS LMAB F.143, no. 1981, fol. 44. From 1939 on, this document served the Nazi authorities as the basis for dealing with the Karaites in Eastern Europe. In passing, it is important to mention that the Karaites were not the only “suspicious” group of alleged Jewish origin which was spared by Reich authorities. Warren Green found six other documented cases of exemptions being granted to such groups. An estimated number of 70,000 such persons were theoretically exempted from extermination (Green, “Nazi Racial Policy,” 37, 43-44). Bryan Rigg, who found only two cases of exemptions being granted to “racially” non-Jewish groups practicing Judaism,

decision taken with regard to the Karaite case, the German authorities still had some doubts as to the racial composition of the Karaites. Furthermore, they were concerned about a possible Jewish admixture in their blood. This is why, in spite of the existence of the aforementioned “January edict,” which in a way recognized the Karaites’ non-Semitic status, Nazi authorities usually required from the local Karaite communities “confirmation” of their non-Jewish origins.

In July 1939 (i.e. only half a year after the “January edict”!) the Berlin authorities started seriously doubting the reliability of the Karaite claims concerning their non-Semitic origins.¹⁰⁶ It seems that the ethnic origin of the Volhynian and Galician Karaites was the most doubtful for the German authorities. The Nazi specialists who expressed their opinion about the Tatar-Mongol-Khazar origins of the Crimean Karaites mentioned that the Karaites of Halicz and Łuck were closely related to the Oriental and Sephardic Jews.¹⁰⁷ Especially cautious was the attitude of German officials in Galicia, where the Nazis were inclined to analyse the origins of each Karaite family separately and had no doubts that many of the local Karaites were intermarried with Jews.¹⁰⁸ Furthermore, one of the Nazi officers directly mentioned in his report that there were mixed marriages between Jews and Karaites in Łuck and Halicz.¹⁰⁹

This is why the Galician Karaites, in spite of the fact that, to my knowledge, none of them was killed by the Nazis, did not feel absolutely secure until the

was not acquainted with Green’s publications. His understanding of the Karaite case also seems to be quite superficial (Bryan Mark Rigg, *Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers. The Untold Story of Nazi Racial Laws and Men of Jewish Descent in the German Military* (Kansas, 2002), 283).

¹⁰⁶ MS LMAB F.143, no. 394, fol. 5.

¹⁰⁷ Trevisan Semi, “Image of the Karaites,” 85; eadem, “L’oscillation,” 387.

¹⁰⁸ Friedman, “Karaites,” 111, ft. 52.

¹⁰⁹ Green, “Nazi Racial Policy,” 38; Friedman, “Karaites,” 107-109. Cf. a copy of a German report to the *Gebietskommissar* in Schaulen (16.09.1941, German) (MS LMAB F.143, no. 1082, fol. 34). In spite of the fact that the Nazis could hardly have had any documentation from Galicia and Volhynia concerning mixed Karaite–Rabbanite marriages (cf. § 4.2.3), the obvious Semitic features in the appearance of the local Karaites were too evident to exclude the possibility of such marriages.

liberation of Galicia by the Soviet Army in 1944. Most of them had to prove to the local German authorities their Karaite origin and were obliged to sign documents certifying the absence of Jewish admixture in their genealogical tree. Thus, for example, in the summer of 1942 the Family Agency of the *Generalgouvernement* in Kraków sent a letter to Halicz requesting confirmation of the Karaite origin of Zarach Zarachowicz.¹¹⁰ It was only in December 1943 that Zarachowicz's personal papers, photos, and certificates (altogether twelve different documents!) were sent back to him. These materials apparently satisfied the inquisitiveness of the German officials in Kraków, and his non-Semitic origins were not questioned again.¹¹¹ Some local Karaites were requested to sign a special certificate in three languages (German, Polish, and Ukrainian). It had to be signed by its bearer and attested that the individual was not a Jew in any meaning of this term. These certificates, most likely, were supposed to be signed by every member of the Halicz Karaite community.¹¹²

According to a few Galician Karaite authors, Corrado Gini's anthropological study, which "proved" the non-Semitic origins of the Karaites, was one of the main factors in saving them from Nazi persecutions.¹¹³ Nevertheless, it seems that the Karaite authors often exaggerated the role of Corrado Gini's work. In my opinion, it was just *one* of the numerous factors that saved the Karaites during the Holocaust. This hypothesis is attested by the fact that in 1942-1943 the Nazi authorities in Poland, Lithuania, and the Crimea decided to undertake an additional examination of the Karaite case in spite of the existence of Gini's study and the decision of 1939 (both excluded the Karaites from the ranks of the "Rassejuden"). In 1942 the Nazis

¹¹⁰ Regierung des Generalgouvernements (Sippenstelle) an Herrn Zoruch Zoruchowicz, Sekretär, Krakau, 10.6.1942 (the Yurchenko MSS, Z. Zarachowicz's collection).

¹¹¹ Regierung des Generalgouvernements (Sippenstelle) an Herrn Zoruch Zoruchowicz, Sekretär, Krakau, 8.12.1943 (ibid.).

¹¹² One such certificate was shown to me by a local Karaite in May, 2002.

¹¹³ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 15; Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 7.

undertook their own independent anthropological research on the Lithuanian Tatars and Karaites. A German scholar, whose name is not mentioned by the sources, was sent to do anthropological research in Halicz. Surprisingly, he had anti-Nazi convictions, and therefore composed a report on their racial structure favourable to the Karaites.¹¹⁴ A few other scholars were asked for their opinions by the German authorities in other Nazi-occupied territories. In order to rescue the Karaites from annihilation in concentration camps, all of them testified to the Karaites' Turkic origin.¹¹⁵

Finally, in order to secure an absolutely objective answer to their question regarding the ethnic origins of the Karaites, the Nazis ordered several of the most important Jewish historians to compose historical memoranda concerning the Karaites. Professor Majer Bałaban and Dr. Ignacy Schiper (Schipper) were asked to prepare two separate essays of this kind in the Warsaw ghetto; Zelig Hirsch Kalmanowicz was assigned a similar task in Wilno (Lithuania); Philip Friedman, Dr. Leib Landau, and Dr. Yaakov Schall were employed for this purpose in the Lwów ghetto in Galicia.¹¹⁶ A similar scenario was played out by the Nazis in Halicz, where the Gestapo asked the local Ashkenazic rabbi about the ethnic origins of the Karaites.¹¹⁷ Here one can clearly see the acumen of the Nazi authorities: being aware of the antagonism between the Karaites and Rabbanites, they probably expected that at least one of the Karaites' ideological opponents would testify to their Jewish origin.

¹¹⁴ Furthermore, he made good friends with the Halicz Karaites and even helped one of them, Zacharjasz Nowachowicz, to rescue some of his valuable possessions (Edward Tryjarski, "Coming to the Rescue of the Karaites during the Second World War," *RO* 56:2 (2004): 107-108).

¹¹⁵ In the Crimea, where the Nazis managed to exterminate most of the local Jews by Dec. 1941, they asked a Russian scholar, A.I. Polkanov for his views on the ethnogenesis of the Karaites (Y.A. Polkanov, foreword to A.I. Polkanov, *Krymskie karaimy* (n.p., n.d. [Simferopol, 1990s]), 4-5). In Kraków, they posed the same question to the famous Polish Turkologist Tadeusz Kowalski (Tryjarski, "Coming to the Rescue," 107).

¹¹⁶ Friedman, "The Karaites," 97-123; Shmu'el Spector, "Ha-qara'im be-Eiropah she-be-shlitat ha-natsim be-roi mismakhim germani'im," *Pe'amim* 29 (1986): 90-108.

¹¹⁷ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 15. Unfortunately, Abrahamowicz did not mention the name of this Rabbi.

All of the aforementioned scholars, however, apparently understood the sinister implication of this “scholarly” enquiry. This is why, in their wish to save the Karaites from the fate of other Jews, the scholars unanimously expressed the opinion that the Karaites were *not* of Jewish extraction. Friedman, who himself observed the composition of one such paper, mentioned that it was prepared very carefully, with emphasis on the controversial nature of the Karaites’ ethnic history and the existence of the well-argued Khazar theory of the Karaites’ origin.¹¹⁸ The answers by the Jewish scholars to the Nazis’ enquiry certainly played an important role in rescuing the Karaites.

The Karaites, in turn, frequently helped the Jews to escape the hands of Nazi executioners. In Halicz, for example, the local Karaite lawyer, Zacharjasz Nowachowicz, sheltered his Rabbanite colleague, Doctor Jocztes in the attic of his house. Unfortunately, Doctor Jocztes was soon caught by the Nazis – and Nowachowicz himself managed to avoid the death penalty for sheltering a Jew only through a substantial bribe.¹¹⁹ Furthermore, in Halicz there were two other cases where the local Karaites sheltered their Jewish neighbours.¹²⁰ Even these examples are sufficient to disprove the aforementioned claims that the Karaites “were loyal servants of the Nazis.”¹²¹

In addition, many Rabbanite Jews saved their lives by producing false certificates attesting to their Karaite origin. In this way Mordecai Tenenbaum (1916-

¹¹⁸ Friedman, “Karaites,” 110-111. The destiny of the Jewish scholars questioned by the Nazis was different from the fate of the Karaites whose lives they tried to save with their academic reports: only one of them, Philip Friedman, survived the Holocaust.

¹¹⁹ Before the war, the two colleagues had their offices in the same building (Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 16).

¹²⁰ Ibid. Printed, archival, and oral sources attest that there were many other cases where the Karaites accorded help to the Jews elsewhere in Eastern Europe. It is known that in the Crimea, however, some Karaites joined the ranks of the *Wehrmacht* and wore Nazi uniforms (Green, “Fate,” 174; idem, “Nazi Racial Policy,” 40). This problem, often misused by the Karaites and their opponents alike, needs further elucidation.

¹²¹ Ross, *Acts of Faith*, 135.

1943) and members of his resistance group saved a number of Jews by forging papers that certified their Karaite or Tatar origins.¹²² It is impossible to estimate how many Jews managed to save their lives thanks to forged Karaite certificates, but we may suppose that there were a few thousand cases of this kind. It is known that at least one Galician Jew, the historian Żanna Kormanowa of Lwów, saved her life thanks to such a false Karaite certificate.¹²³

In general it seems that the Halicz Karaites did not suffer from the Nazi regime more than their Polish and Ukrainian neighbours. Because of the fact that they were recognized as non-Jews, most Halicz Karaites were allowed to continue the same activities as before the German occupation. This is the reason that after the war some of them were accused of collaboration with the Nazis.¹²⁴ The Karaites were even allowed to perform some traditional religious ceremonies. Thus, in August 1942 the Galician Karaites celebrated the marriage of one of the members of their community.¹²⁵ On the other hand, some of them, for example the future Orientalist scholar Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, were taken to Germany for forced labour.¹²⁶ In spite of the fact that the Nazis usually demolished such Jewish monuments as synagogues and cemeteries,¹²⁷ neither the Karaite cemetery, nor the local Karaite synagogue was destroyed. Nevertheless, the cemetery still suffered considerably from the German

¹²² Green, "Nazi Racial Policy," 41. Roman Freund published one such forged "Karaite" document, which saved the life of "Frau Frieda Malsky-Tolstow, geb. Rieklmann," whose name shows her Ashkenazic origins (Freund, *Karaites*, 130). Cf. this forged certificate compared with a real Karaite certificate from Wilno (Vilnius) published in *Rannalla päärynäpuu: Liettuan karaiimien runoutta*, ed. Keijo Hopeavuori, Tapani Harviainen, Kai Nieminen (Helsinki, 1998).

¹²³ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 16.

¹²⁴ E.g. a Karaite train driver, who was accused of collaboration with the Nazis because of the fact that some German trains carried military equipment (*ibid.*).

¹²⁵ See the marriage contract between Mordecai-Shalom b. Joshua Mordkowicz and Esther bat Joseph, Halicz, 6.08.1942, Hebrew (the Yurchenko MSS, Z. Zarachowicz's collection).

¹²⁶ He was taken as far as Lower Silesia (Aleksander Dubiński, "Zygmunt Abrahamowicz (1923-1990)," *Folia Orientalia* 30 (1994): 227-229).

¹²⁷ E.g. they entirely obliterated one of the Rabbanite cemeteries of Halicz, which was located next to that of the Karaites.

artillery station located on its eastern side.¹²⁸

In autumn 1944 Galicia was liberated by the Soviet Army. Three young Karaites from Halicz, Michał Abrahamowicz, the brother of Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, and two Leonowicz brothers were recruited to the Soviet Army in 1944 and were killed during the last stage of the war.¹²⁹ With the end of the war in this region began a new, Soviet, era in the history of Galicia.

¹²⁸ Ivan Yurchenko, and Nataliya Yurchenko, "*Doslidzhennia karaïms'koho kladovyshcha bilia Halycha*," in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 47.

¹²⁹ Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 16. According to an oral testimony by my grandfather, Mikhail Fomin, in 1944-1945, when the Soviet Army started suffering from a shortage of human resources, many youngsters lacking any military training were recruited. According to his estimate, seven to eight out of ten such new recruits were usually killed during the very first encounter with the enemy (Simferopol', May 1994).

Chapter 7. The Galician Karaites after 1945

7.1. *Decline of the Galician community after the Second World War.*

The face of Eastern Europe, and of Galicia as well, was completely changed as a result of the war, the ruin of pre-war life, the massacre of the local Slavic and Jewish population, and the new demarcation of state borders. In 1945 the city of Przemyśl with its surroundings, along with the western part and a small section of north-western Galicia were given back to Poland, whereas the rest of the Polish *Kresy* (Wilno region, Volhynia, and Galicia) were annexed by the Soviet Union. Galicia became a region in the Ukrainian Soviet Socialist Republic. This territory embraced the L'viv (Lwów), Stanislav (Stanisławów; from 1962 – Ivano-Frankivs'k), and Tarnopol' regions (*oblasti*). Centuries-long inter-ethnic relations that were established in this region also underwent a transformation. The Jewish population, which had inhabited this land from the Middle Ages, was entirely annihilated by the Nazi *Endlösung* of the "Jewish question." The majority of the Galician-Volhynian Poles emigrated to Poland after 1945. The Poles who decided to stay in Soviet Ukraine became gradually Ukrainized, whereas the Ukrainians who remained in Poland were Polonized. Thus, the Polish-Ukrainian/Ruthenian-Jewish triangle, which had existed in Galicia-Volhynia for about six hundred years, was no more.

In addition to human losses, general devastation, and the disastrous economic situation, the psychological and moral climate of the region also could not remain the same as in the pre-war period. For many Jews who survived the Shoah, the Holocaust became a traumatic experience that forced them to abandon their religious and cultural traditions.¹ Ukrainian–Polish relations became much worse because of the

¹ After the Holocaust many Jews had a much more sceptical attitude to religion than before. Only traditionally raised families and religiously educated people preserved their faith in its original form (Sebastjan Rejak, "Jews in Contemporary Poland: Their Attitude towards Assimilation, Religion, and the Holocaust," *Dialogue and Universalism* 11:5-6 (2001): 71-84).

emergence of the militant Ukrainian nationalism of Stepan Bandera (1909-1959). The so-called “Banderovtsy,” followers of this separatist leader, killed thousands of Polish, Jewish, and Russian civilians during and after the war. Only the firm establishment of the Soviet regime in Galicia and Volhynia suppressed all manifestations of nationalist and religious sentiments in these regions.

After the war, the number of Karaites in Eastern Europe considerably decreased: some left with the retreating German army in 1944, some died during the war, some perished in concentration camps.² Furthermore, even though there was no organized massacre of Karaites, in the whole of the Soviet Union (Ukraine: Kiev, Khar’kov; the Crimea: Eupatoria, Theodosia; Russia: Krasnodar, Novorossiisk; Lithuania: Poswol) an estimated number of 470 Karaites were killed by the Nazis in spite of all the directives from Berlin to spare their lives.³ Altogether, out of approximately twelve thousand Karaites living in Central and Eastern Europe before the war, perhaps as few as six to seven thousand survived.⁴ The East European Karaite community emerged from the war largely demoralized, especially in the Crimea, where some Karaites, together with their Tatar neighbours, had joined the ranks of the *Wehrmacht*. During the war, the Karaites were constantly forced to testify to Nazi officialdom regarding their non-association with Jewish civilisation and their non-adherence to the Jewish religion. Perhaps it is only in this period of Karaite history that the words “Judaism” and “Jewishness” became synonymous with mortal danger. This is why the post-war

² Memorial stones of the Warsaw Karaite cemetery contain information about two Polish Karaites, Genowera and Jan Pilecki, who were taken to Auschwitz (as seen by M.Kizilov in March, 2001). Another Karaite, Isaiah Pilecki, was taken to Auschwitz as early as 1939 and died there ca.1945; Lidia Szole-Karakasz was killed by the Germans on a street in Warsaw in 1943; Moses Nowicki died in Germany, where he had been taken for forced labour (“Pamięci tych, co odeszli,” 139-141). These are only a few examples of the Karaites’ sufferings from the Nazis during the war.

³ The reasons for murdering the Karaites were various: denunciations by neighbours; lack of knowledge on the part of the Nazis about the differences between Karaites and Rabbanites; their Mosaic religion. Many Karaites were simply killed as Soviet citizens during the massacres of Soviet civilians organised by the Nazis without consideration of ethnic origin.

⁴ In 1959 there were 5,727 Karaites living in the Soviet Union (mostly in the Crimea; 423 in Lithuania), and perhaps 400-500 in Poland.

period became a time of firm establishment of a Turkic identity among the East European Karaites.

During World War II, from 1939 to 1945, the Halicz Karaite community lost most of its intellectual leaders. As has been mentioned, the hazzan Mordecai Leonowicz died in 1940, whereas Ezua Leonowicz, the administrative head of the community, was sent to Siberia. Samuel Eszwowicz, the new head of the community, also died during the war.⁵ In 1946 Isaac Abrahamowicz, the former hazzan and one of the most educated members of the community, passed away.⁶ Two promising young Karaites, future Orientalist scholars, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz (1923-1991) and Józef Sulimowicz (1913-1973), left Halicz after the end of the war.⁷ Nowach Szulimowicz, another intellectual leader of the interwar Halicz community, severed all ties with the Karaites after 1945.⁸ The catalogue of the cemetery contains the names of eight Karaites who died between 1939 and 1945.⁹

As a consequence of the annexation of some Nazi-occupied territories by the Soviet Union (Eastern Poland and Lithuania), most of the Karaites again became citizens of the same country, this time of the Soviet Union. Many of them, however, as former Polish citizens, decided to leave the regions which were annexed by the Soviet Union and move to Poland. The Soviet authorities allowed the Karaites of the former Eastern Polish territories (Volhynia and Galicia) to emigrate to Poland on the basis of their earlier Polish citizenship.¹⁰ Especially notable was the emigration from

⁵ "Pamięci tych, co odeszli," 141.

⁶ His grave is, surprisingly, one of the most modest tombstones in the cemetery. It was erected there, according to some reports, only in the 1960s, i.e. a few years after his death. Its inscription is in Karaim, in Ukrainian transliteration in Cyrillic characters: "Абрагамович Ізак М. 27.XI.1868р 21.XII.1946. Уцмак дзанина" (as recorded by M. Kizilov in May, 2002).

⁷ On Sulimowicz's manuscript collection see Aleksander Dubiński, "Karaimskie rukopisi iz kolektsii Yu. Sulimovicha v Varshave," in *Tiurkskoe yazykoznanie: Materialy III Vsesoiuznoi tiurkologicheskoi konferencii* (Tashkent, 1985), 20-24.

⁸ Sulimowicz, "Znaczenie Halickich Karaimów," 42.

⁹ See Yurchenko et al., *Karaims'ke kladovyshche*, 218-233.

¹⁰ In 1945, according to an agreement between Poland and the USSR, the Polish and Jewish

Łuck, where only a few Karaites remained after the end of the war.¹¹ The Halicz community felt perhaps a bit more attached to its traditional home. Nevertheless, in the 1940s and 1950s altogether 45 Karaites left Halicz, most of them for Poland (24 persons) and Lithuania (11 persons). In order to obtain permission to emigrate, the Karaites had to prove their Polish origins and the presence of relatives in Poland to the Ministry of Recovered Territories (*Ministerstwo Ziem Odzyskanych*).¹²

From 1945 to 1947 Karaite emigrants from Volhynia-Galicia, and those who had managed to leave Lithuania unofficially, organized several new communities in Silesia (Wrocław, Opole), Warsaw, and Trójmiasto (Gdańsk, Gdynia, Sopot). They were also joined by scattered groups of Karaites who had lived in central Poland before the war. Several Halicz Karaites settled in the town of Opole, in the vicinity of Wrocław (Breslau).¹³ Thus, the Karaite population of the former Polish territories was now divided between Poland itself and the Lithuanian (Troki, Wilno, Poniewież) and Ukrainian (Łuck, Halicz) Soviet Socialist Republics.

After the end of the war, relations between the local Karaites and those Rabbanites who had managed to survive the Shoah apparently became even friendlier than before 1939-1945. It is known that at least 37 Karaite families from Poland (most of them, apparently, from Łuck and Halicz) emigrated to Israel in 1950.¹⁴ More

populations of the former Polish territory were allowed to emigrate to Poland. Not being either Jews or Poles, the Karaites were not included in the agreement at all. Most of the Galician and Volhynian Karaites, however, were able to hide their Karaite identity and emigrate with Polish passports, pretending to be Poles. On the other hand, the Soviet administration did not grant official permission to emigrate to Poland to the Karaite inhabitants of Lithuania (Szymon Pilecki, "Karaimi w Polsce po 1945r," in *Karaimi. III Pieniężnieńskie spotkania z religiami (Materiały z sessii naukowej)*, ed. Alexander Dubiński (Pieniężno, 1987), 41).

¹¹ Anna Dubińska, "Garść danych o Karaimach z Łucka," *Awazymyz* 2 (3) (1999): 9-11.

¹² The Yurchenko MSS have preserved a copy of one such certificate, which granted the family of Zofja Eszwowicz permission to join her brother, Szymon Nowicki, who lived in Opole in Poland (*Udostoverenie/Zaświadczenie* given to Zofja Eszwowicz, her husband, Samuel Eszwowicz, and their son, Gabriel Eszwowicz, by the Ministry of Recovered Territories; Polish/Russian, Warsaw, 17 Feb. 1948).

¹³ See the letter of Ignacy Eszwowicz to Helena Eszwowicz written in the 1960s (Polish; the Yurchenko MSS).

¹⁴ *American Hebrew* 160:14 (28.06.1950): 7.

details on post-war Karaite–Rabbanite contacts may be found in the manuscript version of an article by Zygmunt Abrahamowicz. Unfortunately, the present-day East European Karaite community is concealing these Rabbanite–Karaite relations – and at the request of Abrahamowicz’s relatives, his article was posthumously published without the highly important passage on contacts between the Galician Ashkenazim and the Karaites after the war.¹⁵

Relations between the Galician Karaites and the local Ukrainian population were highly complicated, both during the war and after it. The Polish-oriented Karaites, and their Jewish religion, certainly were not particularly favoured by the Ukrainian nationalists with their anti-Semitic and anti-Polish agenda. Karaite emigration from Łuck and Halicz to Warsaw had already begun during the Nazi occupation due to fear of the Ukrainian nationalists.¹⁶ We lack data concerning Halicz, but in Łuck Ukrainian SS members murdered at least two Karaites as early as 1942.¹⁷ Apart from the danger of physical annihilation, the Karaites were often subjected to everyday hostility. According to an oral report, during World War II one of the local Ukrainians blocked the road and did not let the Karaites carry out a burial in the cemetery. Surprisingly, this conflict was settled by the German authorities, who allowed the Karaites to perform the ritual.¹⁸

In spite of this Karaite-Ukrainian animosity, two Halicz Karaites, Anna-Amelia Leonowicz (1925-1949) and her mother, Helena (Rukhama) Leonowicz (1890-1967), paradoxically, became members of the radical organisation of Ukrainian nationalists,

¹⁵ See Stefan Gąsiorowski’s foreword to Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 4. Nevertheless, Abrahamowicz himself clearly wanted to see this passage published.

¹⁶ Eszwowicz, “Halyts’ka karaïms’ka hromada,” 7; Pilecki, “Karaimi w Polsce,” 42.

¹⁷ These were Selim (Shalom?) Rudkowski and Józef Gołub (Pilecki, “Karaimi w Polsce,” 42; “Pamięci tych, co odeszli,” 140; Bogusław Firkowicz, “Ogniska karaïmskie po latach,” *RM* 4:3 (1995): 88).

¹⁸ Private communication, Halicz, May 2002.

Orhanyzatsiia Ukraïns'kykh Natsionalistiv (OUN).¹⁹ The mother, Helena-Rukhama, left her house at the disposal of OUN members, who used it as a hiding place. In 1948, after a fight with Soviet militia in her house, Helena-Rukhama was arrested and sentenced to 25 years of imprisonment. However, in 1954, only six years later, she was released and returned to Załukiew, where she lived until the end of her days. In 1949, nine months after the arrest of her mother, Anna-Amelia (known among the nationalists by the nickname “Galia”), while being surrounded by Soviet forces, locked herself in a church and committed suicide together with another member of the organization.²⁰ According to oral reports by the local Karaites, however, the Leonowicz women collaborated with the Ukrainian nationalists not of their own free will, but under compulsion, while being threatened by the latter.²¹

Those Halicz Karaites who decided to stay in their native town, the place where their ancestors had lived for so many years, again changed their citizenship and became citizens of Soviet Ukraine. From the 1940s to the 1950s the community dwindled to ca. 40-50 souls because of emigration and natural decrease. Only five Karaites were

¹⁹ The OUN was founded in 1929 and took Mussolini's fascist state as their example. Its main thesis was “Ukraine for the Ukrainians.” While the Poles and Communists were considered the main enemies of the OUN, its members also actively took part in mass murderers of Jews in 1941. During the war the SS battalions Nachtigall, Roland, division SS Halychyna and some other military units formed from ethnic Ukrainians participated in military activity against the Soviet Army and killed thousands of Polish, Russian, and Jewish civilians in Galicia. After the war the OUN continued fighting against the Soviet Army and killing civilians. Its last units were exterminated only at the beginning of the 1950s (for details see John-Paul Himka, “Ukrainian Collaboration in the Extermination of the Jews during World War II,” in *The Fate of the European Jews, 1939-1945: Continuity or Contingency*, ed. Jonathan Frankel (New York-Oxford, 1997), 170-189; Basil Dmytryshyn, “The Nazis and the SS Volunteer Division ‘Galicia’,” *American Slavic and East European Review* 15:1 (1956): 1-10). Surprisingly, not only the Karaites, but also some Rabbanite Jews joined radical organizations of Ukrainian nationalists during the war (Taras Hunczak, “Problems of Historiography: History and Its Sources,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 25:1/2 (2001): 136).

²⁰ According to Petro Zin'kovs'kyi, there will soon be a memorial on the site of this event (Petro Zin'kovs'kyi, “Uchast' halyts'kykh karaïmiv u vyzvol'nykh zmahanniakh 40-ykh rokiv XX st.,” in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 140-141). Anna-Amelia Leonowicz (1925-1949, a teacher in Halicz in the 1940s) seems to be identical with Amalja Leonowicz, a student of Hebrew and Karaim, who recited a poem by Elijah Kazas during the latter's centenary celebration in Halicz in 1934 (“Dzymatynda Halicnin,” 25).

²¹ Ivan Yurchenko (May, 2005). According to I. Yurchenko, her father (was it Ezua Leonowicz?) was sent to Siberia by the Soviets.

born in Halicz during the whole of the post-war period from 1946 to 2002, and only two marriages were celebrated. At the same time, 17 Karaites died and many more emigrated from Halicz.²²

The Soviet regime did not welcome either the Karaites' religion or the study of their language. According to Janina Eszwowicz, young Karaites were officially forbidden to enter the local kenesa because they were pioneers and Komsomol members. Nevertheless, they often attended closed religious ceremonies which took place in private homes.²³ Furthermore, many Karaites were considered quite suspicious because of their religiosity and pro-Polish sentiments. Thus, for example, Zachariasz Nowachowicz, known as an ardent Polish patriot, was not allowed to continue his legal practice.²⁴ Soon after the end of the war he, together with several other Halicz Karaites, moved to Poland and settled in Chrzanów.²⁵ Zarach Zarachowicz, who played an active role in the spiritual life of the community until his death in 1952, officially worked as an accountant after the Soviet annexation of Halicz.

In general, the post-war dejudaization tendencies, which were so strong in most other East European Karaite communities, were much less evident among the Halicz Karaites. Some Karaite elders preserved their Judeo-Karaite identity even after the war. Thus, for example, in the 1950s one of the local Karaites called his people "the true Israelites" (*pravil'ny Izraelitiane*).²⁶ Zarach Zarachowicz normally began

²² Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 8.

²³ Janina Eszwowicz, private communication (Halicz, June, 2003).

²⁴ According to Zygmunt Abrahamowicz, it happened because of his pro-Polish sentiments (Abrahamowicz, "Dzieje," 16).

²⁵ Edward Tryjarski, „Restoration of Oriental Studies in Poland after the World War II as Reflected in Five Letters by Tadeusz Kowalski," *Studia Turcologica Cracoviensia* 5 (1998): 273-274.

²⁶ A handwritten marginal note in broken Russian in Alexei Yugov, *Svetonostsy. Epopeya* (Moscow, 1946), 148 (this book was given by Boris Kokenay as a present to Zarach Zarachowicz and is currently kept among the Yurchenko MSS). This short note was left, most likely, by a relative of Z. Zarachowicz.

every letter to Szapszał with Hebrew quotations from the Bible.²⁷ Furthermore, in spite of the loss of their spiritual and administrative leaders, the Karaites continued practising their religion after the war as well. In order to follow the Karaite religious calendar, they compiled hand-written pocket calendars, which were composed in the Hebrew language and contained traditional Hebrew terms.²⁸ From 1940 to 1960 the duties of the hazzan were fulfilled by the shammash Moses (Mosze) ben Shalom Szulimowicz (1882-1974). In his letters to Szapszał he calls himself in Karaim *men of szammasz kahalnyndan halicnyn juwuzrak jumuscunuz* (I, the shammash of the Halicz community, your lowest servant).²⁹ It seems that Szapszał, as the former spiritual head of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, continued sending financial support to Szulimowicz for fulfilling his religious duties even after the war.³⁰ Moses Szulimowicz and Zarach Zarachowicz continued teaching Hebrew and religion to Karaite children after the war.³¹ Thus, even in Soviet times the local Karaites were able to receive some religious education.

In the 1940s the community made some insignificant repairs to the synagogue. In a letter to Szapszał in 1948 Zarachowicz mentioned that most members of the community attended services in the kenesa. He characterized the whole state of community affairs with the sorrowful quotation from the prophet Haggai: “Ye have sown much, and bring in little; ye eat, but ye have not enough; ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink; ye clothe you, but there is none warm.”³² He stated that “the Almighty who saved us from the atrocities of the war will continue protecting His

²⁷ MS LMAB F.143, nos. 723, 724.

²⁸ See the calendar for 1944/1945 and “Luah roshei hodashim (1949-1950)” (the Yurchenko MSS; cf. Illustrations, fig. 5.6).

²⁹ Moses Szulimowicz to S.Szapszał (no date) (MS LMAB F.143, no. 652). The archives have preserved a few other letters of Szulimowicz to Szapszał written from 1950 to 1955 in Polish, Ukrainized Russian, Hebrew, and Karaim (MS LMAB, F.143, no. 652).

³⁰ In 1948 he was going to send Szulimowicz 200 roubles (S.Szapszał to Z.Zarachowicz, Wilno/Vilnius, 8 Oct. 1948, Russian; the Yurchenko MSS).

³¹ Z.Zarachowicz to S.Szapszał, Halicz, 22 June 1947, Russian (MS LMAB F.143, no. 724, fol. 1v).

³² Haggai 1:6 (Zarachowicz quoted it in the Hebrew original).

people and take care [of the Karaites] with divine providence.”³³ Unfortunately, in 1952, persecuted by the Soviet government because of his “connection to religious matters,” Zarachowicz decided “to find asylum in the waters of the Dniester.”³⁴ His death was another heavy blow to the shrinking and stagnant community.

After the war, because of the decline of the Halicz community and the lack of control on the part of Soviet officials, the local Ukrainians started vandalizing the Karaite cemeteries in Załukiew and Kukizów. As a consequence, many valuable tombstones were taken as building materials. The constant collecting of clay seriously damaged the eastern part of the Halicz cemetery.³⁵ The cemetery in Kukizów was entirely obliterated in the 1960s by one of the local tractor drivers, who tore down the tombstones and moved them aside.³⁶

The Halicz Karaite synagogue was functioning until 1960, when it was finally closed by the Soviet administration. Thus, the only Karaite synagogue (*kenesa*) which remained open after 1960 (and throughout the whole Soviet period) was that in Troki (Lithuania). In 1960 the Troki hazzan, Szemaja Firkowicz,³⁷ visited Halicz and tried to prevent the closure of the local *kenesa*, but to no avail. Fortunately, in 1960, several days before the planned appropriation of the building by the Soviets, a member of the local administration warned the community about the forthcoming “abomination of desolation.” Moreover, the Karaites also received secret permission to go inside the building and take everything they needed. Smaller things were removed without any special problems (prayer books, Torah scrolls, two crystal chandeliers, electric lamp-

³³ Z.Zarachowicz to S.Szapszał, Halicz, 8.07.1948, Russian (MS LMAB F.143, no. 723, fol. 1v).

³⁴ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 16. One may notice that the time of Zarachowicz’s death overlaps with the end of the Stalinist period, which was characterized by an explosion of anti-Semitic persecutions and sentiments, culminating in the famous trial of “poisoner-doctors.”

³⁵ Yurchenko, Yurchenko, “Doslidzhennia,” 47.

³⁶ Oral communication received by me from a local resident during my field trip to Kukizów in May 2002. The informant also added that other inhabitants of Kukizów had strongly disapproved of this action.

³⁷ After the war, a.k.a. Szymon/Semion Adol’fovich Firkowicz.

brackets,³⁸ etc.). The rescue of the massive and heavy wooden Torah closet was much more difficult. Nevertheless, in an atmosphere of utter secrecy, early in the morning, it was transported to the house of Sabina Zajączkowska at 60 Osmomysla Street.³⁹ Soon afterwards the synagogue was closed. From 1960 to 1985 the synagogue building was used as a warehouse and maintenance shop.

In the post-war period, in spite of all the efforts by Karaite intellectuals, knowledge of religious traditions and of the Hebrew and Karaim languages rapidly deteriorated – in Halicz, as well as in all other East European Karaite communities. In the 1950s and 1960s most Halicz Karaites who possessed a native command of Karaim and Polish switched to Russian and, especially, to Ukrainian as the main languages of everyday communication. Karaim was used mainly within the family circle. Nevertheless, some Karaite elders continued using Hebrew and Karaim even in the 1970s. In April 2005 I discovered a few copybooks with Karaim prayers written in Hebrew characters. They were most likely written in the 1970s by Moses Szulimowicz, the last shammash of the Halicz community.⁴⁰ Samuel Ickowicz, one of the Galician emigrants to Poland, was perhaps the last to compose poetry in the Galician-Volhynian dialect of Karaim (he used the Latin script for this purpose).⁴¹ A short while before his death, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz translated into Galician-Volhynian Karaim “Zapovit” (“Testament”), the most important poem by the Ukrainian poet Taras Shevchenko, a symbol of present-day independent Ukraine.⁴² In the 1980s linguists interested in the Karaite pronunciation of Hebrew in Eastern

³⁸ These lamp-brackets were later donated to the Wilno kenese, which was re-opened in the 1990s.

³⁹ The whole story is narrated in detail by the present Eupatoria hazzan, Viktor (David) Zakharievich Tiriaki, in his “Sokhranenie religioznykh traditsii karaimov Galicha na rubezhe XX-XXI vv.,” in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 76-83; idem, “Poezdka v Galich,” *KV* 16 (1995).

⁴⁰ The Yurchenko MSS, collection of Janina Eszwowicz.

⁴¹ Samuel Ickowicz, “Zacharia” [poems in Karaim dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the death of Zachariah Isaac Abrahamowicz (1878-1903)] (ibid).

⁴² Published in ‘*Zapovit*’ *movami narodiv svitu* (Kyiv, 1989), 63. Some sources state that he also translated another poem by Shevchenko, “Hamalia” (Eszwowicz, Yurchenko, Yurchenko, “Halyts’ki karaïmy”).

Europe recorded Zygmunt Abrahamowicz's reading of Hebrew texts.⁴³ The late Ms. Janina Eszwowicz (1930-2003) used Karaim (in Latin characters) for correspondence until the end of her days.⁴⁴

The study of the Galician dialect of the Karaim language, which was begun by Russian and Austrian Orientalists at the end of the nineteenth century, was continued in the post-war period as well. In the 1950s and 1960s Halicz was visited by the academician Kenesbay Musaev and the Karaite amateur linguist from Odessa, Ilya (Elijah) Neiman, who collected linguistic materials for a Karaite-Russian dictionary.⁴⁵ Boris Kokenay, another important collector of Karaite manuscripts and an expert in Karaite linguistics, visited Halicz in 1958.⁴⁶

Despite their small numbers, in the post-war period the Galician Karaites attracted the interest of many Soviet poets and writers. One of them, Alexei Yugov, devoted a few passages to the story of the Karaite settlement in Galicia in his novel about Prince Daniel and his times.⁴⁷ This book was enthusiastically read by the Galician and other East European Karaites. Stepan Pushyk, the Ukrainian writer and journalist, and ardent champion of Ukrainian independence, made the local Karaites the focus of his novels, essays, and poems.⁴⁸ He also translated into Ukrainian several

⁴³ At the present time this and other Karaitica recordings are available in the Tape Archives of the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Hebrew University of Jerusalem (The Language Traditions Project) (Tapani Harviainen, "Three Hebrew Primers, the Pronunciation of Hebrew among the Karaims in the Crimea, and Shewa," in *Built on Solid Rock. Studies in Honour of Professor Ebbe Egede Knudsen*, ed. Elie Wardini (Oslo, 1997), 109, ft. 30).

⁴⁴ Cf. her speech in Karaim (Cyrillic script in Ukrainian orthography) in *Karaïmy Halycha (Appendix)*, 204.

⁴⁵ Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 9. Neiman's materials, unfortunately, have never been published. Musaev, though, authored several very valuable language studies (esp. Kenesbay Musaev, *Grammatika karaïmskogo yazyka. Fonetika i morfologiya* (Moscow, 1964)) and was one of the main contributors to *KRPS*.

⁴⁶ MS LMAB F.143, no. 375, fol. 232v.

⁴⁷ Yugov, *Svetonostsy*, 148.

⁴⁸ Stepan Pushyk, "Pid krylom Halycha," *Prykarpats'ka Pravda* (4 Jan. 1969); idem, "Zoloty tik," in Stepan Pushyk, *Khmarolom* (Kiev, 1998), 24; idem, *Halyts'ka brama* (Uzhhorod, 1989), 117-124; idem, "Karaïmshchyzna," *Ridna Zemlia* 29 (1995).

poems by the Karaite poet from Galicia, Zachariah Abrahamowicz.⁴⁹ Petro Hets', a Ukrainian poet, composed a verse dedicated to the Halicz Karaite, Samuel Eszwowicz. This poem described the world-views of the local Karaites and the history of their settlement in Galicia and Volhynia.⁵⁰

In the 1970s, after the closure of the synagogue, the spiritual life of the community was largely stagnant. As far as I could ascertain from my social interaction with members of the community, in the 1960s to 1980s the local Karaites, with some reservation, accepted Szapszał's theories and indeed considered the Khazars their historical ancestors. Nevertheless, unlike the Crimean and Lithuanian Karaites, they never rejected the fact that the Jews had also played a considerable role in the Karaites' ethnogenesis. Furthermore, in contrast to the Crimeans, who adopted Szapszał's concept of the mixed "ecumenical" character of Karaite religious tradition, the Galicians never accepted Szapszał's view with regard to the recognition of the prophetic nature of Jesus and Mohammed. Especially indignant was the reaction of the remnants of the Galician community to the news about the "restoration" of the pseudo-Karaite cult of the so-called "sacred oaks" in the Crimea.⁵¹

In 1985, at the very beginning of the Gorbachev era, the local Soviet administration decided to destroy the Karaite synagogue.⁵² In spite of its evident historical and architectural value, the Soviet vandals decided to build in its place the town's first nine-storey structure. In 1985 the building of the synagogue/kenesa was destroyed. This was the last – and the only – Karaite synagogue that remained in

⁴⁹ Z. Abrahamowicz, "Ya – karaïm," transl. S. Pushyk, *Dnistrova Hvyliia* 11 (124) (12 Mar. 1998). Cf. Stepan Pushyk, "Holos halyts'koho karaïma," *Prapor peremohy* (13 Jan. 1970); idem, "Holos halyts'koho karaïma," *Zhovten'* 5 (1972): 10.

⁵⁰ Petro Hets', "Monolog luts'koho karaïma (S.Eszwowiczu)" (Łuck, 13 June 1973, Ukr.; the Yurchenko MSS). S. Eszwowicz lived at that time in Łuck, hence the title – "The monologue of a Łuck Karaite."

⁵¹ On this pseudo-cult see § 6.3. This paragraph is based on a series of interviews with members of the community carried out by Mikhail Kizilov in Halicz from 2002 to 2004.

⁵² Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 8.

Galicia and Volhynia during the Soviet period.⁵³ By that time the young Karaites had left the town and only eleven elderly Karaites, all of them born before the Second World War (some even before the First World War), remained in Halicz.⁵⁴

7.2. The collapse of the Soviet Union and the last of the Galician Mohicans

The end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s was the time of the “velvet” revolutions in the socialist countries of Eastern Europe and the disintegration of the Soviet Union. It was only then that the East European Karaites, as well as other ethnic minorities of the region, finally received a chance to revive ethnic and religious traditions suppressed by Soviet ideology. This is the reason why in the 1990s, with the final disintegration of the communist system, a rebirth of Karaite religious and cultural life began in the lands of the former Soviet Union. A number of periodicals and books were published;⁵⁵ four functioning *kenesalar* were opened (in Troki, Wilno/Vilnius, and two in Eupatoria); there was also a renewed interest in the study of the Karaim language.

In 1991, some time before the August putsch and the break-up of the Soviet Union, a group of American-Israeli Karaites (Mourad El-Qodsi/Kodsi, Ben Massoudah, and Ovadia Gamil)⁵⁶ visited most of the Crimean, Russian, Polish, and Lithuanian Karaite communities. What struck the visitors most of all, perhaps, was

⁵³ The Kukizów synagogue had burnt down in the second half of the nineteenth century, whereas the Łuck *kenesa* was destroyed by a fire in 1972.

⁵⁴ Abrahamowicz, “Dzieje,” 16.

⁵⁵ From the list of numerous publications I will restrict myself only to mentioning the most important periodicals: *Coś* (underground periodical of the Polish Karaites; 2 issues, Warsaw, 1979; ed. Marek Firkowicz); *Awazymyz* (computer-published periodical of the Polish Karaites, now also available online: <http://www.karaimi.org/awazymyz/>; ed. A. Sulimowicz, M. Firkowicz, and M. Abkowicz); *Karaimskie Vesti* (newspaper of the Russian Karaites), and *Karaimskaia Narodnaia Entsiklopediia* (published under the aegis of the French Karaite *maecenas* M.S. Sarach; a series of books on the history of the Karaites, denying all Jewish links and “proving” the ancient Altai and Mongol-Turkic roots of the East European Karaites).

⁵⁶ All three members of the group are of Egyptian extraction, living nowadays in America and Israel. I had the honour of meeting two members of the group, Ben Massoudah and Ovadia Gamil, in Sep. 2002 at the conference on the history of the Karaite community of Halicz (see below).

not the dropping of the word “Jew,” but the loss of original Karaite traditions and the forging of the new ethnic identity:

It is safe to state here that Karaites of Russia and Eastern Europe, though dropping the word “Jews”, did not disassociate themselves from the Karaite faith as we know it [...] Karaites tried to keep their communities alive so they cleaved to what they could remember: the Karaite calendar, the holy days, what they still remember of their customs and traditions, and even those were affected by changes being mixed with all that they developed. Thus they created a new tradition... That tradition though part of it still clings to Karaism, yet there is no doubt that it has very little to do with the original Karaite faith which is a form of Judaism [...] They abandoned the word “Jews” but they kept the word Karaite to camouflage their retention of Judaism.⁵⁷

In 1991 Mourad El-Qodsi counted only 154 Karaites in Poland (50 in Warsaw, 50 in Gdańsk, 54 in Wrocław and its vicinity). In July 1991, in the last days of the existence of the Soviet Union, he and his colleagues visited Halicz to find only a handful of Karaites living there:

In Halisz [*sic*] we met one Karaite man. All the other Karaites we met there were women. Galina Eshvovich [*sic* for Janina Eszwowicz] a responsible member there, told us that the Karaite community had a very beautiful synagogue... They have a burial place of their own which is still in good condition [...] When Galina [Janina] opened the gate the three Haliszians knelt down, kissed the earth then stood up. Then they put a handkerchief on a tomb and kissed the handkerchief.⁵⁸ The burial place is of two parts, one for all the deceased, the other one for the victims of the Bubonic plague...⁵⁹ When we were done with our visit, Ovadia recited in Hebrew memorial for all the deceased. The minute we finished, Swetlana, a 65 year old lady, took his hands and kissed them saying “Hazzan... Hazzan”.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ El-Kodsi, *Communities*, 28-29. Here and below I have preserved the author's original syntax and orthography.

⁵⁸ A similar rite of kissing the tomb through a handkerchief is still practised by the Polish Karaites in Warsaw.

⁵⁹ I.e. the so-called epidemic cemetery. However, there was no plague in Halicz, only cholera (Yurchenko, Yurchenko, “Problemy zberezhennia,” 31; idem, “Epidemichne kladovyshe,” 180-183).

⁶⁰ El-Kodsi, *Communities*, 14-15, 23.

After the demise of the Soviet Union and the establishment of independent Ukraine in August-December 1991 the remaining Halicz Karaites had to change their nationality again – and now became Ukrainian citizens. Even in the 1990s the remaining members of the local community managed to preserve some elements of the genuine Karaite tradition, language, and ethnic culture. Despite the absence of a hazzan and the house of prayer, all the members of the community could speak the Karaim language. Some of them gathered on Saturdays and other religious holidays, read literature in Karaim, observed fasts, and, having no hazzan, listened to prayers from a tape-recorder.⁶¹

As has been mentioned, in the general anti-Ukrainian and anti-Russian atmosphere of interwar Poland, the Halicz community seemed to ignore completely the existence of the once popular theory concerning the Karaites' arrival in Galicia in the times of Prince Daniel. After the war, however, when Daniel began to be presented by official Soviet historiography as a heroic Galician prince, a champion of the local Slavic population in the struggle against Tatar and Mongol aggressors, this theory reappeared as the main historical concept of the Halicz Karaite community. Since, according to this theory, the Karaites were settled in Halicz in 1246, in 1996 the remaining local Karaites celebrated the 750th anniversary of the establishment of the community.⁶² This festivity almost overlapped with the official celebration of the 1100th anniversary of the establishment of the town of Halicz, which was held in 1998.⁶³

⁶¹ Janina Eszwowicz, private communication (Halicz, June, 2003).

⁶² Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 4. On the speculative character of "Daniel" theory and the date of 1246, see §4.1.2.

⁶³ See reports by the Karaite authors B.S. Taymaz, and O.V. Petrov-Dubinskii, "Drevnii Galich i Karaimy," *KV* 9 (42) (October 1998); cf. A.Yu. Polkanova, "'Ostalas' vetv', kotoroi Kniaz' Danila v Galitsii priiut i zemliu dal,'" *KV* 9 (42) (October 1998). According to official Soviet and Ukrainian

In the 1990s the Crimean Karaites were fostering the idea of restoring one of the Eupatoria Karaite synagogues. Unfortunately, the Torah closets of the Eupatoria *kenesalar* were destroyed during the Soviet era. This is why the plan arose to transport the *aron ha-qodesh* which remained from the Halicz synagogue to the Eupatoria *kenesa* in the Crimea. This seemed even more symbolic, since, according to local tradition, the Galician Karaites themselves originated from the Crimea. In 1994 the Torah closet was delivered from Halicz to the Crimea, where it was subsequently repaired. In 1999 it was installed in Eupatoria's smaller synagogue. Since then it has been used as a religious object again.⁶⁴ In addition to the Torah closet, the Halicz community also donated to the Eupatoria Karaites many valuable printed books and manuscripts, including seventeen Torah scrolls.⁶⁵ One of these scrolls is on display today at a Karaite exhibit in Eupatoria;⁶⁶ others are used for liturgical purposes.

Only in 2000, at the very end of its existence, was the Halicz community officially registered as a regional Karaite community.⁶⁷ The conference, "The Halicz Karaites: History and Culture," which took place in Halicz from 7 to 9 September 2002, was perhaps the last important event in the history of the vanishing community. The conference was attended by about a hundred participants. Among them were specialists in the field of Karaite Studies and representatives of the Karaite communities of Halicz, Crimea, Poland, Lithuania, Israel, and the USA. The conference overlapped with the festivity of the Karaite New Year (*Rosh ha-Shanah*) which was celebrated together by both the Karaite and non-Karaite participants in the

historiography, Halicz was first mentioned by an anonymous Hungarian chronicler as early as 898 (Olexander Mayorov, "Pro datu zasnuvannia Halycha za zvistkoiu uhors'koho Anonima," in *Zberezhennia ta vykorystannia*, 195-203). Nevertheless, more sober scholars date the foundation of Halicz only to the twelfth century.

⁶⁴ Tiryaki, "Sokhranenie," 76-83; cf. Janina Eszwowicz, "Gekhal i vse imushchestvo Galichskoi kenasy sokhranila malochislennaia karaimskaia obshchina," *KV* 4 (47) (1999).

⁶⁵ Especially important were the manuscripts and rare printed books donated by Ms. Ada Zarachowicz.

⁶⁶ See Illustrations, fig. 5.1. This exhibition is located in the building of the former midrash at Karaite Street 63, next to the entrance to the Eupatoria Karaite synagogues.

⁶⁷ Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka karaïms'ka hromada," 9.

conference.⁶⁸

However, nothing could stop the inevitable disappearance of the community. In May 2002, during my first visit to Halicz, there were still seven members of the community. In spite of the fact that Ukrainian, Russian, and Polish were their main *Umgangssprachen*, all of them could speak Karaim fluently and were willing to share their memories with visitors to Halicz.⁶⁹ Eight Karaites of Galician origin lived in 2002 in Lithuania, Moscow, Poland, Simferopol', and Israel.⁷⁰ In 2003 Janina (Rukhama) L'vovna Eszwowicz (15.09.1930-24.10.2003) died in Halicz. She was the official head of the community and perhaps the last custodian of local Karaite traditions. A friendly and hospitable person, the late Ms. Eszwowicz was always happy to share her knowledge and experiences with the numerous academic and Karaite visitors to her house on Karaite Street in Halicz. She accorded great assistance to Ivan and Natalya Yurchenko in their efforts to collect objects of Karaite history and culture for the Halicz Karaite museum.⁷¹

At the present time (2007) only two remaining speakers of the Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language are living in Halicz. According to Vadim Mireev, twenty other Galician Karaites live outside Ukraine; most of them possess

⁶⁸ Proceedings of the conference have been published as *Karaïmy Halycha: Istoriya ta Kul'tura/The Halych Karaims: History and Culture* (L'viv-Halych, 2002 (together with an *Appendix* published separately in the same year)). For a detailed report on the conference and a review of its proceedings, see Mikhail Kizilov, "Vor dem Vergessen bewahren – Neue Forschungen zu den Karäern Ostgaliziens (Ukraine)," *Judaica* 4 (2003): 299-304; cf. Viacheslav Lebedev, "750 let spustia v Galiche ostalos' sem' karaïmov," *Literaturnyi Krym* 35-36 (September, 2002): 12; Mariola Abkowicz, "No i znowu była w Haliczu," *Awazymyz* 1 (7) (2003)). See Illustrations, figs. 9.10-9.11.

⁶⁹ Today only a few Karaites from the comparatively numerous Crimean community (671 persons) can speak the Karaite ethnolect of Crimean Tatar (Jankowski, "Nowy 5762 rok," 104-106). According to surveys in 2001-2002, there were 69 Karaites in Lithuania who could speak Karaim, and only 17 in Poland (Adamczuk, Kobeckaitė, Pilecki, *Karaïmi*, 65). The data of Éva Ágnes Csató, based on her field research in Eastern Europe, are much less favourable. According to this scholar, there are not more than ten to fifteen persons, who are still using the northern dialect of Karaim in Troki (Lithuania). Moreover, only three of them speak Karaim regularly (Éva Ágnes Csató, "Should Karaim be 'Purer' than Other European Languages?" *Studia Turcologica Cracoviensia* 5 (1998): 84).

⁷⁰ Eszwowicz, "Halyts'ka," 7. For a complete list, see *Karaïmy Halycha (Appendix)*, 208.

⁷¹ Ms. Eszwowicz asked her numerous relatives and friends living in various Karaite communities of the world to send objects from their family collections to Halicz. Today her private archive constitutes a part of the Yurchenko MSS.

some limited knowledge of Karaim, and can write and read this language.⁷² Thus, the history of the community has come to an end, and we may, with some sorrow, state that one more ethnic group and one more interesting language have almost disappeared from the historical scene.

As has been shown above, the Galician Karaites managed to distance themselves from Szapszał's modernisation of Karaite society and were able to preserve some of their original ethnographic traditions until today. The conservative character of the community and the unwillingness of its leaders to change traditional matrimonial laws and allow mixed marriages were, perhaps, the main reasons for the demographic decline of the Galician Karaites. Thus, contrary to popular belief, preservation of traditional culture and religious prescriptions does not always promote the *physical* survival of an ethnic minority. Indeed, the case of the Galician Karaites represents a highly interesting example of how the retention of their unique traditions ironically brought the Galician Karaites to the brink of extinction.

7.3. *The Galician Karaite community and its cultural heritage today*

Today, in spite of the fact that the Karaite community of Galicia has practically disappeared, its presence in this region is still reflected in the historical toponymy of the area and in the memories of local inhabitants.

In Lwów (now L'viv), the largest city of the region, there is a Karaite Street (Ukr. *Karaïms'ka vulytsia*), which is located next to the Castle hill. It seems that in the fifteenth century the Karaite community of medieval Lwów lived somewhere in the vicinity of this street. It is also very likely that the magnificent "Golden Rose," the famous sixteenth-century Rabbanite synagogue of the city, was built on the site of a

⁷² Vadim Mireev, Natalia Abrahamowicz (Abragamovich), *Yazyk karaimov Zapadnoi Ukrainy* (Simferopol'-Polevskoi-Slippery Rock, 2007) (in progress).

house which once belonged to a Karaite.⁷³ However, nothing of Lwów's medieval Karaite synagogue or of the local Karaite cemetery has survived.

Kukizów (Ukr. Kukyziv/Kukeziv), once a residence of Jan III Sobieski, is reduced today to a small village in the Kam'iansko-Buz'kyi region (23 km to the north-east of Lwów). Its population hardly exceeds a few hundred people, who barely know anything about the former Karaite community and its intellectual activity. Nevertheless, during my field trip to Kukizów in May 2002, I received information from one of the local inhabitants concerning the exact location of the cemetery. The informant still knew the term "Karaïmy," but did not know what sort of people it was used to denote.⁷⁴ According to Ivan Yurchenko, it is quite possible that a few eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Karaite tombstones may still be found in Kukizów after archaeological excavations and a careful examination of local peasant houses, for which some of the stones might have been taken as building materials.⁷⁵

Thus, Halicz is perhaps the only place where the Karaite community is still widely known and remembered. In the 1990s the street that was the centre of the former Karaite quarter, which was renamed by the Soviets Nikolai Shchors Street, was given back its historical name.⁷⁶ Today it is called *Karaïms'ka vulytsia* (Ukr. "Karaite Street"). Currently, Karaite Street and its remaining nine Karaite houses are under consideration for recognition as monuments of history and culture. Local historians are planning to organize a large Karaite historical reserve, which will include Karaite Street, cemetery and the already existing Museum of Karaite History

⁷³ Bałaban, "Karaïci," 17; Bałaban, *Żydzi*, 6, 56, ft. 1. The synagogue was heavily damaged by the Nazis during WWII and only its ruins have remained.

⁷⁴ The informant believed that the Karaites were some sort of Tatars – perhaps a reference to their Turkic Karaïm language.

⁷⁵ Private communication (Halicz, May, 2002).

⁷⁶ Today's official Ukrainian propaganda does not particularly like Nikolai Shchors and other Ukrainian revolutionaries who helped the Red Army acquire the Ukrainian part of Russia during the Civil War.

and Culture.⁷⁷

Most academic projects related to the study and preservation of the historical legacy of the Galician Karaite community are connected with the unparalleled activity of two local scholars and enthusiasts, Ivan and Natalya Yurchenko. In the late 1990s they began studying and restoring the local Karaite burial ground. Their work was crowned with the publication of a full catalogue of the epigraphic inscriptions from this cemetery.⁷⁸ In 2002 Ivan and Natalya Yurchenko organized a conference dedicated to the history and culture of the Galician Karaites (see above). In the late 1990s, as well, the scholars started collecting ethnographic objects, and in 2003 the Museum of Karaite History and Culture (MKIK, i.e. *Muzei karaïms'koï istorii ta kul'tury*) was opened. A Karaite house at Karaïms'ka Street 33 was refurbished and renovated to serve as the location of the museum. The most impressive objects (the Torah scroll, manuscripts, documents and photographs, ethnographic objects, embroideries, etc.) are displayed in the museum's exhibits.⁷⁹ The museum's repository consists of more than 3,000 objects relating to the history and culture of the Galician Karaites.⁸⁰ Especially important is a collection of manuscripts gathered by Ivan Yurchenko from the attics of abandoned Karaite houses in Halicz or through donations by community members. This archive contains several thousand items related mostly to the nineteenth- and twentieth-century history of the Galician community. Yurchenko started to digitize and catalogue this collection, but unfortunately, due to lack of financial support, he was forced to suspend this project,

⁷⁷ This preliminary decision was taken at a meeting of the "Davnii Halych" Historical Reserve (attended by M. Kizilov in Halicz, 25 Apr. 2005).

⁷⁸ Hebrew originals with Ukrainian translation (Yurchenko et al., *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche*).

⁷⁹ There was only one other Karaite museum before. It was founded by Seraja Szapszał in Troki in the 1930s. The museum in Halicz, however, seems to be much better organized and more objective in its information than that of Szapszał. In addition to these two museums, there are three smaller Karaite exhibitions organized by the Karaite communities of Jerusalem, Eupatoria, and Theodosia.

⁸⁰ Yurchenko, Yurchenko, "Problemy zberezhennia," 28-32.

and the future destiny of this collection is at the moment unclear. Furthermore, Ivan Yurchenko also planned to excavate the base of the kenesa and erect a memorial sign on its site, but for want of funding has not been able to realize his plans so far.⁸¹

Anna (Akbike) Sulimowicz, a daughter of the scholar-Orientalist Józef Sulimowicz, continues the Orientalist traditions of the Galician Karaites and teaches Turkish at the Oriental faculty of Warsaw University. She is also one of the most active contributors and co-editors of the computer-published Polish Karaite periodical *Awazymyz* (Kar. "Our Voice"). Her publications focus primarily on the historiography of Karaite Studies in Poland and on the biographies of eminent Karaite scholars and enlighteners.⁸²

The study of the Galician-Volhynian dialect of the Karaim language is part of the project "Spoken Karaim" being carried out by Éva Ágnes Csató (Uppsala). Today Professor Csató is perhaps the only person in the world who is able to speak all the dialectal varieties of Karaim.⁸³ A few other historians and linguists (D. Shapira, H. Jankowski, A. Sulimowicz, M. Kizilov) are also studying the Galician variety of Karaim and the literature in this dialect.⁸⁴ One Crimean enthusiast and Turkophile, Vadim Mireev, together with Natalia Abragamovich (Abrahamowicz), a descendant of Galician Karaite emigrants, are thinking about launching a project to revitalize the Karaim language in its Galician-Volhynian variant.⁸⁵ However, without a dedicated state programme similar to that responsible for the revitalization and dissemination of

⁸¹ Ibid., 29-30.

⁸² For details see bibliography under "Sulimowicz, Anna Akbike."

⁸³ Éva Ágnes Csató, "The Karaim Language in Halicz," in *Karaïmy Halycha*, 134-139; eadem, "The documentation of the endangered Halych Karaim language" in *Halych i halyts'ka zemlia v derzhavotvorchyykh protsesakh Ukraïny* (Ivano-Frankivs'k and Halych, 1988), 282-283. See Illustrations, fig. 9.12.

⁸⁴ Jankowski, "Two Prayers"; Shapira, "The Turkic Languages," 682-689; Mikhail Kizilov, "Faithful Unto Death"; Anna Sulimowicz, "Język karaimski: starania o jego zachowanie," *Języki obce w szkole* 6 (2001): 37-44. Cf. Alexander Mardkowicz, "Ku pamięci 'babińca'," transl. A. Sulimowicz, *Awazymyz* 2 (3) (1999): 5-8 (republished in *Języki obce w szkole* 6 (2001): 214-216).

⁸⁵ Currently the authors are preparing a new manual and dictionary of the GVKar (Mireev, Abrahamowicz, *Yazyk karaimov*).

the Hebrew language in Israel, this project can hardly succeed. Unfortunately, it seems that neither the Ukrainian government, nor the dwindling East European Karaite community will support this academic venture. As has been shown above, it seems that Galician-Volhynian Karaim will disappear together with the vanishing Karaite community life of Galicia and Volhynia – and the few remaining speakers of this language will be unable to revive it.

Conclusion

The historical fate, the past, and the future of the Karaite community in Eastern Europe

It seems that today there are only three Karaite communities in Eastern Europe *stricto sensu* (i.e. comparatively large groups of people with common ethnic origin, living in the same area, unified by adhering to the same cultural and religious tradition, and having from time to time common cultural events and festivities): in Eupatoria, Troki (Trakai), and Wilno (Vilnius). The Karaite communities in other East European cities and towns are largely reduced to small groups of close family relatives. The once-prosperous Karaite communities of Galicia and Łuck have almost entirely disappeared. The demographic crisis of the Galician and Volhynian community is only part of the general disappearance of the Karaite communities in Eastern Europe. According to the last Ukrainian census (2002) there were 671 Karaites in the Crimea (only 0.03% of the population of the Autonomous Republic of the Crimea), and 834 Karaites in the whole Ukraine. Thus, together with the Karaite population of Moscow and St. Petersburg (ca.400 individuals), there are not more than 1,500 Karaites living within the CIS, whereas the whole East European Karaite community amounts to ca. 2,000 individuals.⁸⁶

Having summarized the main stages in the historical development of the East European Karaite community, it is worthwhile considering general conclusions and implications which may be drawn from the Karaite case. The Karaites are highly important for anyone interested in the history of Turkic peoples and languages.

⁸⁶ On the statistics and the general state of the Karaite community of the CIS and Crimea today, see Tat'iana Shchegoleva, "Osnovnye etnokul'turnye aspekty russkoyazychnoi karaimskoi publitsistiki i sostoianie krymskoi karaimskoi obshchiny v kontse XX – nachale XXI vv," *Tirosh* 6 (2005): 218-135; eadem, "Obzor sovremennogo sostoianiia karaimskikh obshchin SNG," *Tirosh* 7 (2005): 201-219. For Poland and Lithuania see Adamczuk, Kobeckaitė, Pilecki, *Karaimi w Polsce*.

Karaim, the Turkic language spoken by the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites, has retained ancient Turkic lexica which find direct parallels in the *Codex Cumanicus*, the medieval dictionary of the Kypchak (Cuman) language. Thus, the non-Turkic Karaites surprisingly managed to preserve elements of the language of the nomadic Cumans which would have otherwise been lost. The fact that not only ethnic Turks are able to speak Turkic languages played a role in the creation of the twentieth-century pan-Turkic ideological doctrine.⁸⁷ Moreover, apart from the Turkic-speaking Rabbanite Jews of Turkey and the Crimea, the Karaites were the only Turkic-speaking Jewish community in the world. Although a small minority encircled by much more numerous Slavic- and Yiddish-speaking neighbours, the Karaites have continued speaking Karaim up to the present. Such linguistic tenacity on the part of a small ethnic community is not entirely uncommon, but is still rather unusual. To give an example, the Polish Armenians, who spoke the similar Armeno-Kypchak language, stopped using it in the second half of the seventeenth century and replaced it with Polish.⁸⁸

The Karaites are especially important for a better understanding of the history of the Jews — in Europe and elsewhere. The rejection of the Talmud was not unique to the Karaites: there were a few other Jewish groups which also did not recognize the authority of the Talmud and Rabbinic Judaism (e.g. the Samaritans, the Ethiopian Falashas, the Jews of Kaifeng,⁸⁹ *et al.*). Nevertheless, the Karaites were perhaps the only non-Talmudic Jews who lived in Eastern Europe, i.e. in the very centre of Rabbinic Judaism – and managed not to be assimilated by the latter. In late medieval

⁸⁷ See Kırımal, *Nationale Kampf*, xvii-xviii, xxiii.

⁸⁸ Eleonora Nadel-Golobič, "Armenians and Jews in Medieval Lvov: Their Role in Oriental Trade 1400-1600," *Cahiers du monde russe et soviétique* 20 (1979): 361.

⁸⁹ The Falashas and the Chinese Jews were not acquainted with Rabbinic Judaism until very late period of their history. Thus, their rejection of the Talmud was not really a matter of rejecting its authority, but of never having had it available to them in the first place.

and early modern times, East European Karaites managed to create a unique amalgamated ethnic culture which represented a mixture of Jewish, Turkic, and Slavic elements and traditions. From the late eighteenth through the nineteenth century the Karaites began to develop a separate ethnic identity, a process which later resulted in complete disassociation from other Jews. In the interwar period, the Karaite community in Eastern Europe officially accepted Szapszał's Turkic doctrine and received a new — Turkic — ethnic identity.

Karaite history during World War II also seems to be unique. Indeed, there were several other cases when small and "exotic" groups of Semitic origin were recognized as racially not Jewish and thus managed to survive the Holocaust practically unscathed. Nevertheless, those few members of the East European Karaite community who joined the *Wehrmacht* seem to be the only people of Jewish origin who were on the Nazi side of the barricades.⁹⁰ According to a survivor from the Łuck ghetto, the Karaites were even called the "Semitic Nazis" by the local Rabbanites.⁹¹ In addition, as was indicated above, one Karaite family from Halicz joined the Banderovtsy, a radical movement of Ukrainian nationalists, guilty of killing thousands of Polish, Russian, and Jewish civilians. Having said this, it is important to remember that the number of such collaborators could have hardly exceeded a few dozen Karaites, and that the nature of their collaboration is still far from being properly studied. At the same time, a few hundred Karaites fought heroically against Nazi Germany as soldiers of the Soviet army.⁹² Many Karaites sheltered their Rabbanite neighbours,

⁹⁰ Bryan Rigg documented as many as 150,000 cases of Jewish *Mischlinge* ("partial Jews") serving the Nazi regime including decorated veterans and high-ranking officers (Rigg, *Hitler's Jewish Soldiers*). Their case, however, considerably differed from that of the Karaites, who were supposed to be treated as "pure" Jews by the Nazis, both racially and religiously.

⁹¹ Green, "Nazi Racial Policy," 41.

⁹² Alexander Fuki, *Karaimy – synov'ia i docheri Rosii* (Moscow, 1995), 57-146. The author provides details of the biographies of 247 Soviet Karaites who actively participated in the military events of WWII (most of them as Red Army soldiers) (pp. 57-140); one can also find a list of 176 Karaite Soviet soldiers, whose fate is not documented precisely (pp. 140-146); nine French Karaites were recruited to

while some were massacred by the Nazis.

The nineteenth- and twentieth-century study of the Karaites' ethnogenesis was always accompanied by heated academic and public debates. Seraja Szapszał was not the first (and not the last) to suggest their Turko-Khazar origins. Debates concerning historical links between the Karaites and the Khazars were initiated by A. Firkowicz, V. Smirnov, A. Harkavy, V. Grigor'ev, and other scholars as early as the mid-nineteenth century. Today, most specialists in the field of Khazar studies agree that there was no historical connection between the Karaites and the Khazars. Nevertheless, the debate is still raging on, especially in the sphere of non-academic discourse. In spite of the fact that there were many other pretenders to the role of descendants of the medieval Khazars (e.g. the Slavic Judaizing Subbotniks, the Don Cossacks, the Turkic-speaking Krymchak Jews, the Moldavian Csángós,⁹³ and many others), the pseudo-scholarly theory of the Khazar origin of the Karaites is the most elaborate one.⁹⁴ Somewhat similar was a public and academic discussion pertaining to the problem of the descendants of the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel, which also engendered many heated pseudo-scholarly debates and theories.⁹⁵

The Karaites possessed an extraordinary ability to be on good terms with the rulers of their respective countries. Although a Turkic-speaking Jewish community, the Karaites nevertheless managed to find protection under political systems as

the French army (pp. 55-56).

⁹³ Chris Davis, *The Csángós of Moldavia: Historical Narratives*, M.St. Dissertation (Oxford 2005), 12-13.

⁹⁴ See Kizilov, Mikhaylova, "Khazar Kaganate"; Dan Shapira, "Khazars and Karaites, Again" (in the press).

⁹⁵ The quest for the "descendants" of the Ten Lost Tribes, which had begun already in medieval times, in many respects resembles the Khazar mythologeme. Moreover, these two mythologemes often crisscrossed: the Khazars were frequently considered to be among the lost tribes of Israel, whereas the Karaites were believed to be both descendants of the lost tribes and of the Khazars. As was the case with the Khazars, the most varied ethnic groups and religious movements have been identified as the "only" descendants of the lost tribes: the Ethiopian Falashas, the Jews of Cochin, the Afghans, the Crimean Karaites, the Karens of Burma, the Scythians, the Japanese, the Mormons, South and North American Indians, etc.

different as those of Habsburg Austria, tsarist Russia, interwar Poland, and Nazi Germany (!). Their unique ability to adapt helped them survive Russian, Ukrainian, and Polish anti-Semitism, two world wars, and the horrors of the Holocaust. However, the price they paid for their disassociation from the rest of Jewry was very high. Because of the necessity to manipulate their ethnic identity constantly in order to avoid the unpleasant perspective of being included in the lists of Jewish populations, the Karaites inevitably lost the cultural traditions linking them to Jewish civilization.

The East European Karaites represent a unique instance of almost complete rejection of Jewish identity, one which has only a few parallels in Jewish history. The historical vicissitudes of the Tats and the Krymchaks, two Jewish sub-ethnic groups professing Rabbinic Judaism, are perhaps the only close analogues. The Tats, i.e. the mountain Jews of the Caucasus, like the Karaites, also started claiming a non-Jewish, “autochthonous-Turkic” origin during and after World War II and, especially, after the disintegration of the Soviet Union in 1991.⁹⁶

Another example of a Jewish minority which faces today the danger of complete disappearance is that of the “autochthonous” Crimean Rabbanite Jews, a.k.a. the Krymchaks (*Qrimçaqlar*). A small Talmudic community living in the Crimea, in the early modern period the Krymchaks adopted a Turkic idiom similar to that of their Tatar and Karaite neighbours. Being much more flexible in their matrimonial policy than the Karaites, the Krymchaks still normally preferred endogamous marriages with members of their own community. During World War II the Krymchaks, like the Karaites, tried to save their lives by writing and submitting petitions about their Khazar origins. Unfortunately, they were not successful. Thus, in addition to natural

⁹⁶ Valerii Dymshits, “Bor’ba za sushchestvitel’noe,” *Narod Knigi v mire knig. Evreiskoe knizhnoe obozrenie* 50 (2004): 6-13. Like the Karaites, during WWII the Tats managed to convince the Nazi authorities that they were of Jewish religion, but free of Jewish “blood” (Rigg, *Hitler’s Jewish Soldiers*, 283).

demographic problems, their community was decimated by the Nazis' "final solution" of the "Jewish question." After the war, the Krymchaks developed their own "Turkic theory," which was undoubtedly cloned from that of Seraja Szapszał and his Karaite contemporaries. Today the entire Krymchak community consists only of a few hundred scattered individuals living in the Crimea, Israel, Russia, and America. The Krymchak community seems to be disappearing because most of its members prefer not to maintain their separate Krymchak identity, and normally join other Rabbanite Jewish communities.⁹⁷

The Karaites' renunciation of Judaism, however, had a much more radical character than that of the Tats and Krymchaks: in contrast to the Karaites, even during Soviet times many Tats and Krymchaks still considered themselves Jews and continued professing Judaism. What makes the Karaite case unique is that the East European Karaites were the *only* Jewish community in the world which developed such an elaborate pseudo-scientific doctrine to justify their renunciation of Jewish identity. Furthermore, today many East European Karaites continue Szapszał's work and carry on publishing numerous books and articles of doubtful scholarly value, in which they still try to prove their Turko-Cumano-Khazar origins – even though no current external factor seems to endanger their ethnic security, and our academic knowledge clearly shows the historical naiveté of these claims.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ See more in Anatolii Khazanov, *The Krymchaks: A Vanishing Group in the Soviet Union* (Jerusalem, 1989); Michael Zand, "Notes on the Culture of the Non-Ashkenazi Jewish Communities Under Soviet Rule," in *Jewish Culture and Identity in the Soviet Union* (NY-London, 1991), 378-444; Mikhail Kizilov, "Krymchaki," in *Ot kimmeriitsev do krymchakov*, ed. A.Gertsen, I.Khrapunov (Simferopol', 2004), 193-203. More details on the fate of the Krymchaks during WWII might be found in the correspondence of the Krymchaki amateur historian, Lev Kaya (esp. L.I. Kaya to A.N. Torpusman, 1970s-1980s, Archive of the Vaad (Jewish council) of Russia, Moscow). A word of thanks goes to the President of the Vaad, Professor Mikhail Chlenov, for permission to use Kaya's collection.

⁹⁸ A full bibliography is too vast to be given here; see the most recent: Simon Szyszman, *Les Karaites d'Europe* (Uppsala, 1989); E.I. Lebedeva *Ocherki po istorii krymskikh karaimov-tiurkov* (Simferopol', 2000); Yu.A. Polkanov, *Karai - Krymskie karaimy-tiurki. Karais - the Crimean Karaites-Turks* (Simferopol', 1997); *Legendy i predaniia karaev (krymskikh karaimov-tiurkov)*, ed. by Yu.A. Polkanov (Simferopol', 1995); *Karai (Krymskie karaimy)*.

To my knowledge theories of nationalism know only a few other examples of similar radical transformation of an ethnic identity in the non-Jewish world. One parallel case that I am aware of is that of the „Wilamowiceans / Welmessaier,” a small group of Silesian Germans, who developed a mythologeme attesting to their, as they had it, „Anglo-Saxon” or „Flemish” origins in order to avoid the post-war resettlement of German population from Poland. As a consequence of this “degermanization” (cf. the Karaites’ “dejudaization”) they have almost lost their peculiar Wilamowicean German dialect and identity – and started speaking Polish and feel themselves as Poles.⁹⁹ Similar traces of political and ideological manipulation with the ethnic identity may be noted in the case of the Moldavian Csángós, an ethnic minority of disputed Hungarian–Romanian origin.¹⁰⁰

In addition, the East European Karaites seem to be the only Jewish minority which has disappeared primarily because of the rigidity of its marriage customs and general prohibition against conversion to Karaism. Some other small Jewish communities, which were somewhat less strict and conservative with regard to their matrimonial laws and religious traditions have managed to survive until today. Thus, for example, the Samaritans, who, like the Karaites, were rigorous non-Talmudic traditionalists, in the 1920s nevertheless allowed mixed marriages with Rabbanite Jews. As a consequence, the demographic situation in the community considerably improved: from 150 souls in 1901 the Samaritan community grew to 654 members in 2004.¹⁰¹ This means that in the course of about a hundred years the community became four times larger – an example which might have been followed by the

⁹⁹ See Tomasz Wicherkiewicz, *The Making of a Language. The Case of the Idiom of Wilamowice, Southern Poland* (Berlin-NY, 2003).

¹⁰⁰ Davis, Csángós, 12-13.

¹⁰¹ Snopov, “Samaritane,” 81-83.

Polish-Lithuanian Karaites as well, if not for the conservative nature of their religious laws and the losses they suffered during the Second World War.

Similarly, the modern Israeli and American Karaite communities, consisting mostly of Arabic-speaking Karaites of Egyptian extraction, also permit conversion and mixed marriages with non-Karaites.¹⁰² This is why the Israeli community, which has an estimated number of 25,000-30,000 members, seems to be thriving. A few thousand American Karaites can freely profess their religion and have their own synagogues in the country (the largest centres being in San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Chicago). A “Karaite Jewish University” has recently been established in California.¹⁰³ The Israeli Karaites have separate courts of justice, schools for children, synagogues, and even two Karaite agricultural colonies (*moshavim*).¹⁰⁴ Even though the Israeli Karaites sometimes have certain legal difficulties with the recognition of their status by the rabbinic authorities of the country, they consider themselves Israelis with all the rights of citizenship accorded to other Jews. Being removed from the dejudaization tendencies of their East European brethren, the Karaites of Israel (most of them came to Israel from Egypt and Iraq) have faithfully kept their Judeo-Karaite identity through the centuries and have never considered themselves anything but (Karaite) Jews.

An estimated few hundred East European Karaites (mostly from the Crimea, Ukraine, and Lithuania) emigrated to Israel in the 1980s-2000s. Paradoxically enough, Yurii Szapszał, the great-grandson of the forefather of the Karaites’ Turkic

¹⁰² For the attitude of the modern American and Israeli Karaites to conversion to Karaism and mixed marriages, see *Introduction to Karaite Judaism*, 207-211, 217; cf. an open letter from *Hakham Rashi Eliyahu Marzouq* (http://www.orahsaddiqim.org/current_articles/conversion_marzouq.shtml). Especially loud and somewhat scandalous is the activity of Nehemiah Gordon, a Rabbanite convert to Karaism, who, however, is not recognized as a Karaite by many Karaite-born believers (see Nehemiah Gordon’s site: <http://www.karaite-korner.org/kkstore.shtml>).

¹⁰³ See its site: <http://www.kjuonline.com/home.htm>.

¹⁰⁴ Nehemia Meyers, “Israel’s 30,000 Karaites follow Bible, not Talmud,” *Jewish Bulletin* (10 Dec.1999), 1a, 49a.

identity, was among them. Because of the loss of their Judeo-Karaite identity and religious tradition, these emigrants normally do not join the religious Karaite communities of the country. Nevertheless, one of the Crimean Karaite emigrants, Abraham (Alexei) Kefeli, managed to receive a proper religious education and was subsequently appointed hazzan of the Karaite community in the town of Ashdod.¹⁰⁵ In 2002 he published a leaflet which challenged all the East European Karaites not to believe in theories concerning their Turkic origins and return to their genuine Karaite roots – religious as well as cultural and ethnic.¹⁰⁶

Thus, it seems that the future history of Karaism will be connected not with Eastern Europe, but with the state of Israel, which welcomes every East European Karaite who is ready to identify with the Judaism of his forefathers and claim the right of repatriation to *Erets Yisra'el*. This is perhaps even more symbolic when one takes into consideration that the medieval Karaites, the leaders of the *Avelei Tsion* (Mourners of Zion), were perhaps the first Jewish thinkers to call exiled Jewry to return to the Holy land of Palestine.

¹⁰⁵ This part of my dissertation is largely based on my field work with the Israeli Karaites in 2002-2005.

¹⁰⁶ Avraham Kefeli, Natal'ia Kefeli, "*Karaimy. Raz'yasnitelnaia broshiura po istorii karaimov Kryma i osnovam karaimskoi religii*" (Ashdod, 2002). Avraham Kefeli informed me in a private conversation that he had left the Crimea largely because of the persecutions on the part of the local "Turkic" Karaites.

GLOSSARY

- aron ha-qodesh* – Torah closet, the place for keeping Torah scrolls in a synagogue
- Ashkenazim* – German, West-, Central-, or East-European Jews
- berit milah* (GVKar. *mile*) – circumcision
- hakham* (Heb. “sage,” “wise one”) – 1) educated person; 2) supreme administrative and religious head of the Karaite communities in Eastern Europe after 1837
- hakhan* – pseudo-Turkic corruption of the Hebrew term *hakham* introduced by Seraja Szapszał in the late 1920s
- Haskalah* (from Heb. *sekhel* – “reason/intellect”) – Jewish Enlightenment, movement for spreading European culture among the Jews (ca. 1780s-1880s)
- hazzan* – 1) singer (cantor) in a Rabbanite community; 2) religious (and sometimes administrative) head of a Karaite community in Eastern Europe
- hevra qaddishah* (Aramaic “holy congregation”) – a charitable confraternity; from Early Modern period on its functions were generally limited to burial of the dead
- huppah* – wedding canopy
- kapporet* – drapery for a Torah scroll
- kashrut* – dietary laws
- kenesa* (also *kensa/kenese/kenasa*) – Karaite synagogue (cf. Heb. *beit ha-knesset*, i.e. “synagogue”)
- ketubbah* – marriage contract
- kosher* – ritually permissible food
- maskil* (Heb. “wise,” “enlightened one”) – scholar, adherent of the Jewish Enlightenment (cf. *Haskalah*)
- matsah* – unleavened bread, traditional substitute for bread during the *Pesakh* (Passover)
- matsevah* – tombstone
- melamed* (GVKar. *iwretiwci*) – teacher
- menorah* – seven-branched candelabrum or oil-lamp
- mezuzah* – doorpost amulet
- midrasz* – Karaim for Heb. *beit ha-midrash*, i.e. a religious school
- minyan* – lit. “number”; usually interpreted in the sense of “ten people,” i.e. the minimal congregation necessary for public worship
- miqveh* – ritual bath
- mitsvah* – commandment, precept, injunction; also a good or charitable deed
- mohel* – circumciser
- ochuwcu* – lit. “reader”; combined the duties of *ba'al qeri'ah* (lit. “master of reading”) with those of a custodian (*shammash*)

Oral Law – the Talmud (a.k.a. *Torah she-be-‘al peh*), a later Rabbinic commentary and legal code based on the Hebrew Bible (*TaNaKh*)

piyyut – poem

qehilah – Jewish community, congregation; the same as *qahal*

qina (GVKar. *kyna*) – lamentation, funeral elegy

Rabbanite – adherent of Rabbinic (Talmudic) Judaism

ribbi (rarely *erbi*) – Karaite form for “rabbi;” usually applied to a teacher. Cf. Yiddish *reb* and *rebbe*

shammash – synagogue beadle/custodian

shehitah – ritual slaughtering of animals

shofet (lit. “judge”) – negotiator or lobbyist, administrative head of a Karaite community in Poland and Lithuania responsible for representing the community to non-Karaite authorities (cf. Pol. *wójt* and Heb. *shtadlan*)

shohet – ritual slaughterer; cf. *shehitah*

siddur – prayer book

tallit gadol (“large tallit”) – four-cornered prayer shawl worn during morning services

tallit qatan (“small tallit”) – four-cornered garment worn under the clothes for the duration of the day

TaNaKh – the Hebrew Bible, Christian Old Testament

taqqanah – regulation (rule / reform) governing the internal life of a community and supplementing biblical laws

targum – translation of the Bible into vernacular languages (e.g. in Karaim)

tas (Heb. “[the Torah] shield”) – a decorative metal breastplate hung from the Torah rollers

tefillin – phylacteries, small leather cases containing Biblical verses and leather straps attached to them; phylacteries are affixed on the forehead and arm by male Jews during morning services

Torah – Pentateuch or Pentateuchal scroll

tsitsit – fringes or tassels at the corners of Jewish four-cornered garments (see *tallit gadol/qatan*)

województwo – administrative district in Poland (a.k.a. *voivodship* or *palatinate*)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

In this dissertation I have analysed the most valuable documents pertaining to the history of the Galician Karaites, which are kept in archival collections in England, Russia, Ukraine, Crimea, Poland, Lithuania, Austria, and Israel. Especially important were the hitherto little-studied Karaite collections in Vilnius (Seraja Szapszał and Szemaja Firkowicz's personal archives), St. Petersburg (Abraham Firkowicz's collection), and Kraków (Karaite materials by the Polish Orientalists, Tadeusz Kowalski and Jan Grzegorzewski).

Of major importance, too, was the collection of Karaite manuscripts assembled in Halicz by Ivan Yurchenko (the Yurchenko MSS), which is still in the process of being catalogued. The author of this study is perhaps the first and only scholar who has managed to obtain access to this collection so far. Prospective students of the history of the Galician community should turn their attention first of all to this new archive. Due to the fact that this collection has not yet been properly catalogued, I have provided a short bibliographic description of those Yurchenko MSS that I used in my study. Documents from other, already well-established, archival collections, which may be easily found in their respective catalogues, were normally indicated by me by their call numbers only.

Highly useful, as well, was my work with the collection of objects of Galician Karaite material culture currently kept in the Museum of Karaite History and Culture in Halicz (ca. 3,000 items; see section 1.2. of the bibliography). I have provided a short description of the museum items which I used in my study.

I decided to divide my printed sources into two large categories: "printed primary sources" (publications of Karaite authors; section 1.3), and "other printed

primary sources (sources of non-Karaite origin; section 1.4).” Soon, however, I found myself facing a very difficult question: should I treat publications of twentieth-century Karaite orientalists (e.g. Anna Sulimowicz, Ananjasz Zajączkowski, Zygmunt Abrahamowicz and some others) as sources or secondary literature? After long consideration the following decision was taken. Most of the publications of Karaite scholars, their academic character notwithstanding, still provide us with many first-hand details, such as their authors’ opinions and views, their personal reminiscences, memoirs of relatives, etc. Moreover, biographies of twentieth-century Karaite scholars from Galicia (and their publications) also represent a part of the history of the Galician community after 1918. Therefore, *all* publications by Karaite authors (both from 1772 to 1918 and afterwards) are viewed as primary sources for this study (see section 1.3).

Another difficult question was connected with publications by journalists and amateur historians (e.g. Bohdan Janusz), which were published before 1945. Should they be considered secondary academic literature or sources on the state of the community in that period? Again, after lengthy consideration, I came to the following conclusion. *Stricto sensu* the scholarly value of such publications is quite insignificant. Nevertheless, personal observations by such journalists and men of letters undoubtedly represent a very important source for the history of the Karaites in the region. Therefore, such publications are listed in the bibliography under *1.4. Other printed primary sources*. Highly complicated was also the case of Reuven (Ruben/Rubin) Fahn (1878-ca.1939), who is known as an amateur historian, ethnographer and epigraphist, on the one hand, and as a *littérateur*, journalist, and ardent Zionist, on the other. His scholarly studies, which pioneered *academic* research on the history of Galician Karaism are listed as secondary literature, whereas his

travel reports and collection of Karaite legends are listed as *1.4. Other printed primary sources*.

In spite of the fact that the most important aspects of the history of the Galician Karaite community from 1772 to 1945 were analysed in this study, further research may be directed toward the analysis of exegetical and theological works by local Karaite savants; deeper study of the Galician variant of the Karaim language; and compilation of biographies of intellectual leaders of the community.

1. Sources

1.1. Manuscript and archival

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1.2. Museum collections

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Bronze menorah from the Halicz synagogue (kenesa). First half of the twentieth century.

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Ritual scissors for circumcision. Halicz, late nineteenth century – first half of the twentieth century.

Ritual silver cup for blessed wine with Hebrew inscription. Halicz. Nineteenth century.

Silver tas (Tora shield) with Hebrew inscriptions. Donated to the community of Halicz by Rachel, the wife of Simcha [Isaac ben Moses?] Łucki in 1783.

The kapporet (a drapery for a Torah scroll) of Hanna ha-Rabbanit, wife of Levi, with gold embroidery. Halicz. Nineteenth century.

The hazzan's four-cornered mantle (Pol. "tallit kapłański") with tassels (tsitsit). Halicz. 1930s.

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Karaite Jewish congregation “Orah Saddiqim”

An open letter from *Hakham Rashi* Eliyahu Marzouq regarding acceptance of proselytes to Karaite communities

http://www.orahsaddiqim.org/current_articles/conversion_marzouq.shtml

Karaite Jewish University (California)

<http://www.kjuonline.com>

APPENDICES

1. Statistical data and lists of hazzanim.

1.1. List of the Karaite hazzanim of Halicz.¹

Judah ben Aharon	1581?-1583?
Aaron ben Samuel <i>ha-Ro'eh</i>	(ante 1663 ² -1685)
Joseph ben Samuel <i>ha-Mashbir (ha-Rodi)</i>	(1685-1700)
[...]	[...] ³
Moses ben Joseph <i>ha-Rodi</i>	(after 1728(?)-1738)
Samuel ben Joseph <i>ha-Rodi</i>	(1738-1744)
Mordecai ben Samuel (Mordkowicz)	(1744-1765)
Moses ben Samuel <i>ha-Rodi</i>	(1765-ante 1778)
Joshua ben Mordecai Mordkowicz	(ante 1778 ⁴ -1796)
Samuel ben Moses ben Samuel <i>ha-Rodi</i>	(1796-1802)
Shalom ben Zachariah Zacharjasiewicz	(1802-1810)
Abraham ben Levi Leonowicz	(1810-1851)
Joseph ben Abraham Leonowicz	(1851-1866)
Joshua-Joseph ben Moses Mordkowicz	(1866-1884)
Zarach ben Samuel Leonowicz	(1884-1894)
Simcha ben Joshua-Jacob Leonowicz	(1894-1900)
Shalom ben Joseph Nowachowicz	(1900-1922)
Levi (Leon) ben Samuel Eszwowicz	(1922)
Isaac ben Moses Abrahamowicz	(1922-1923, 1925-1933)
Samuel ben Mordecai-Shalom Mordkowicz	(1923-1925)
Zarach ben Moses Zarachowicz	(1933-1934)
Mordecai ben Abraham Leonowicz	(1934-1939)
Moses ben Shalom Szulimowicz	(1940-1960)

1.2. List of the Karaite hazzanim of Kukizów.

Mordecai ben Nisan Kukizów	1688-1709
Simcha ben Hananiel	from ca. 1709-through the 1720s
Mordecai ben Samuel Mordkowicz	before 1744
Joshua ben Mordecai Mordkowicz	before 1771
Mordecai ben Nisan II	ante 1771 ⁵ -ante 1803
David ben Mordecai ben Nisan Kukizów	ante 1803-1822
Joshua-Joseph ben Moses Mordkowicz	ca. 1822-ca. 1831

¹ Based on archival documents from RNL and on Zarach Zarachowicz, "Łuwachy hazzanlarnyn Halicte," *K4* 8 (1935): 23; Majer Bałaban, "Karaici w Polsce," in his *Studja Historyczne* (Warsaw, 1927), 25; Reuven Fahn, *Kitve' Reuven Fahn*, part 1: *Sefer ha-qara'im* (Lwów, 1929), 26-64, 145-263.

² Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 736, 1242.

³ According to Zarachowicz, Moses b. Joseph ha-Rodi was hazzan from 1700 to 1738 (Zarachowicz, "Łuwachy," 23). According to archival documents, however, certain Zachariah was the spiritual leader of the community in 1713, and in 1728 – Simcha hazzan b. Joseph ha-Mashbir (Shapira, *Some New Data*, 15). According to Mann (*Texts and Studies*, 1273, ft.662), however, in 1727/8 the office of the hazzan was occupied by Samuel b. Joseph hazzan.

⁴ See Mann, *Texts and Studies*, 756, 1351, 1361-1362. According to Zarachowicz, Joshua b. Mordecai was appointed hazzan in 1792 (Zarachowicz, "Łuwachy," 23).

⁵ Mordecai b. Nisan II was the hazzan of Kukizów already in 1771 (NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no. 2871).

1.3. List of the Karaite house-owners in Halicz according to the census of 1767.¹

	Polish name	English transliteration	Remarks
1	Szymciu Jozefowicz	Simcha ben Joseph	
2	Stoszka wdowa	Esther?	widow
3	Aron Szymonowicz	Aharon ben Simcha	
4	Moszek Nusymowicz	Moses ben Nissim	
5	Zacharyasz Jakubowicz	Zachariah ben Jacob	
6	Jakob Szmuyłowicz	Jacob ben Samuel	
7	Rabinowa wdowa		widow of the Rabbi ²
8	Zacharyasz Szulimowicz	Zachariah ben Shalom	
9	Mosko Rabinowicz	Moses	son of the Rabbi
10	Puniak	[...]	unclear
11	Syszko	[...]	unclear
12	Szymon Berkowicz	Simeon ben Berakhah	
13	Icko Ickowicz	Isaac ben Isaac	
14	Icko Dankowicz	Isaac ben Dan/Daniel	
15	Josef Judkiewicz	Joseph ben Judah	
16	Nuchym Gancarz	Nuchim	the potter
17	Josef Markiewicz	Joseph ben Mordekhai	
18	Josef Symonowicz	Joseph ben Simcha	
19	Josef Rabinowicz	Joseph	son of the Rabbi
20	Icko Attamanczyn	Isaac Attamanczyn	of Załukiew (a Karaite?)

1.4. Statistical data on the Jewish poll-tax according to the census of 1765 as compared with the data provided by Jewish communities of Austria in 1774.³

Lemberg, 23. May 1775.

Ausweis was die Juden Kopf Steuer nach der Lustration de Anno 1765 ertrage und wie viel von denen Kahalen mittels ihren Fassionen hier auf Köpfe angegeben, mithin mehr oder weniger zur Schuldigkeit pro Anno 1774 fůrgemerket worden.

Kreis	Kahale	Köpfe		Einfache Kopf Steuer				mithin gegen dem Lustrations ...			
		nach der Lustration de Anno 1765	nach eigener Angab der Juden	nach der Lustration		nach denen Juden Fassionen		Zu viel		Zu wenig	
				G	gr	G	gr	G	gr	G	gr
Halliczer	Halicz	365	365	730		730					
	ibidem	94	94	188		188					
	Karaimi										
Lemberger	Kulikow ⁴	409	409	818		818					
	ibidem	55	55	110		110					
	Karaimi										

¹ AGAD Lustracje dz. XVIII, no. 62. Lustracja Starostwa Halickiego.
² This widow, together with the sons indicated in the lines 9 and 19, seem to be relatives of Mordecai b. Samuel *Segan* (Mordkowicz) (d. 1765), the last Karaite hazzan of Halicz before the Austrian annexation of Galicia.
³ Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Staats-Archiv des Innern und der Justiz, Hofkanzlei IV, T.I, K.1520. Galizien – 1784.
⁴ Scribe’s erratum for “Kukizów.”

1.5. List of the members of the Halicz community who agreed to follow Abraham Firkowicz's reforms (*taqqanot*) in 1871.¹

	Name(s)	Surname	Remarks
1	Joshua-Joseph b. Moses	Mordkowicz	<i>hakham ha-rosh ve av-beit-din</i>
2	Levi b. Joseph	Leonowicz	<i>hazzan ha-rosh ve-ha-dayyan</i> , hazzan in 1884-1894
3	Zarach b. Samuel	Leonowicz	<i>hazzan ha-mishneh ve-ha-dayyan</i>
4	Mordecai b. Abraham	Leonowicz	<i>rosh ha-qahal</i> , son of Abraham Leonowicz
5	Mordecai-Shalom ² b. Moses Moses	Mordkowicz	<i>menahig u-parnas</i> , brother of Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz
6	Zachariah b. Samuel	Abrahamowicz	<i>menahig u-parnas</i>
7	Shalom b. Isaac	Szulimowicz ³	<i>ha-zaqen</i>
8	Simcha b. Joshua		<i>ha-zaqen</i>
9	Joseph b. Isaac	Szulimowicz	
10	Samuel b. Joshua		
11	Isaac b. Samuel		
12	Samuel b. Isaac		
13	Noah b. Isaac		
14	Moses b. Joseph		
15	Moses b. Zachariah		
16	Samuel b. Noah		
17	Abraham b. Joseph		
18	Moses b. Mordecai-Shalom	Mordkowicz	
19	Joshua b. Samuel	Leonowicz	his father is called <i>adonenu ve-ateret roshenu</i>
20	Samuel b. Mordecai Shalom	Mordkowicz	
21	Samuel b. Zachariah		
22	Simcha b. Moses	Mordkowicz	brother of Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz
23	Simcha b. Samuel	Szulimowicz	
24	Judah		
25	Isaac b. Moses		
26	Abraham b. Moses		
27	Jacob b. Joshua		
28	Shalom b. Joshua	[Szulimowicz]	<i>Qatan</i>
29	Zarach b. Moses	Zarachowicz ⁴	
30	Benjamin b. Samuel		

¹ On the basis of two documents signed by the members of the community (Adolf Jellinek, *Abraham Firkowitsch, das religiöse Oberhaupt der Karäer* (Vienna, 1875), 11-15). I have corrected misprints of this publication by consulting the Hebrew original of one of these documents (NLR F.946, op.1, no. 47: *Postanovlenie karaimskoi obshchiny g. Galicha o chastichnom izmenenii obriadov obrezaniia, obruchenii i svad'by*, 1871). The names of the members of the community were sometimes written in slightly different manner in each of the documents; this list represents a version based on the comparison of all three versions of these documents.

² In other place his name is written as „Mordecai-Solomon“ (Jellinek, *Abraham Firkowitsch*, 11).

³ In Jellinek's publication corrupted to „Szłomowicz.“ Therefore, I have corrected all the „Szłomowicze“ to „Szulimowicze.“

⁴ „Sornuchowicz“ in the original.

31	Simcha b. Joshuah-Jacob	[Leonowicz]	דלטי (?), <i>hazzan</i> in 1894-1900
32	Zachariah-Jacob b. Abraham	Leonowicz	
33	Benjamin-Immanuel b. Samuel	Szulimowicz	
34	Zarach b. Moses	Zarachowicz ¹	the same as no. 29?
35	Joseph b. Shalom	Nowachowicz	
36	Shalom b. Isaac-Simcha		
37	Samuel b. Joshua	Eszwowicz	
38	Shalom-Natan b. Samuel	Eszwowicz	
39	Simcha b. Shalom	Szulimowicz	
40	Samuel b. Zachariah	Abrahamowicz	
41	Moses b. Joshua	Szulimowicz	<i>Qatan</i>
42	Moses b. Zachariah	Abrahamowicz	
43	Samuel b. Joseph	Józefowicz	
44	Abraham b. Joseph	Samuelowicz	
45	Moses b. Joseph	Samuelowicz	the same as no. 14?
46	Samuel b. Jacob	Eszwowicz	

¹ In Jellinek's publication: „Sornuchowicz“; in the archival copy: “Zoruchowicz.” More correct is “Zarachowicz.”

1.6. List of the members of the Halicz community (composed apparently by Simcha ben Joshua-Jacob Leonowicz at the request of Jan Grzegorzewski in 1896).¹

Spis rodziny sekty Karaitów w Haliczu [1896]

1. Abrahamowicz Moses zamieszkały w Załukiew.
2. Abrahamowiczowa Ruchamcia wdowa po Samuelu Abrahamowiczu zam. w Załukwie.
3. Abrahamowicz Samuel zam. w Załukwie.
4. Abrahamowicz Izaak zam. w Załukwie.
5. Abrahamowicz Mordko zam. w Załukwie.
6. Abrahamowicz Salomon w Haliczu
7. Abrahamowicz Moses w Haliczu
8. Abrahamowicz Mordko zam. w Żyrawie w powiecie Chodorów.
9. Abrahamowiczowa Estera wdowa po Abramie Abrahamowiczu
10. Leonowicz Szymon chazan
11. Leonowicz Jakub Józef ribi i nauczyciel
12. Leonowicz Leon
13. Leonowiczowa Ryfka wdowa po Zacharjaszu L[eonowiczu].
14. Abraham Leonowicz bez żenry za Dniestrem w Hamarni
15. Leonowicz Szymon nauczyciel w Jekaterinosławie
16. Leonowicz Abraham zam. w Haliczu
17. Leonowiczowa Ryfka córka Mordka Leonowicza
18. Mordkowicz Szymon wdowiec
19. Mordkowicz Samuel
20. Mordkowiczowa Domicela wdowa po Mojzeszu Mordkowiczu gminnym sekretarzu i zastępcy prokuratorji w Bursztynie w powiecie Rohatyn. i teraz zamieszkała we Lwowie.
21. Mordkowicz Szymon bez żenry.
22. Mordkowicz Ozyasz
23. Mordkowicz Mojzesz zamieszkały w Łucku w Rosyi
24. Mordkowiczowa Rachela wdowa po Mordku Mordkowiczu
25. Eszwowicz Izaak
26. Eszwowicz Mojzesz
27. Eszwowiczowa Salomea wdowa po Szymonie Esz[wowiczu].
28. Eszwowiczowa Amalia wdowa po Judzie Esz[wowiczu].
29. Eszwowicz Samuel
30. Eszwowicz Salomon
31. Eszwowicz Samuel
32. Eszwowiczowa Estera wdowa po Samuelu Esz[wowiczu].
33. Nowachowicz Józef wdowiec zam. w Załukwie
34. Nowachowicz Szulim //.....//
35. Nowachowicz Samuel //.....//
36. Ickowicz Sara wdowa po Nowaku Ick[owiczu].
37. Ickowicz Samuel
38. Ickowicz Eszwa zamieszkały w Kończakach.

¹ AN PAN, Spuścizna K III-6 (Jan Grzegorzewski). No.16. Karaimi. Wyciągi z Archiwum Lwowskiego, notatki z zakresu historii i kultury, wykaz imenny Karaimów w Haliczu. 1914.

39. Ickowicz Eszwa //.....// w Dubowcach
40. Szulimowicz Samuel
41. Szulimowicz Józef bez żenny
42. Szulimowiczowa Sara wdowa po Abrahamie Szul[imowiczu].
43. Szulimowicz Szulim
44. Szulimowicz Abraham
45. Szulimowicz Natan Szulim
46. Szulimowicz Szymon wdowiec zam. w Załukwie
47. Szulimowicz Eszwa
48. Szulimowicz Mojżesz zam. w Żyrawie p. Chodorów.
49. Samuelowicz Samuel zam. w Załukwie
50. Samuelowicz Abraham
51. Samuelowicz Izaak zam. w Załukwie
52. Samuelowiczowa Salomea wdowa po Samuelu
53. Samuelowiczowa Amalia wdowa po Mojżeszu Sam[uelowiczu]
Syn Józef c.k. Auskultantem w Kołomyi
54. Samuelowiczowa Domicela wdowa po Zacharjaszu
55. Samuelowiczowa Mincia wdowa po Izaaku Sam[uelowiczu].
56. Zarachowicz Mojżesz
57. Abrahamowicz Izaak zam. w Łucku w Rosyi

Zliczono dzieci z tychże rodziny

mężczyzn 54.

dziewcząt 49.

Starszych osób 89.

pośród nich znajdują się

13 wdów

3 wdowców

[description of the Karaite synagogue which was attached to the document:]

Opis Świątyni która zbudowana w roku 1836. którą zbudował i starał się oto dziadzio mój Abraham Leonowicz sławny chazan i chacham wielki, senior magistrata Halicza, syn Leona Leonowicza, który zaprowadził magistrat do miasta wolnego Halicza. _____

wysokość świątyni 6. mtr. 55. cm

szerokość //.....// 6 – 70.

długość //.....// 11 – 50.

to jest rozmiar wewnętrzny świątyni.

2. Excerpts from printed and archival sources on the Galician Karaites.

2.1. Official reports.

[July, 1773]

*Beschreibung der Königreiche Galizien, und Lodomerien nach dem Zustand, in welchem sie sich zur Zeit der Revindicirung durch Ihre Kais. Königl. Apostolische Majestät, und besonders im Monat Julius 1773. befunden haben.*¹

Jüdischer.

12^{mo}. Endlich war auch die jüdische Religion toleriret, deren Anhänger öffentliche Kahale und Synagogen haben; die so genannten Karaimen anhängen besonderer jüdischer Secte und, sie sind von den übrigen Juden in der Kleidung, und Sitten unterschieden, denn sie tragen sich pohnisch, und bauen das Feld. Sie finden sich blos zu Kulikow und Halicz, ihrer Anzahl mag umgefähr 150. Seelen betragen und zahlen die Kopfsteuer wie die übrigen Juden.

[October 1774]

*Gehorsamster Bericht des Kayserl. König. Districts Directors N.2 In betrag der Sect. Lebens Arten und Unterhaltung der Karaimer Juden in der Statt Halicz.*²

1^{mo}. Diese Karaimiter Nation oder sogenannte Turckhische Juden seyen von uhralten Zeiten, wie sie so selbst vorgeben, noch vor 200 Jahren auß der Turckhey, und zwar von Constantinopel hierher gekommen ihr glauben stamet ab von denen Israelitern wie so solche in alten Zeiten gehalten haben, und ist der einzige Unterschied zwischen ihnen und denen andern Juden, daß sie in dem sogenannten Talmut nicht glauben auch ihrer Feiertag ganz besonders, und nicht mit denen hier ländischen Juden mit welchen sie sich in Tücksche halten; ihre Kleidung ist auch ganz anders und nicht gleich denen andern Juden, sondern Pohnisch, sie scherren gleich denen Pohlen ihre Köpfe ja wann sie den Bart abschneiden [...]

2^{do}. Diese Karaimer haben in dieser Statt Halicz 19 biß 16 Familien...

*Suggestion of the Galician Gubernium regarding the possible conversion of the Austrian Jews into Karaites (1774).*³

[...] und dem Lande ungemein zuträglich wäre es jedoch, wenn man die andern Juden in die sogenannten Caraimiten verwandeln und die nämliche Beschaffenheit alsdann bei ihnen zu Wege bringen könnte. Nicht allein einer friedfertigen Lebensart bemühen sich diese Leute, sondern sind zum Teile mit eigenen, zum anderen Teil von Christen ab gepachteten Feldern beschäftigt, welche sie auf das sorgsamste und wirtschaftlichste auszubauen pflegen [...] indem nichts mehr zu wünschen wäre als daß auch die übrigen Juden, welche derzeit keiner wirklichen Possession fähig wären und

¹ Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Hofreisen NK 5, Konv.5, I Abteilung, fol. 475v.

² Österreichisches Staatsarchiv, Staats-Archiv des Innern und der Justiz, Hofkanzlei IV. T.I. K.1520. Galizien – 1784. No. 1494.

³ As cited in Josef Karniel, *Die Toleranzpolitik Kaiser Josephs II* (Gerlingen, 1985), 292.

sie doch als Menschen leben müßten, ihren Unterhalt in Schänken, Couchen und Bedrückung der Christen zu suchen verleitet würden, auf [ge]meinlichen und friedfertigen Fuß dieser Caraimiten gesetzt werden möchten, weil die Gleichstellung der letzteren mit den Christen vielleicht auch die übrigen Juden aus natürlichem Triebe zum Besitze eines mäßigen Eigentums und zugleich mäßigen arbeitsamen Verwendungen anzueifern und solchergestalt aus einer der Christlichen beschwerlichen Nation mit der Zeit gute Mitbürger erzielt werden dürften.

*A report of the Galician Gubernium (1774).*¹

...dieses arbeitsame, mässige, friedfertige, reinliche und den Christen selbst nicht unangenehme Volk, bei 200 an der Zahl, sein friedliches Leben meist mit Ackerbau nach Art der ersten Israeliten zubr[ingt], mithin in mehr als einer Rücksicht sowohl den christlichen als den übrigen jüdischen Landesbewohnern zu einem Beispiele dienen könnte; [the report continues to say] dass niemals eine Klage wider die Karaiten vorgekommen [sei].

2.2. Travel accounts.

*Franz Kratter (1772).*²

Eine besondere, dir ganz unbekannte Sekte verdient hier noch angemerkt zu werden, nämlich die Karaimen, oder auch Karaiten, welche eine Art Hebräer sind, die aber den Talmud nicht erkennen, und vielleicht schon darum eine Art besserer Menschen ausmachen. Sie tragen sich polnisch, bauen das Land, werden in allen Angaben dem Landmanne gleichgehalten, und sind von den Lasten der übrigen Judenschaft ganz frei. Ihre Anzahl belief sich im Jahre 1776 nicht höher, als auf 609 Personen.

*The letter from the Austrian Emperor Joseph II to Field Marshall Lacy about the Karaites of Çufut-Qale in the Crimea (1 June 1787).*³

J'ai aussi été voir une ville voisine de Baktschisarai uniquement habitée par des juifs de la secte des Caraites, dont les uns sont des négociants assez riches et les autres des cultivateurs, mais ils cachent leurs femmes à l'exemple des Tartares. Ils sont obligés de se contenter d'une aussi longtemps qu'elle ne devienne laide et que la vue de la femme ne s'affaiblisse; c'est dans ces deux cas seulement qu'il leur est permis d'en épouser une autre. Si cette loi était établie à Vienne, nous verrions bien des femmes porter des lunettes pour se débarrasser de leurs maris.

¹ As cited in Johann Vinzenz Goehlert, „Die Karaiten und Mennoniten in Galizien,” *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historische Classe der Kaiserlicher Akademie der Wissenschaften* 38 (1861): 600.

² [Franz Kratter], *Briefe über den itzigen Zustand von Galizien. Ein Beitrag zur Staatistik und Menschenkenntnis*, vol.2 (Leipzig, 1786), 149.

³ *Joseph II. und Katharina von Russland*, ed. Alfred von Arneth (Vienna, 1869), 362.

*Balthasar Hacquet (1788/9).*¹

Hier, in dem Ort Halitsch, findet man eine besondere Gemeinde von Juden, welche Caraemi genannt werden. Ihr ganzes Gesetzbuch besteht in den fünf Büchern Moses, welches freylich ohnehin mehr genug wäre, wenn sie die Gesetze davon hielten. Sie [the Karaites] sind von den übrigen Juden sehr verachtet; aber für den Staat besser, indem, sie sich den Ackerbau angelegen seyn lassen, wohingegen der ächte Jude hier in Polen das elendeste, furchtsamste, ärmste, säuischste und auch in vielen Stücken (Betrügereyen ausgenommen, zu welchen er vor allen fähig ist) das blödsinnigste Volk vom ganzen Lande ist.

Joseph Rohrer: excerpts from "6. Brief. Bemerkungen über die Gebräuche und Sitten der Karaimen in Halicz und deren Rabbinen (Halicz den 27. Novemb. 1803)." ²

Zulim Zachariewicz [Shalom Zacharjasiewicz] ist ein junger Mann von 37 Jahren, sieht aber so alt aus, als hätte er wenigstens schon 57 Jahre auf seinem Rücken, welcher wahrscheinlich von Natur so krumm ist, daß der gute Karaime nur mit Mühe sein offenes, großes Auge gegen mich hinaufhält. Dieser eingebogene, kleine Mann mit einem ganz gelben Gesichte erreicht kaum in der Höhe meine Lenden. Er hatte, als ich ihn traf, einen blauen, langen, ganz geschlossenen Rock, mit schwarzem Felle ausgeschlagen, trug eine große pohnische Mütze, ferner einen Stecken, welcher länger, als er selbst ist, übrigens so reine Stiefeln, als man sie an unsern schmutzigen Juden zu sehen nicht gewohnt ist.

[...]

Dieser nämlich hütet sich eben so sehr, wie jeder andere Karaime, einen Mitbruder sterben zu sehen, weil er sich sonst verunreinigt glaubt, und daher, der herkömmlichen Sitte nach, sogleich zu dem Dniester laufen, und im Fluße sich bis gegen den Kopf versenken muß. Von diesem peinlichen Gesetze sind selbst die Weiber dieser Secte nicht ausgenommen; auch sie müssen sich im Flußwasser so weit untertauchen, als es ihnen möglich ist, ohne von der Gewalt des Stromes fortgerissen zu werden. Der bange Gedanke in diese traurige Lage versetzt zu werden, macht, daß jeder Karaime seine eigenen Brüder und Schwestern flieht, wenn ihm auch nur scheint, daß sie in Zügen liegen. Der Karaime sucht sich in der Eile einen talmudischen Juden, der kein Karaime ist, und für Geld Alles thut; zahlt diesen, damit er den Kranken- und Todtenwärter mache, zu 2, 3 auch vier Dukaten, und ehe noch die patentmäßige Zeit von 48 Stunden verstossen ist, ja selbst ohne 24 Stunden abzuwarten, treibt der Karaime schon, daß der talmudische Jude den verblichenen Körper wasche, in den Sarg und in das Grab lege. Höchstens steht der Karaime in der Entfernung durch einen Zaun, ob sein verstorbener Glaubensgenosse im Karaimen Gottesacker richtig beygesetzt worden ist! Schaudern muß man, wenn man bedenkt, wie leicht hier Scheintodte begraben werden können.

[...]

Ich fragte den Rabinen [Shalom Zacharjasiewicz], wie sein gutes Herz so grausam sein könnte, den letzten Liebesdienst den Seinigen nicht zu erweisen, und

¹ Balthasar Hacquet, *Hacquet's neueste physikalisch-politische Reisen in den Jahren 1788. und 1789. durch die Dacischen und Sarmatischen oder Nördlichen Karpathen*, pt.1 (Nuremberg, 1790), 198-203.

² Joseph Rohrer, *Bemerkungen auf einer Reise von der türkischen Gränze über die Bukowina durch Ost- und Westgalizien, Schlesien und Mähren nach Wien* (Vienna, 1804), 109-116.

dieselben nicht selbst begraben zu wollen... Allein der Rabine sah mich mitleidig an, und statt sich mit mir in ein vernünftiges Gespräch einzulassen, antwortete er ruhig: "Der Herr will es so haben. Auch müssen wir alle Wände jenes Zimmers, wo der Verstorbene lag, abscharren lassen. Eben so muß das Holz in jener Stube, wo der Kranke starb, abgekratzt und neu gewaschen werden. Dieser Art der Reinigung haben wir so auf uns gebracht."

[...]

Bald schieden wir aus der Gegend des Dniesters und des Gottesackers der Karaimen. Nur bath ich den Rabinen noch, mich in die Karaimen Synagoge zu führen. Der Rabine hohlte die Schlüssel vom Hause, und sagte, er habe zu viele Schätzung für meine Person, um mir nicht mit Vergnügen die Thüren des Tempels zu öffnen. – Ihr könnt getröst seyn, lieber Zulim [Shalom]! antwortete ich, ich betrete euern Tempel nicht, um mich hierüber lustig zu machen. Ich verehere denselben vielmehr; denn so armselig euer Bethhaus auch aus Holz geschnitzt ist, so schließt es doch an Sabbathtagen eine Gemeinde in sich, deren allgemein bekannten, tugendhaften Wandel man, wenn man anders keinen verdammenden Sectengeist im Busen nährt, verehere muß. Der gute Rabine segnete mich, wenn schon ohne ein Kreuz zu machen, nach seiner Art...

[...]

Noch hörte ich in der Folge, daß alle Jahre aus der Krim ein Karaime zu kommen pflege, der die hiesigen Karaimen mit Büchern versieht. Die Haliczer Karaimen sagen, daß sie mit den Tataren ins Land kamen, von den Pohlen gefangen genommen, übrigens von den Königen allmählich so lieb gewonnen wurden, daß man sie in dem königlichen Wohnsitze zu Halicz selbst angesiedelt hat.

[monologue of an old Rabbanite Jew met by Rohrer in the local tavern]

"Läßt sich, fuhr er [the Rabbanite] in einem Schwallen von Worten fort, wohl denken, daß dieses Karaimen-Volk zu was nütze seyn könne? Es sind weder Juden, noch Christen, es sind Zwitter; und doch halten sie den jüdischen Sabbath. Jeder von uns Juden würde, ohne die zehn Gebote bey sich zu tragen, gar nichts ausgehen. Der Karaime läßt die Seinigen in der Synagoge liegen. Kann ein solcher Mensch wohl noch Achtung verdienen; kann er wohl noch ein Jude heißen wollen; kann das Recht seyn?"

2.3. Polemical and scholarly literature.

*Joseph Rohrer (1804).*¹

... der Talmudische Jude will neben keinem Karaimen wohnen. Er behauptet, daß schon das Wort Karaime ein Schimpfwort sey, und so viel, als Verschnittener heiße [...] Auf jeden Fall bleibt es ausgemacht, daß der Karaime im höheren Grade die Tugenden, welche der unbefangene Staatsman fordert, besitze, als der gewöhnliche talmudische Jude. Der Karaime treibt keinen Geldwucher, und bereichert sich nicht

¹ Joseph Rohrer, *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1804), 147-148.

auf Kosten fremder Menschen mit fremden [sic] Gute. Er treibt zwar auch zuweilen den Pferdehandel; seine gewöhnliche Beschäftigung aber ist Ackerbau und das schwere Fuhrwesen. Der Karaime arbeitet nie dem Scheine nach, sondern mit Anwendung aller seiner Kräfte. Er lebt mit Christen auf freundschaftlichem Fuße, stört und verdammt Niemanden, ist ungemein genügsam, und betrügt sich so friedfertig, daß von ihm oder wider ihn nicht leicht eine Klage vor die christlichen Gerichte kommt.

[...]

Der Karaime brennt am Sabbatstage weder bey Hause, noch in der Synagoge ein Licht... Es mag daher so dunkel in seiner Synagoge beym Anfange und in der Fortsetzung des Sabbathes seyn, so zündet er keine Kerze an. Eben so mag der Winterfrost noch so groß seyn, so leidet der Karaime bey Hause am Sonnabend kein Ofen- oder Kaminfeuer.

Emanuel von Kronbach (1831).¹

Die Karaimen (besser Karaiten genannt) scheinen ungefähr im 12. Jahrhundert aus dem Orient, und nach den bestimmten Angaben des Mardochai, aus Assyrien in die Krimm eingewandert zu seyn... Von der Krimm aus scheinen sie sich bald nach Polen verbreitet zu haben... Zwar erwähnt die Geschichte Polens nirgends mit Bestimmtheit das Jahr ihrer Einwanderung – aber alle Muthmaßungen weisen auf den eben bemerkten Zeitpunkt...

[...]

Sie selbst nennen sich Kinder der Schrift, verwerfen ganz den spätern Talmud mit allen Auslegungen und Comentationen ohne Ausnahme, und sind sonach eine von den übrigen Juden ganz abgesonderte Sekte, von ihnen in Vielen geschieden und getrennt; werden auch von den Rabbinen äußerst gehaßt, und wo sich hierzu Gelegenheit darbiethet, verfolgt... Die rabbinischen Juden nennen sie gewöhnlich Ketzer...

[...]

Sie sind still, bescheiden, gottesfürchtig, thätig, arbeitsam, reinlicher und weit emsiger bey ihren Arbeiten als andere Juden; auch ihre Weiber behaupten dieses Lob. Sie treiben jedes, auch das schwerste Handwerk, wie die Christen; aber am meisten nützen sie dem Staathaushalte, indem sie selbst den Feldbau betreiben, wobey ihnen ihre Weiber, Kinder und ihr Gesinde emsig beysteht; was bey den übrigen Juden selten der Fall ist, von denen viele durch die Unthätigkeit ihrer Weiber in den Bettelstand gerathen. In ihrem Betragen sind sie minder verschmitzt, offener, weniger kriechend – sie kleiden sich sehr einfach, wenn auch noch im orientalischen Schnitt, und ihre Weiber meist weiß, seltener mehrfarbig, und nie in so grellen Farben, als die der übrigen Juden.

[...]

Die polnische Aussprache der Karaiten ist weniger gesticulirend, kreischend, Mundverzerrend und näselnd, als bey den übrigen Juden, und da sie sich im allgemeinen reinlicher halten, so ist ihre Annäherung seineren Geruchs Nerven minder beschwerlich.

[...]

¹ Emanuel von Kronbach, „Ueber die karaitischen Juden (gewöhnlich Karaimen genannt) im Königreiche Galizien,“ *Österreichisches Archiv für Geschichte, Erdbeschreibung, Staatenkunde, Kunst und Literatur* 1:134 (8 Nov. 1831): 530-532.

...auch scheinen sie im Allgemeinen mehr dem natürlichen Erwerbszweige des Ackerbaues hold, weniger Verdienst im Handel zu suchen und zu finden... erscheinen diese Karaiten als thätige, fleißige Landwirthe und betriebsame Handwerker... und wenn nicht ganz fehlerfrey, doch sicher tauglichere Glieder im Staats-Verein bilden.

*Johann Vinzenz Goehlert (1861).*¹

Dieses Völkchen führt in allen Ländern, wo es Wohnsitze gefunden, ein friedlich eingezogenes und sittliches Leben, fremd von allen politischen Wirren. Überall und zu jeder Zeit hat sich dasselbe durch Treue und Redlichkeit und besonders durch leichte Ansmiegung an die Landessitten und Gebräuche die milde Fürsorge der Regierung und die Liebe der Eingeborenen erworben [...] Sie besitzen Felder und nehmen Grundstücke in Pacht zur eigenen Bearbeitung, wobei sie von ihren Weibern und Kindern thätig unterstützt werden. Ausserdem befassen sie sich mit Handel (mit Vieh, Flachs, Leinwand und Wachs) und Fuhrwesen, eigentliche Gewerbe betreiben sie jedoch nicht... Zu den bemerkenswerthen Thatsachen über diese Sekte gehört auch, dass in der criminalistischen Chronik seit Erwerbung Galiziens noch kein Karaite als Verbrecher oder Gesetzübertreter notirt erscheint... So wie sie den Feldbau betreiben scheuen sie auch die schwersten Arbeiten nicht und es fanden sich damals unter den erwachsenen männlichen Individuen 16, welche Taglohnsdienste leisteten.

*Gerson Wolf (1883).*²

Zunächst müssen wir eines verhältnißmäßig kleinen Bruchtheiles der jüdischen Bevölkerung in Österreich, nämlich der Karaiten zu Halicz in Galizien, welche jetzt daselbst im Ganzen 40 bis 50 Familien zählen, gedenken, da diese sich principiell von den anderen Juden unterscheiden [...] Die Karaiten in Halicz beschäftigen sich seit undenklichen Zeiten zumeist mit der Landwirtschaft und die Mittellosen sind in der Regel Tagelöhner. Ihre Lebensart ist sehr einfach, sie sind friedliche und arbeitsame Leute. Der Älteste unter ihnen ist Richter ohne die mindeste Besoldung, dem sie alle ohne Weigerung gehorchen [...] In ihren Häusern sind sie reinlich, die Kleidung beiderlei Geschlechtes ist polnisch, nur die Männer sind durch den langen Bart von dem Landvolk zu unterscheiden. Sie erhalten schon von der Kaiserin Maria Theresia 1775 Privilegien, nach welchen sie von den damaligen Judensteuern, von der persönlichen Dienstleitung beim Militär [...] befreit waren. Diese Privilegien wurden ihnen von den späteren Regenten bestätigt. Auch noch nach dem Militärgesetze vom 30. December 1859 waren die Karäer von der Militärdienstleistung befreit, jetzt werden sie in der Regel dem Sanitätsdienste zugewiesen.

¹ Johann Vinzenz Goehlert, „Die Karaiten und Mennoniten in Galizien,” *Sitzungsberichte der philosophisch-historische Classe der Kaiserlicher Akademie der Wissenschaften* 38 (1861): 596-603.

² Gerson Wolf, *Die Juden* (Vienna-Teschen, 1883), 95-97.

Jan (Johann von) Grzegorzewski (1903).¹

Diese Haliczzer Karaiten sind gleich den übrigen Łach-Karaiten [i.e. Polish Karaites] ein friedfertiger, ehrlicher und arbeitsamer Volksstamm. Sie beschäftigen sich hauptsächlich mit dem Landbau oder verdienen sich ihr Brot als Handwerker und Tagelöhner. In früheren Zeiten dagegen führten sie auch lebhaften Handel mit dem Orient... Sie meiden jedweden Umgang mit den Juden.

2.4. Certificate issued by the Halicz town council to the local Karaite community with enumeration of the losses suffered on 31 October 1913 from the fire.²

Ze strony Zarządu miasta Halicza poświadczają się, że wybuchły w nocy 31 października 1913 w Haliczu pożar zniszczył świątynię karaicką oraz domy i zabudowania gospodarcze następujących karaitów:

1/. Mojżesza Eszwowicza 2/. Eszwy Jckowicza 3/. Józefa Mordkowicza 4/. Samuela Eszwowicza 5/. Jsaka Szulimowicza 6/. Mojżesza Szulimowicza 7/. Domiceli Szulimowicz 8/. Estery Jckowicz 9/. Mojżesza Zoruchowicza 10/. Abrahama Leonowicza i 11/. Marka Leonowicza.

Członkowie gminy wyznaniowej karaickiej złożonej z 50 rodzin byli w tymże roku nawiedzeni kilkakrotnymi powodziami elementarnymi, a trudniąc się wyłącznie rolnictwem ponieśli znaczne szkody, to też nie są w stanie swymi siłami odbudować w mowie będącej świątyni niemniej swych domów i zabudowań gospodarczych.

Halicz dnia 27 kwietnia 1914

signature: [illegible]

stamp: Magistrat król. woln. miasta Halicza

¹ Jan (Johann von) Grzegorzewski, "Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt in Galizien. Vokalharmonie in den entlehnten Wörtern der karaitischen Sprache in Halicz," *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 146 (Vienna, 1903): 2.

² AN PAN, Spuścizna K III-6 (Jan Grzegorzewski). No.16. Karaimi. Wyciągi z Archiwum Lwowskiego, notatki z zakresu historii i kultury, wykaz imenny Karaimów w Haliczu. 1914.

3. Excerpts from Karaite sources.

3.1. Mordecai Sultański on the Karaites of Halicz and Kukizów (ca. 1838).¹

And when they became subjected to the rule of the Austrian emperors, the Austrian Emperors also loved them to such an extent that they decided to differentiate them from the Rabbanites in all respects. And the Karaites were exempt from all the taxes and levies that were exacted from the Rabbanites, and they did not pay to the royal treasury any tax or due but three Polish *złotys* annually (which is equal to a hundred and eighty Russian *kopeikas*) apart from additional taxes. And their hand had always been above that of the Rabbanites, and they were before them in every matter, even in the fact that the law did not allow the Rabbanites to be engaged in trade in the country or settle there. The Karaites were free and could trade and settle because they were not included in Jewish laws, but were separated from the Rabbanites to their glory, and were treated in the same manner as all other inhabitants of the country.

[...]

When the Austrian Emperor conquered the lands of Galicia and Lodomeria, and they became subjected to his rule, he gave the town of Kukizów as a gift to one of his ministers, and the latter one day handed it over to one of his officials (*pomeshchik*²). Having acquired the town, this official started banishing the Karaites. He took away and seized their lands and fields so that the Karaites could not suffer the hardship of his pressure any longer, and went away from there, some to Halicz, some to Łuck, after more than a hundred years of their stay in Kukizów, and no one remained there today [1838], only one owner of a house who keeps the synagogue.

3.2. Letter from the hazzan Abraham Leonowicz to the Ruthenian scholar Denis Zubritskii (1838).³

Wielmożny Mości Sędzio y łaskawy Dobrodzieju!

[...] postarałem się teraz zadosyc uczynić żądaniu JEgo Mosci y szukałem między papierami, i znalazłem wyciąg z książki, czyli makular doniesienia, uczynionego w podobnym zapytaniu w 1813 Roku przez s.p. JEgo Excellencyi Metropolity Angellowicza. Książka ta, od której ten wyciąg zrobiony był, była książka Modlitw, duża, na pergaminie pisana, jeszcze przed wyjściem Karaitów z Krymu, kiedy jeszcze druku nie było w Europie, nanim była zapisana Epoka wyiscia z Krymu Karaitów do Halicza, y różne Notate, co od tego czasu, tak przyjemności jako nieprzyjemności doznali w tutejszey siedzibie przez lat blisko 600. Lecz niestety też wraz z Bożnicą naszą... w 1830 Roku podczas pożaru niemiłosiernego, zniszczona została, jednak ja przypomniawszy sobie, iż s.p. JEgo Excellencyi Angellowiczowi

¹ My translation from Mordecai Sultański, *Zekher Tsaddikim o qitsur agadah*, ed. Samuel Poznański (Warsaw, 1920), 118.

² The Russian for a "landowner" transcribed with Hebrew letters: פומישציק.

³ Stanisław Kunasiewicz, *Przechadzki archeologiczne po Lwowie*, pt.2-3 (Lwów 1876), 122, ft.1.

robiłem z tej książki wyciąg, y Nieboszczyk ztwardził, że to zgadza się z pewnym dziełem (którego ś.p. czytał) że Karaity ieszcze w 13tym wieku do Russyi Czerwoney przeszli, ieszcze za panowania Wielkich Xiążąt Ruskich, wyszukałem takowego między papierami mojemi, y łącze tu kopij przetłumaczoną na Polskie. Raczy WWMMPan Dobr. przyjąc dla swoiey wiadomosci, y udzielenia komu zależy...

Halicz 3.X.1838

Leonowicz

[Leonowicz's commentaries on a historical chronicle regarding the arrival of the Karaites in Halicz]

Kiedy Karaici przeszli do Halicza, to ieszcze w tej okolicy nie było żydów Talmudzystow, dowodzi tego, podanie Wędrownika Zyda Benjamina z Tuledulé¹ (ktorego Hrabia Tadeusz Czacki w swojm uczonym dziele pod tytułem rozprawa o Żydach,² także wspomina) iż w opisanu Synagog żydowskich gdzie się znayduią, niewspomina aby w Russyi tuteisze były naowczas, tudziez y to jest znakiem, że żydzi pozniey do Halicza przyszli, jak Karaici, albowiem cmentarz Karaitów iest nad samym brzegiem rzeczkę Czwi, a żydowski iest dopiero pozniey przyparty. Wspomniony Wędrownik Benjamin umarł 1171 R.

[...]

Od tej Epoki, co rok w kalendarzach (ktorych sami uczeni Karajtow dla siebie układają) rachuje się także który rok iest od czasu siedzenia Karaitów w Haliczu, n.p. następujący Rok Israelitow 5599 [1838/9] od stworzenia swiata, iest 592gi jak siedzimy w Haliczu, a jak w Łucku osiedli, to 361, y t.d.

3.3. Children's verses in Karaim composed in Halicz apparently as a greeting to the hakham Seraja Szapszal, ca. 1929.³

I.

Karajlar biz biz,
Karajca sezlejbiz,
Karajca jiwrenebiz,
Karajca jirlajbiz.

Biz ułanlar
Kici Karajlar
Jisrael ilisi
Onca ułusu.

Kieliniz ułanlar
Dostlarba dostkalar

Karaites we are,
We speak Karaim,
We study Karaim,
We sing in Karaim.

We are children,
Little Karaites,
[We are] part of Israel,
A chosen people.

Come, children,
Friends – boys with girls

¹ I.e. Benjamin of Tudela.

² I.e. Tadeusz Czacki, *Rozprawa o Żydach* (Wilno, 1807).

³ The Yurchenko MSS, typescript and handwriting. Both verses were probably composed to greet Seraja Szapszal in Halicz in 1929 and were supposed to be sung (or recited) by Karaite children. Verse II seems to be dedicated personally to Seraja Szapszal. I have italicized Hebrew loanwords. Cf. also one more verse in §6.1.

Barajyk *midraszka*
 Da son azbarga.
 Karyndaslar biz biz
 Dostlar barymyz
 Ribbi-atamyz
 Midrasz-jiwimiz.
 Anda uchujbiz
 Dahyn jazabiz
 Anda jirlajbiz
 Anda jiwrenebiz.
 Anda jiwrenebiz
 Anlajbiz, bilebiz
 Ne kerti, ne jalhan,
 Ne jachsy, ne jaman.
 Anda jiwrenebiz
 Anlajbiz, bilebiz
 Ki *Adonaj* Tenrimiz
Adonaj birdi.

II.

Da biz kici ulanlar
 Tikri Karajlar
 Jaratuwcumuzga
 Machtaw berebiz
 Da *Adonenunun*
 Sawlahun kolabiz.
 Kicli Tenri bijik kiekte
 Ullu Bijimižni,
Nasimižni
 Agamyzny
Alufumuznu
 Dewletimižni
 Kienderiwcimižni
 Aharahymyzny –
 Rachmetlehej
 Alhyslahaj
 Da saklahaj
 Da abrahaj
 Da kierkiejtkiej
 Da jiz jillar
 Tiri tutkaj!
 Orech jamim!!!!

Let us go to the *midrash*
 And then to its courtyard.
 We are brethren,
 We are all friends.
 The *Ribbi* is our father,
 The *midrash* is our house.
 There we read
 And also write,
 There we sing,
 There we study.
 There we study,
 Understand and perceive
 What is truth, what is lie,
 What is good, what is bad.
 There we study,
 Understand and perceive
 That the Lord is our God
 The Lord is One.

We are small children,
 True Karaites.
 We praise
 Our Creator
 And ask [Him] for the health
 For our Teacher [i.e. Szapszal].
 Mighty God, who is strong in heaven,
 Have mercy upon
 Our lord,
 Our prince,
 Our elder,
 Our master,
 Our strength,
 Our leader,
 Our head.
 Bless [him],
 And protect,
 And guard,
 And adorn,
 And may he live
 A hundred years!
 May he live long!!!¹

¹ Literally: "long days."

3.4. Anecdotic stories about Rabbanite Jews who tried to be registered as Karaites.¹

Z Czerniowica, zamieszkały w Odesie żyd, przybył do Halicza z prośbą do tutejszego chahama Leonowicza, aby mu dał ślub z żydówką i wystawił metrykę ślubną jako karaimam. Poparł tą prośbę okazaniem legitymacji, wydanej w Odesie na jego imię – jako jest karaimem. Chacham podejrzewając [...] legitymacji rzecze mu:

- Ja sam nie mogę tej sprawy rozstrzygnąć; przyjdź tedy na posiedzenie zgromadzenia starszych gminy naszej i przedłoż swoją prośbę.

Sam zaś tymczasem wysłał list do Odessy po informacje dokładnie.

Gdy otrzymano odpowiedź stwierdzającą sfałszowanie legitymacyi, zgromadzenie odpowiedziało odmawnie [?] i nieprzychyliło się do wydania śluba [?].

Inny [rosyjski] żyd, pragnący wpisania go wprost w liczby karaimów, składał do ręk [hazzana Józefa] Mordkowicza 1,000 zł.r. [Hazzan replies:]

- Nie mogę ani wpisać ciebie w prawa [?] karaimów, skoro karaimem nie jesteś, ani też przyjąć twego daru, bo nie wiem, za co bym miał go otrzymać. Gdybyśmy tak sztucznie i niezwanie [?] tworzyli karaimów, skompromitowalibyśmy nie tylko siebie, ale i Cesarza austr. i państwo austr. [...]

W ~~Łucku~~ ^{Haliczu} ~~zaś~~ ^{też} ² gdy żyd^{zi} przybyłⁱ do ~~zwierzechnika~~ ^{rabina} karaimskiego, oświadczyw [?] wprost, iż życzy sobie przejść na łono karaityzmu i otrzymać odpowiednią metrykę, rabin mu rzecze:

- [...] Przyjmiemy cię tedy, obywatelu, do karaityzmu, jako musisz odbyć nowicyat przez 3 lata,³ po upłynieniu których, w razie pomyślnej prośby – możesz otrzymać zaświadczenie – jako jesteś prawowiernym karaitą.

Żyd, który potrzebował natychmiast legitymacji, aby nią się [...] przeciw [...] rządowi rosyjskiego stworzonej przeciw żydom, umknął – i już się nie pokazał.

¹ Recorded by Jan Grzegorzewski in Halicz at the beginning of the twentieth century (AN PAN, Spuścizna K III-6 (Jan Grzegorzewski). No.16. Karaimi. Wyciągi z Archiwum Lwowskiego, notatki z zakresu historii i kultury, wykaz imenny Karaimów w Haliczu. 1914). I have preserved the syntax and orthography of the original.

² Words and letters in superscript were added by Jan Grzegorzewski at a later stage of editing his notes, above the earlier drafts.

³ Grzegorzewski left a commentary that this was in accordance with Leviticus 19:23.

4. The Karaites in the Austrian military service.

4.1. Certificate of completion of military service of Moses Zarachowicz (Zoruchowicz) no. 62.

LANDWEHR ABSCHIED

1878/609

Kais. König.
Landwehr-Bataillon
Stanislau Nr. 62

Gefreiter Moses Zoruchowicz geboren im Jahre 1858 zu Halicz, Bezirk Stanislau, Land Galizien, Karait Religion, ledigen Standes, hat im Heer bei der 15. und 1. Sanitäts Abteilung durch 10 Jahre, 3 Monate, -- Tage als Sanitätssoldat und Gefreite[r] ferner bei dem Landwehr Bataillon Stanislau Nr.62 durch 2 Jahre, -- Monate, -- Tage als Gefreite[r] treu und redlich gedient [...]

Nachdem Gefreite[r] Moses Zoruchowicz der gesetzlichen Dienstpflicht vollkommen genügt hat, so wird derselbe auf Grund des §. 52 des Wehrgesetzes mit 31^{ten} Dezember 1890 aus dem Verbande der Landwehr entlassen, und ihm diese Urkunde ertheilt.

Dieser Gefreite[r] unterliegt der Landsturmpflicht und gehört bis zum 31. Dezember 1895 zum I und bis zum 31. Dezember 1900 zum II Aufgebote des Landsturmes.

Stanislau, am 31^{ten} Dezember 1890.

[the seal of the Kais. König. Landwehr-Bataillon Stanislau Nr. 62, signature]

4.2. Certificate of completion of military service of Moses Zarachowicz (Zoruchowicz) no. 20.

ABSCHIED

K.K.Landsturmbezirks-Commando Nr. 20^{ten} zu Stanislau

Zoruchowicz Moses geboren im Jahre 1858 zu Halicz, Bezirk Stanislau, Land Galizien, hat laut des beihabenden Militär- (Landwehr-) Abschiedes (Bescheinigung) im Heere (in der Kriegsmarine) und in der Landwehr (Seewehr) seine gesetzliche Dienstpflicht vollendet.

Derselbe ist berechtigt, die Jubiläums-Erinnerungs-Medaille zu tragen.

Zur Bestätigung, dass er auch der Landsturmpflicht mit 31^{ten} Dezember 1900 vollkommen genügt hat, wird ihm diese Urkunde ertheilt.

Stanislau am 31^{ten} Dezember 1900.

[the seal of the K.K. Landsturmbezirks-Commando Nr. 20^{ten} zu Stanislau, signature]

5. Calendar

5.1. Table of correspondence of the names of months of the Hebrew, Karaim, and English calendar (according to the system introduced by Seraja Szapszał in the 1930s).

English	Karaim ¹	Hebrew
March-April	artaryk aj	Nisan
April-May	kurałaj	Iyar
May-June	baskuskan	Sivan
June-July	jaz aj	Tammuz
July-August	ułahaj	Av
August-September	cirik aj	Elul
September-October	ajryksy aj	Tishrei
October-November	kiz aj	Cheshvan
November-December	sohum aj	Kislev
December-January	kys aj	Tevet
January-February	karakys aj	Shevat
February-March	sujunc aj	Adar
	artyksy aj ²	Va'adar

5.2. Turkic names of the days of the week of the East European Karaites.³

English	Galician	Troki	Crimean
Sunday	jich kin	jech kiuń	juhkün
Monday	jiw bas kin	jechbaszkiuń	juhbaşkün
Tuesday	orta kin	ortakiuń	ortakün
Wednesday	sereda ⁴ kin	chankiuń	qankün
Thursday	kecejni kin ⁵	kiczibaraski	ki(ü)çeynekün
Friday	ajne kin	baraski	e(a)ynekün
Saturday	szabbat ⁶ kin	szabbatkiuń	şabbatkün

¹ The Karaim names of the months and days of the week are reproduced according to the Polish transliteration accepted by the Galician Karaite authors in the interwar period.

² Only in leap years.

³ Names of the days used by the Galician Karaites have been provided by Zarach Zarachowicz (see Tadeusz Kowalski, “Zu den türkischen Monatsnamen,” *Archiv Orientalní* 2:1 (1930): 14, ft.3), while those used by the Troki and Crimean Karaites by the Karaite editors of *KRPS* (*KRPS*, 682). I have used the Turkish transliteration for the names of the days of the week used by the Crimean Karaites.

⁴ A Ukrainian loanword; cf. Polish *środa*.

⁵ Or: *kecesi ajne kinnin* / *kece ajne kin*.

⁶ According to Jan Grzegorzewski pronounced also as *sabbat*; cf. also *aziz sabbat* (“holy Sabbath”).

ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Maps

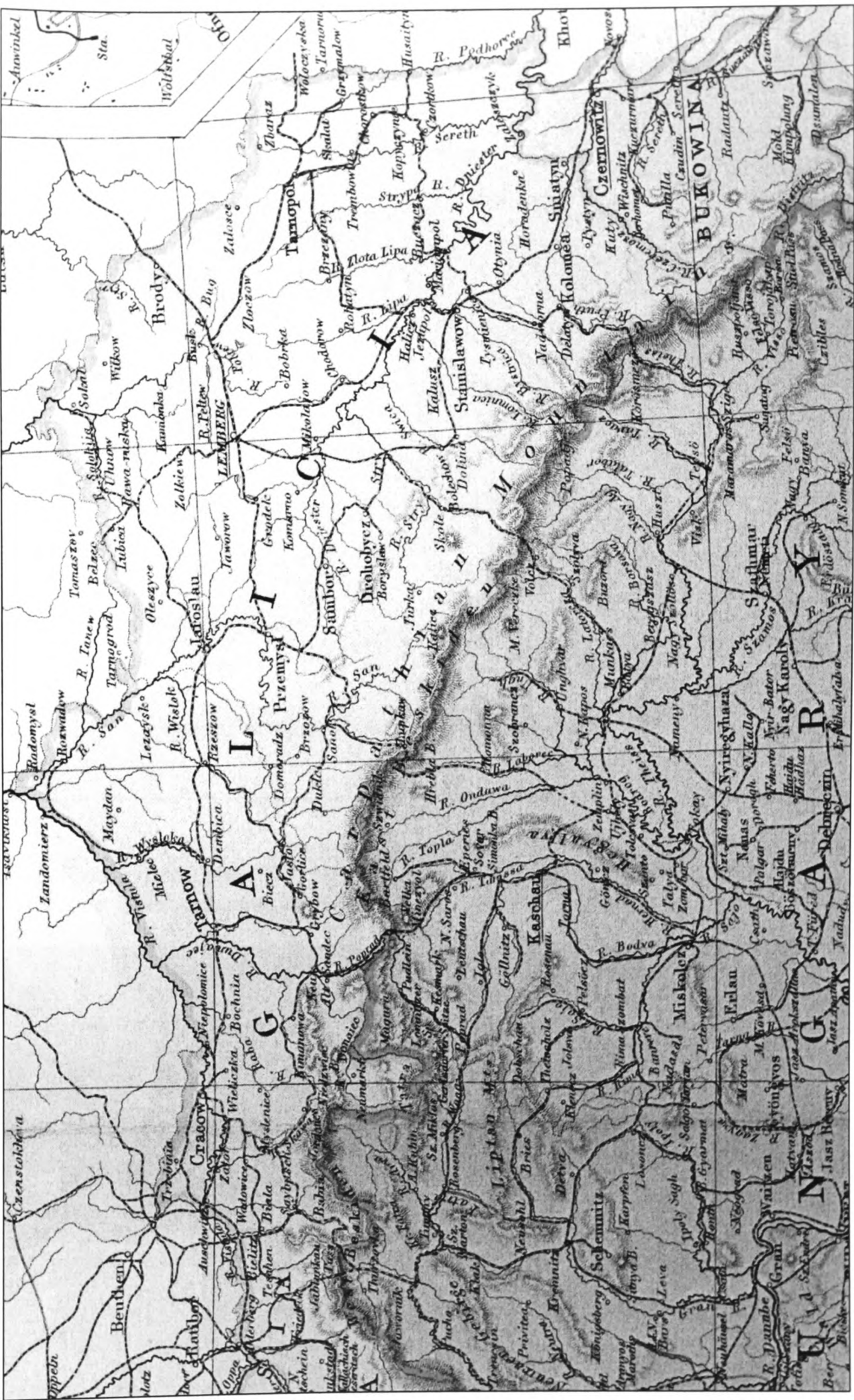
Fig. 1.1. Map of Karaite settlements in Eastern Europe (by M. Kizilov).



Fig. 1.2. Map of Eastern Galicia and Pokutia (early 19th century).



Fig. 1.3. The map of Eastern Galicia by John Bartholomew (source: *The Citizen's Atlas*, London, 1898).



2. Halicz: town life.

Fig. 2.1. Topographic plan of late medieval – early modern Halicz (by M. Kizilov).

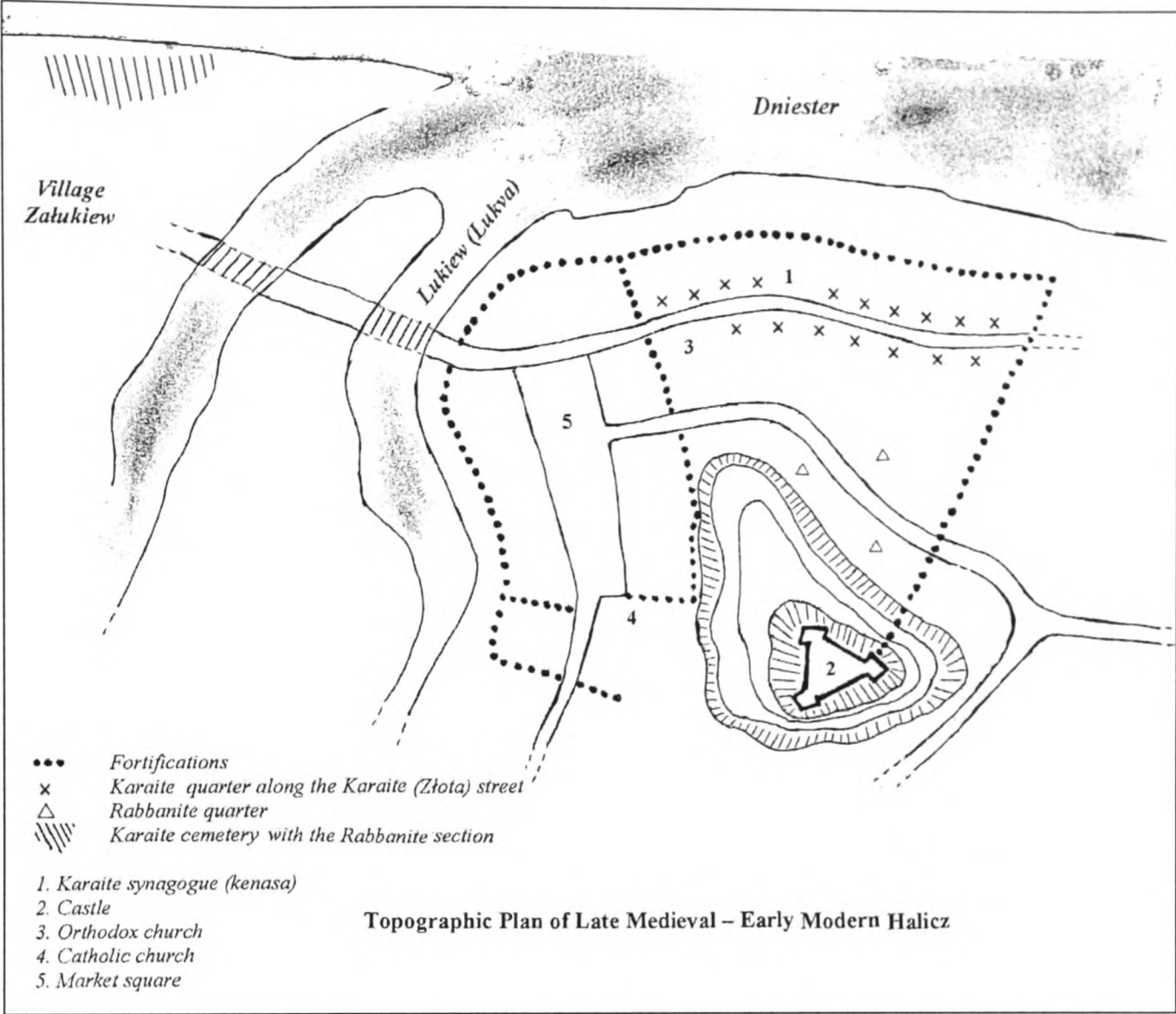


Fig. 2.2. Karaite street and the synagogue of Halicz before World War I (source: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Krakow, 1927)).

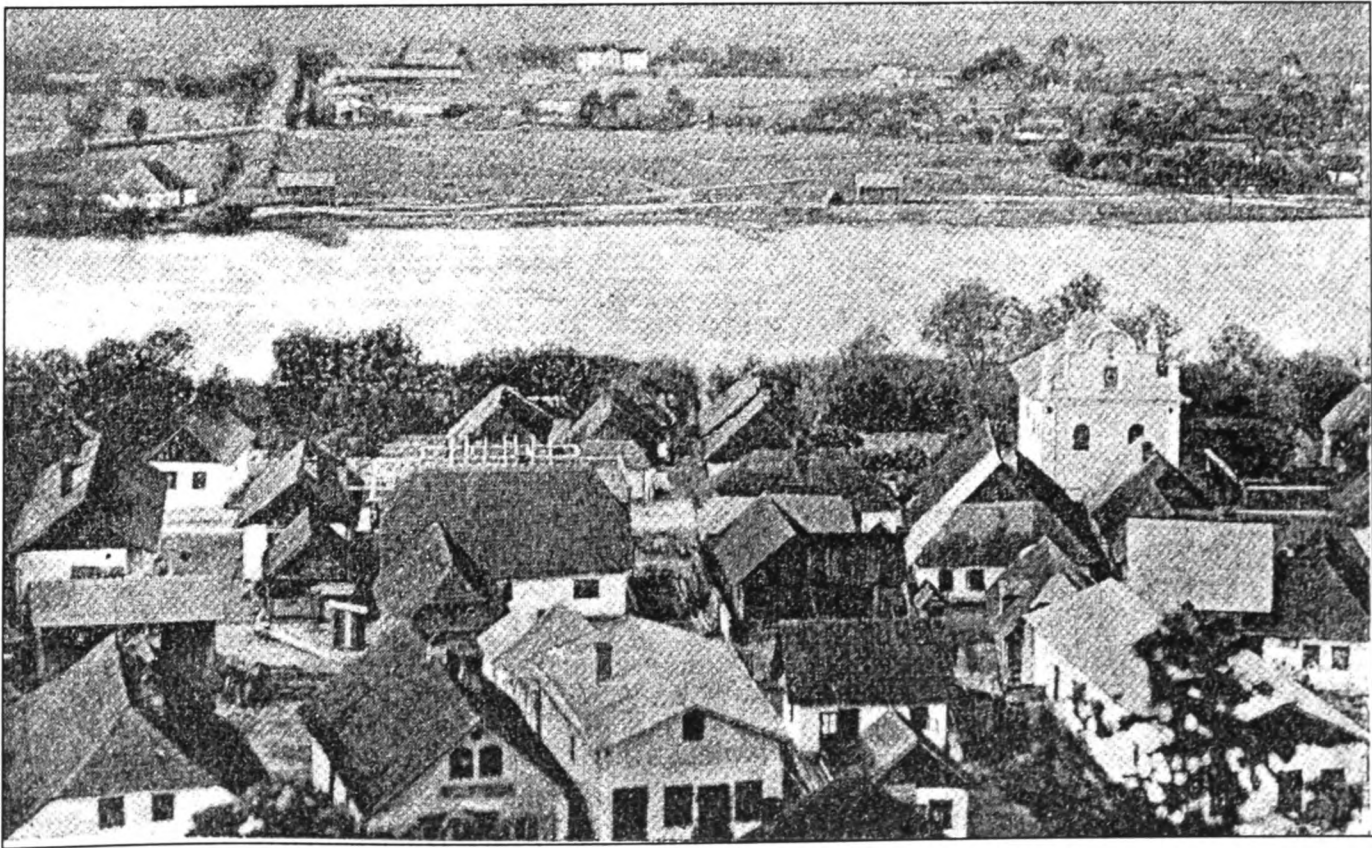


Fig. 2.3. Karaite street and the synagogue of Halicz before World War I
(source: Polish postcard, early 20th century; text in Polish, German, and Ruthenian).



Fig. 2.4. Karaite street in the 21st century; a modern nine-story house on the place of the destroyed synagogue-kenesa (photo by M. Kizilov, 2002).



3. The Halicz synagogue (kenesa).

Fig. 3.1. The synagogue before World War I
(source: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Krakow, 1927)).



Fig. 3.2. The synagogue after the restoration of 1927
(photo by Tadeusz Kowalski, source: MKIK).



Fig. 3.3. Shammash Samuel Mordkowicz inside the synagogue, ca. 1903
(source: Grzegorz Smólski, “U Karaimów w Haliczu,” *Naokoło Świata* 2 (1903)).

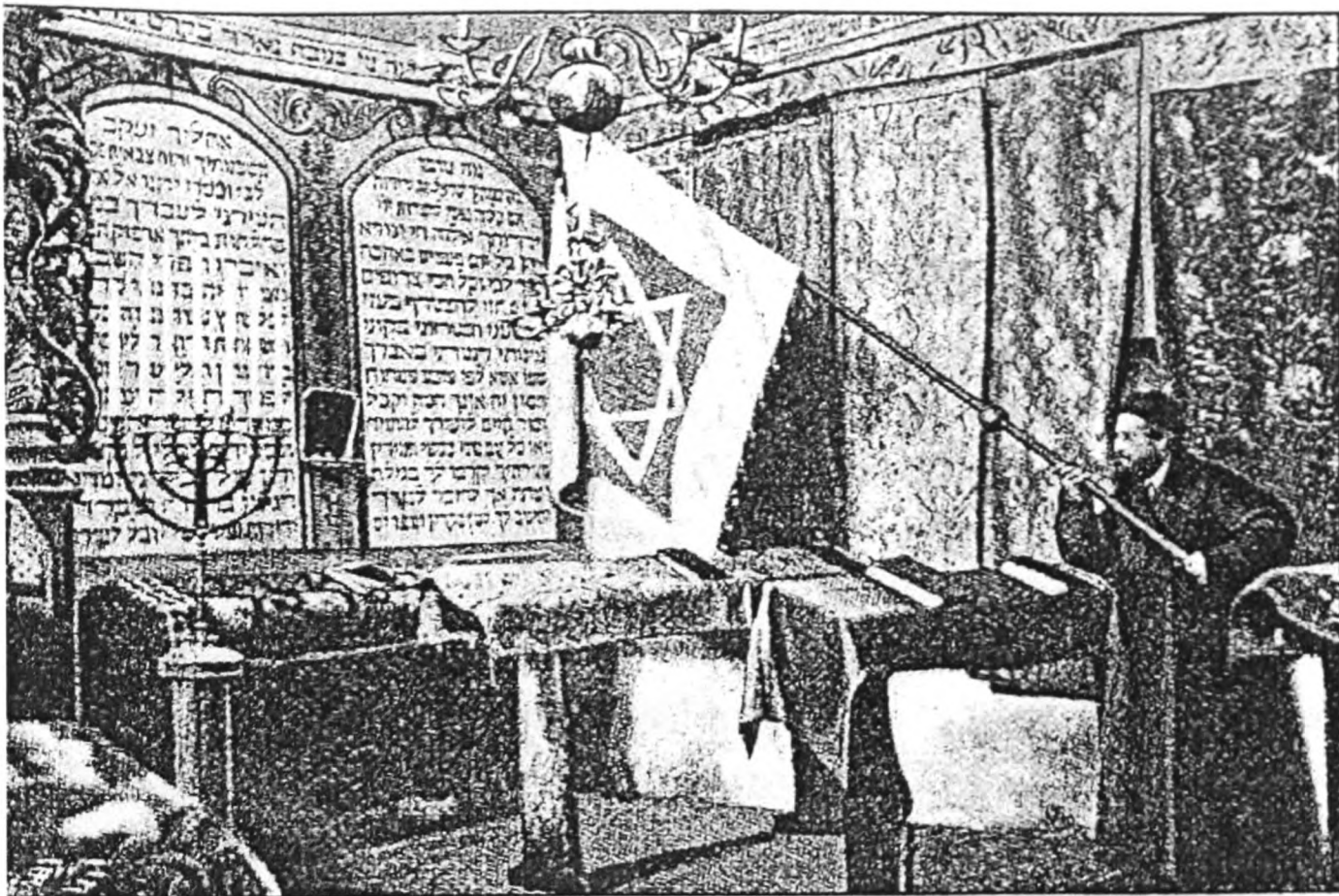


Fig. 3.4. Interior decorations of the synagogue and *aron ha-qodesh* before World War I (source: Polish postcard, early 20th century).

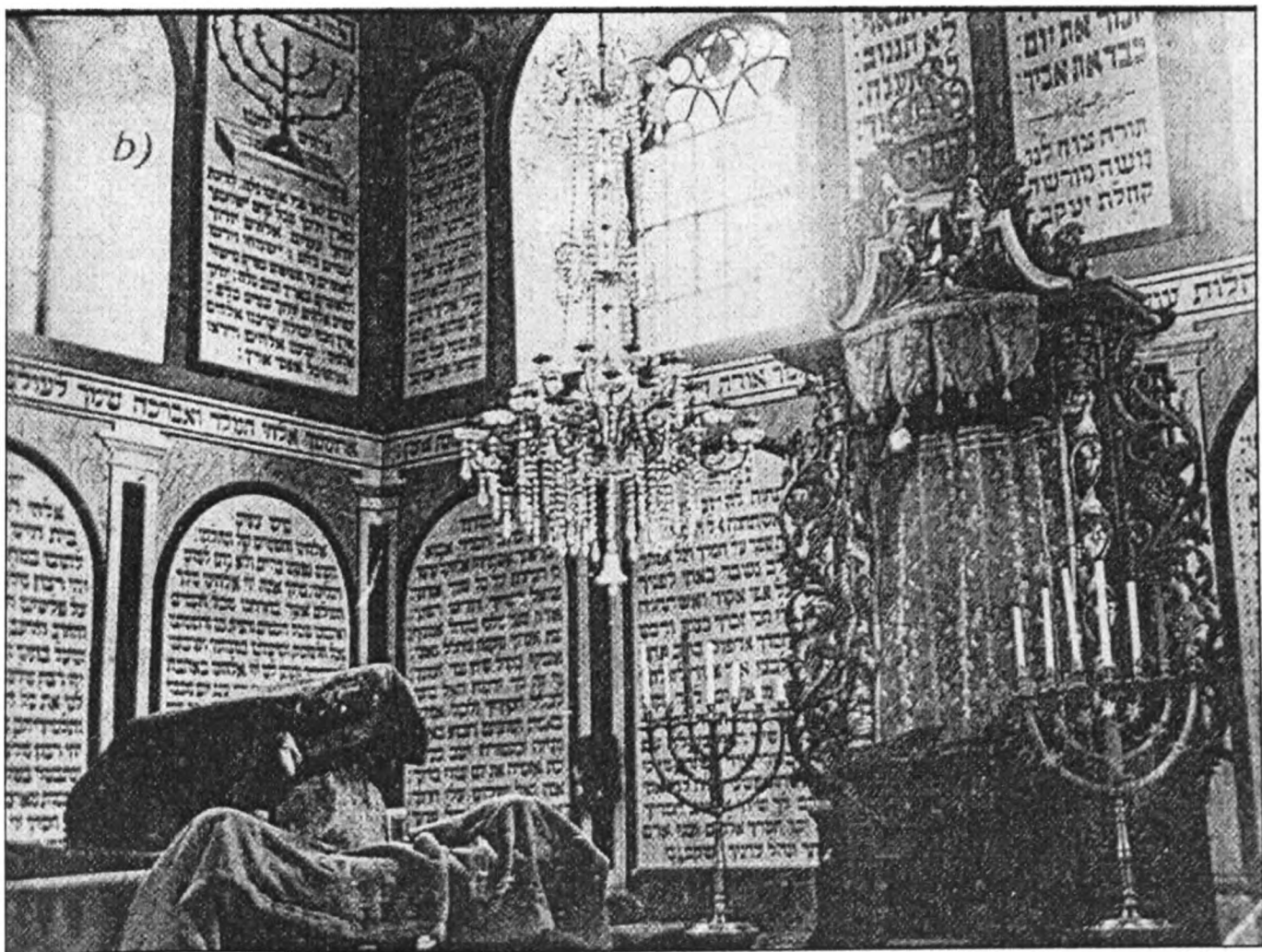


Fig. 3.5. The Halicz *aron ha-qodesh* installed in the Eupatoria Karaite synagogue-kenesa in the 1990s (photo by M. Kizilov, Eupatoria, 2005).



Fig. 3.6. Upper part of the Halicz *aron ha-qodesh* with Ten Commandments installed in the Eupatoria Karaite synagogue-kenesa (photo by M. Kizilov, Eupatoria, 2005).



4. Karaite cemeteries in Załukiew (vicinity of Halicz) and Kukizów

Fig. 4.1. Ground plan of the Załukiew (Halicz) cemetery by Ivan Yurchenko (source: Ivan Yurchenko, Oleksii (Avraam) Kefeli, Nataliia Yurchenko, and Oleksander Berehovs'kyi, *Karaims'ke kladovyshche bilia Halycha. Katalog nadmohyl'nykh pam'yatnykiv* (L'viv-Halych, 2000)).

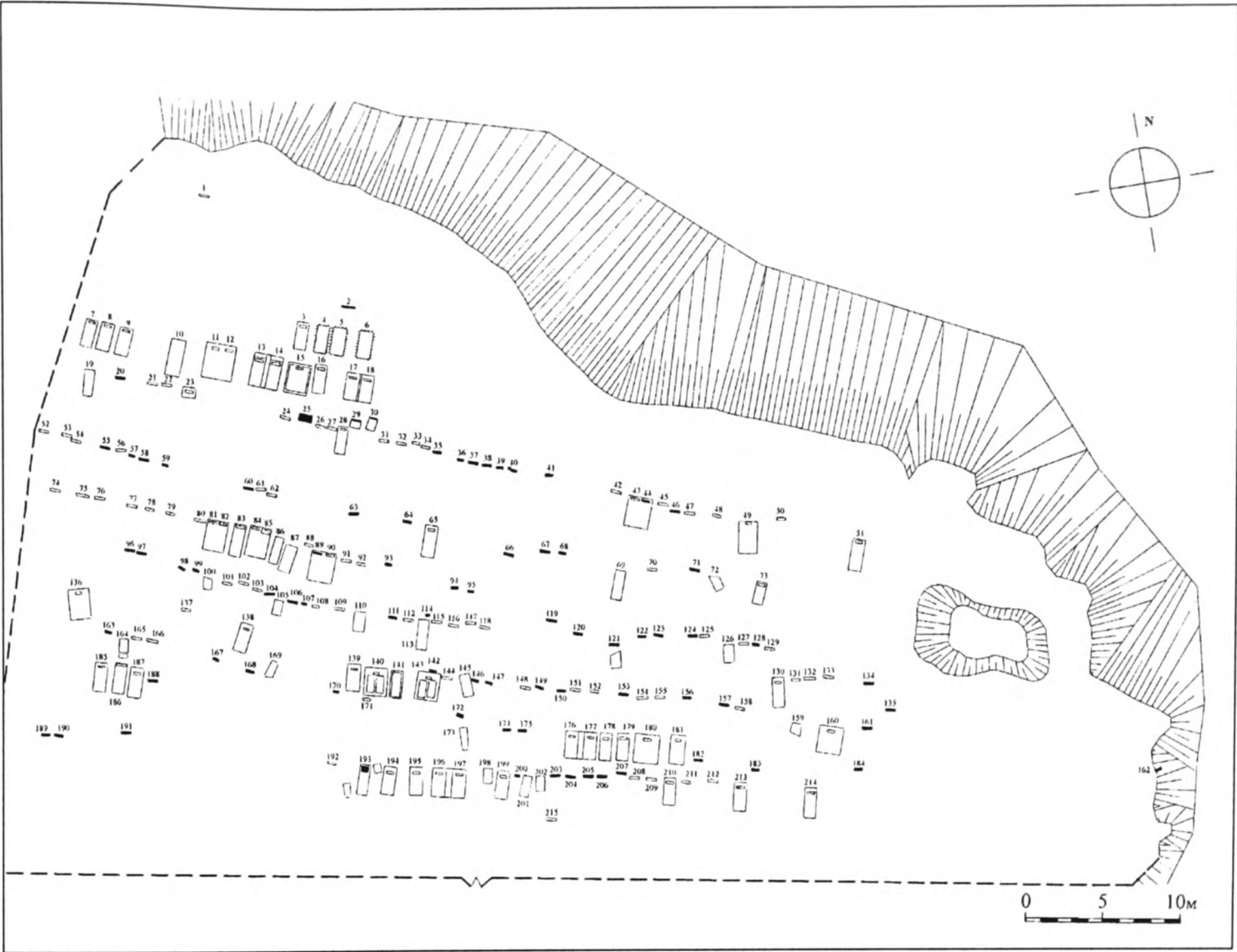


Fig. 4.2. Karaite cemetery in Załukiew as depicted by F. Weber (source: Joseph Rohrer, *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1804)).

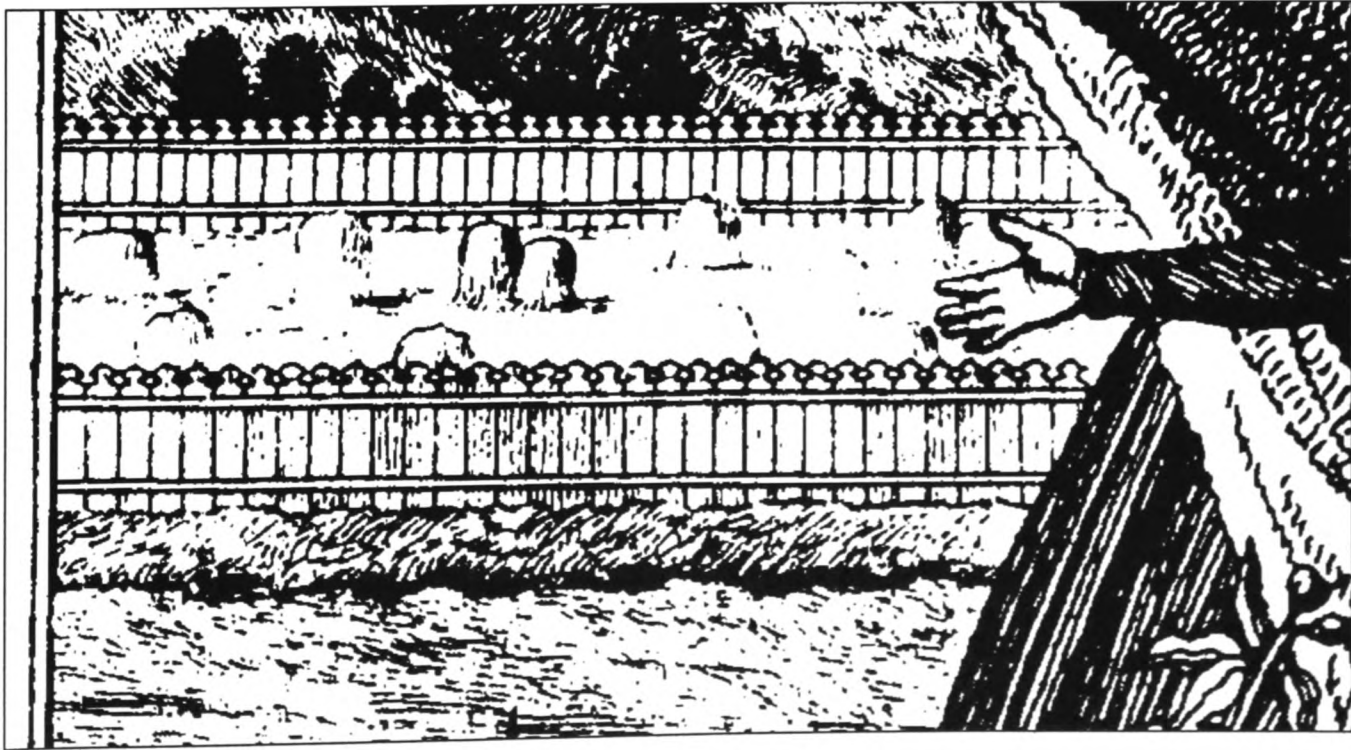


Fig. 4.3. View of the Zahukiew (Halicz) cemetery today (photo by M. Kizilov, 2002).



Fig. 4.4. Tombs standing on the edge of the cemetery precariously close to the Dniester (photo by M. Kizilov, 2002).



Fig. 4.5. Types of Karaite tombstone monuments from Halicz (19th – early 20th centuries) by Ivan Yurchenko (source: Ivan Yurchenko, Oleksii (Avraam) Kefeli, Nataliia Yurchenko, and Oleksander Berehovy's'kyi, *Karaïms'ke kladovyshche bilia Halycha. Katalog nadmohyl'nykh pam'yatnykiv* (L'viv-Halych, 2000)).

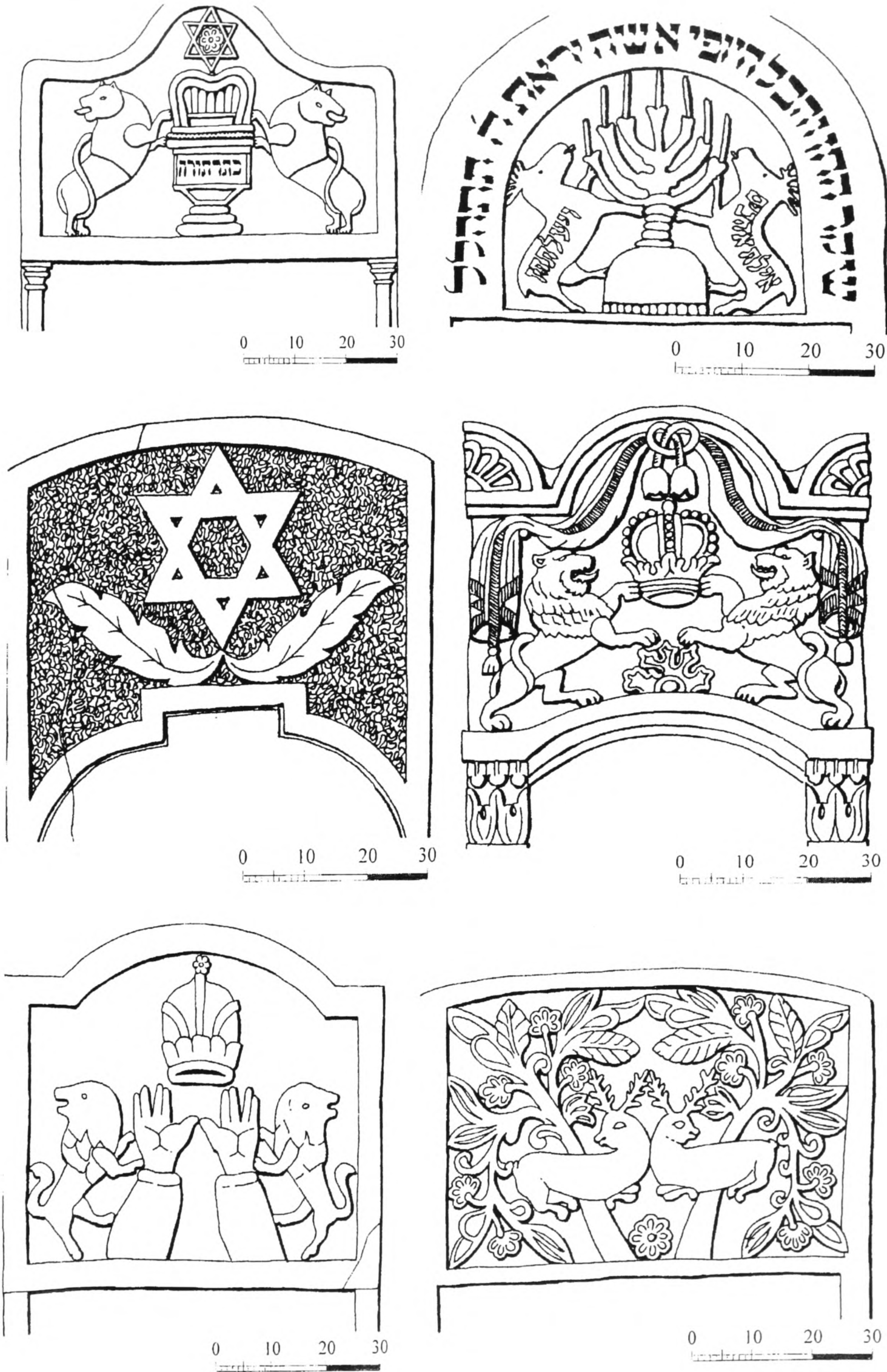


Fig. 4.6. The tomb of Judah Eszwowicz, Halicz, 1832-1895 (photo by M. Kizilov).



Fig. 4.7. 18th-century tomb from the Karaite cemetery of Troki, Lithuania (photo by M. Kizilov).



Fig. 4.8. Rabbanite tomb from Satanów, West Ukraine, 1755 (source: Mikhail Nosonovsky, *Hebrew epitaphs and inscriptions from Ukraine and Former Soviet Union* (Washington, 2006)).



Fig. 4.9. Karaite tomb from Çufut-Qale, the Crimea, 1760 (source: materials of A. Fedorchuk's expedition, 2005).



Fig. 4.10. Kukizów: the tomb of Abraham b. Noah (d. 1831) (source: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Krakow 1927)).



Fig. 4.11. Kukizów: the tomb of Debora Łobanos (d. 1711), excavated by the group of the Halicz Karaites in Kukizów in 1932 (source: [Alexander Mardkowicz], “Zeretlerinde Kukizownun,” *KA* 5 (1932)).

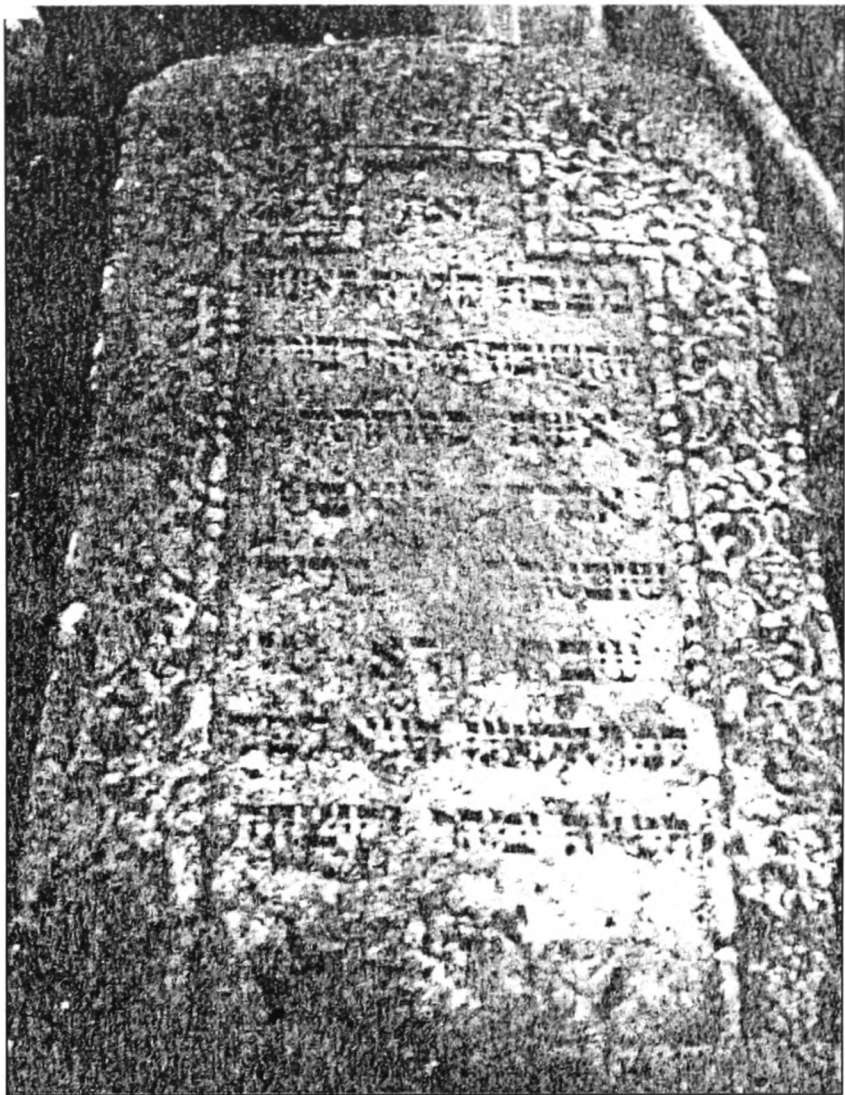


Fig. 4.12-13. Photos taken during the trip of the group of the Halicz Karaites to Kukizów in 1932 under the guidance of the hazzan Isaac Abrahamowicz (Abrahamowicz wears the hazzan’s black-and-white cap) (source: *KA* 5 (1932)).



Fig. 4.14. Three tombs which remained in the Kukizów cemetery in the 1930s (source: *KA* 5 (1932)).



5. Manuscripts

Fig. 5.1. 19th-century Torah scroll and silver *tasim* (Torah-shields) from Halicz exhibited in Semita Kushul' museum in Eupatoria (photo by M. Kizilov, 2005).

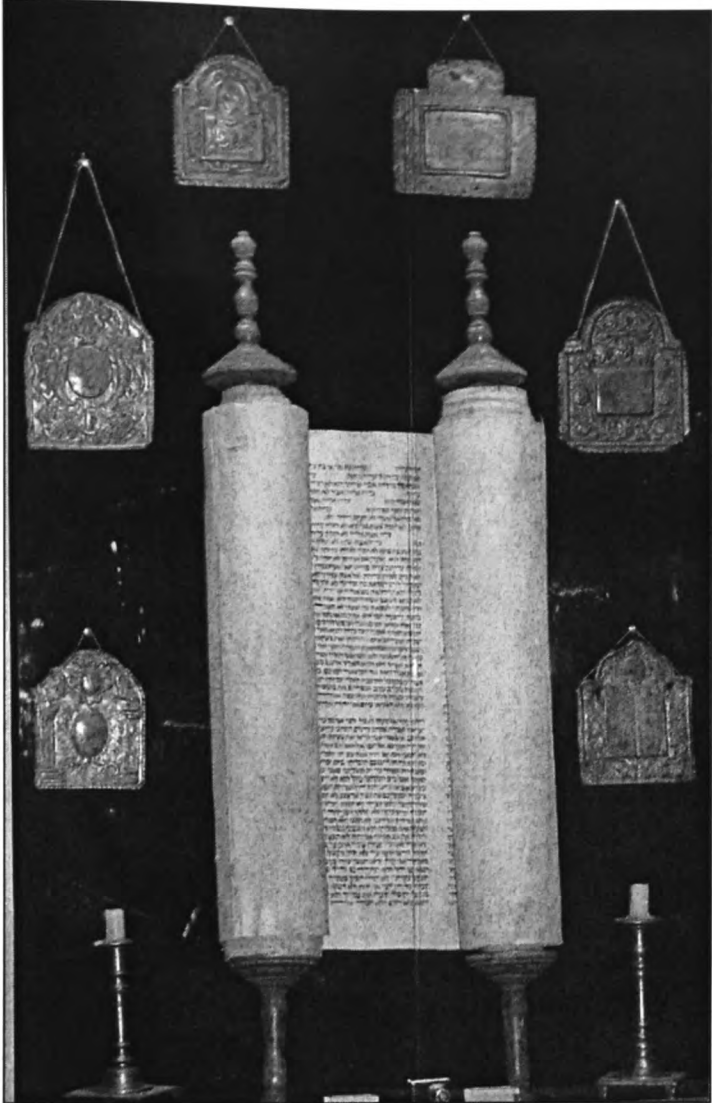


Fig. 5.2. 19th-century Torah scroll from Halicz exhibited in MKIK (photo by M. Kizilov, 2005).

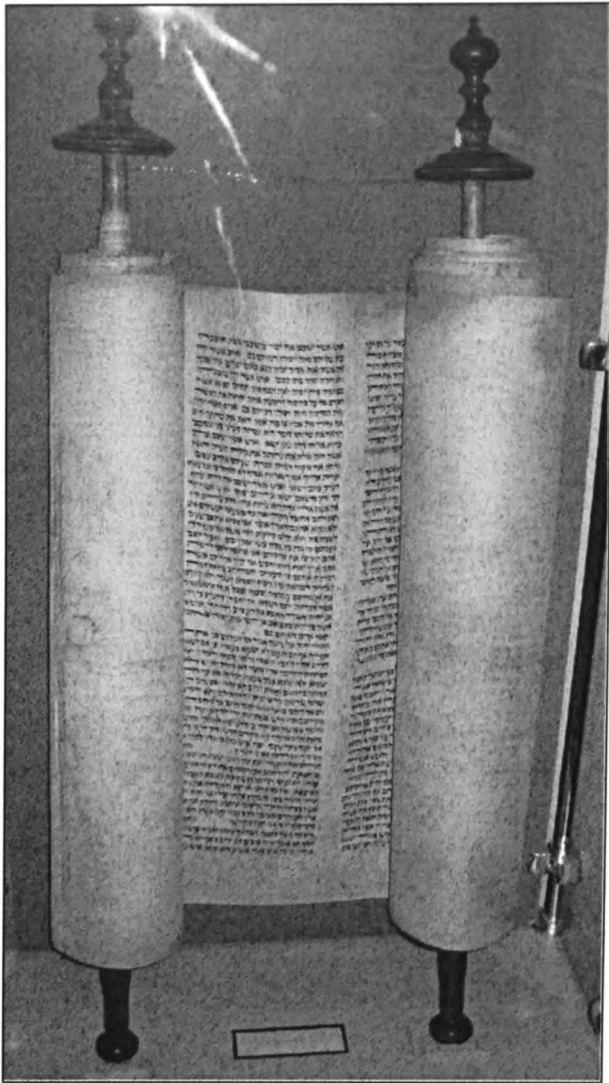


Fig. 5.3. The title page of *Seder ha-tefillot*, copied by Joshua-Joseph Mordkowicz (?) in Halicz in the nineteenth century (source: the Yurchenko MSS).



Fig. 5.4. Ornament with the name and appraisal of the Crimean hakham Simcha ben Solomon Babowicz; Halicz, 1831-1832 (source: NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.2698, fol. 1r).

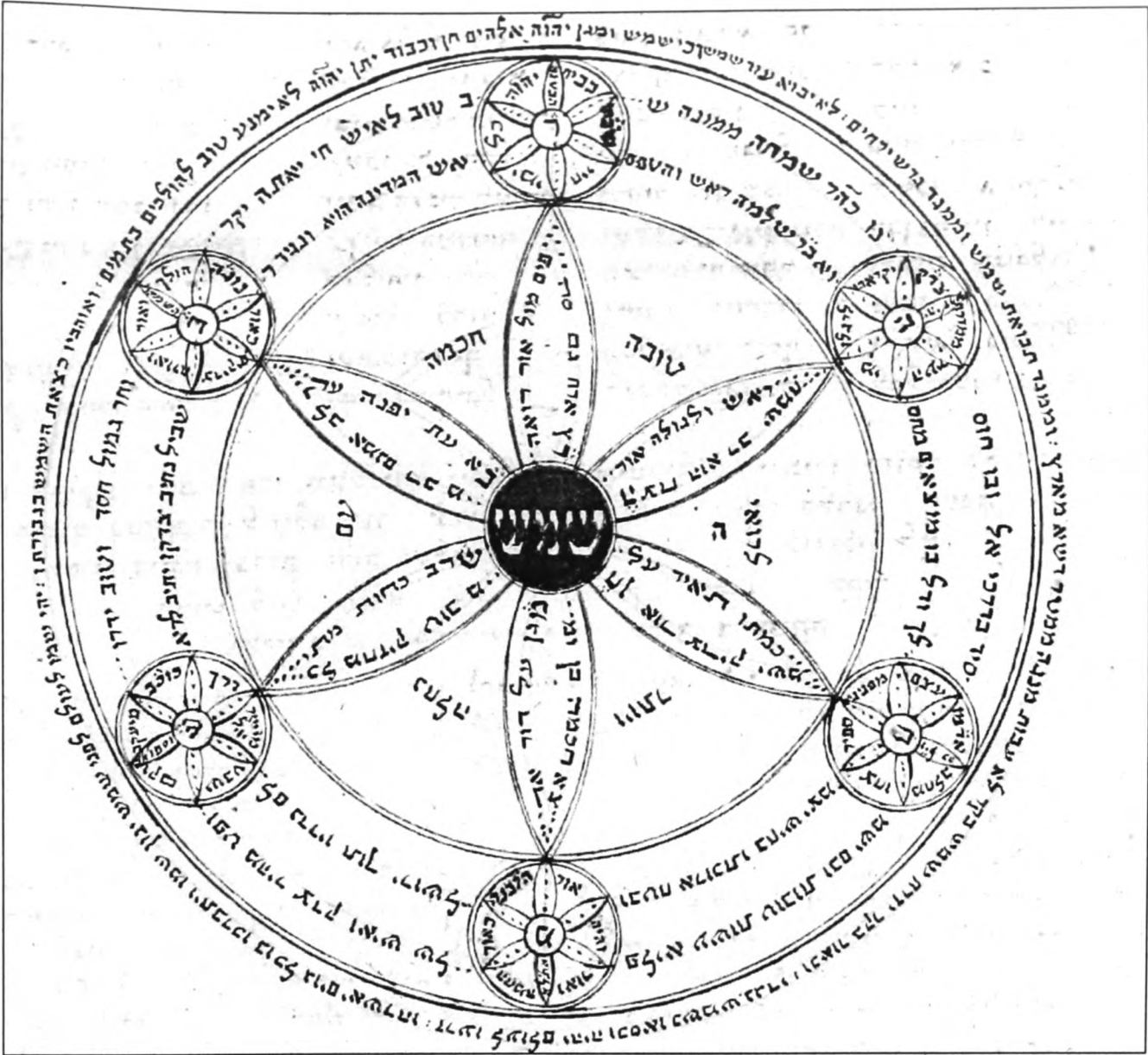


Fig. 5.5. Ornament with appraisal of the Crimean hakham Simcha b. Solomon Babowicz; Halicz, 1831-1832 (source: NLR F.946, Evr.II A, no.2698, fol. 4r).

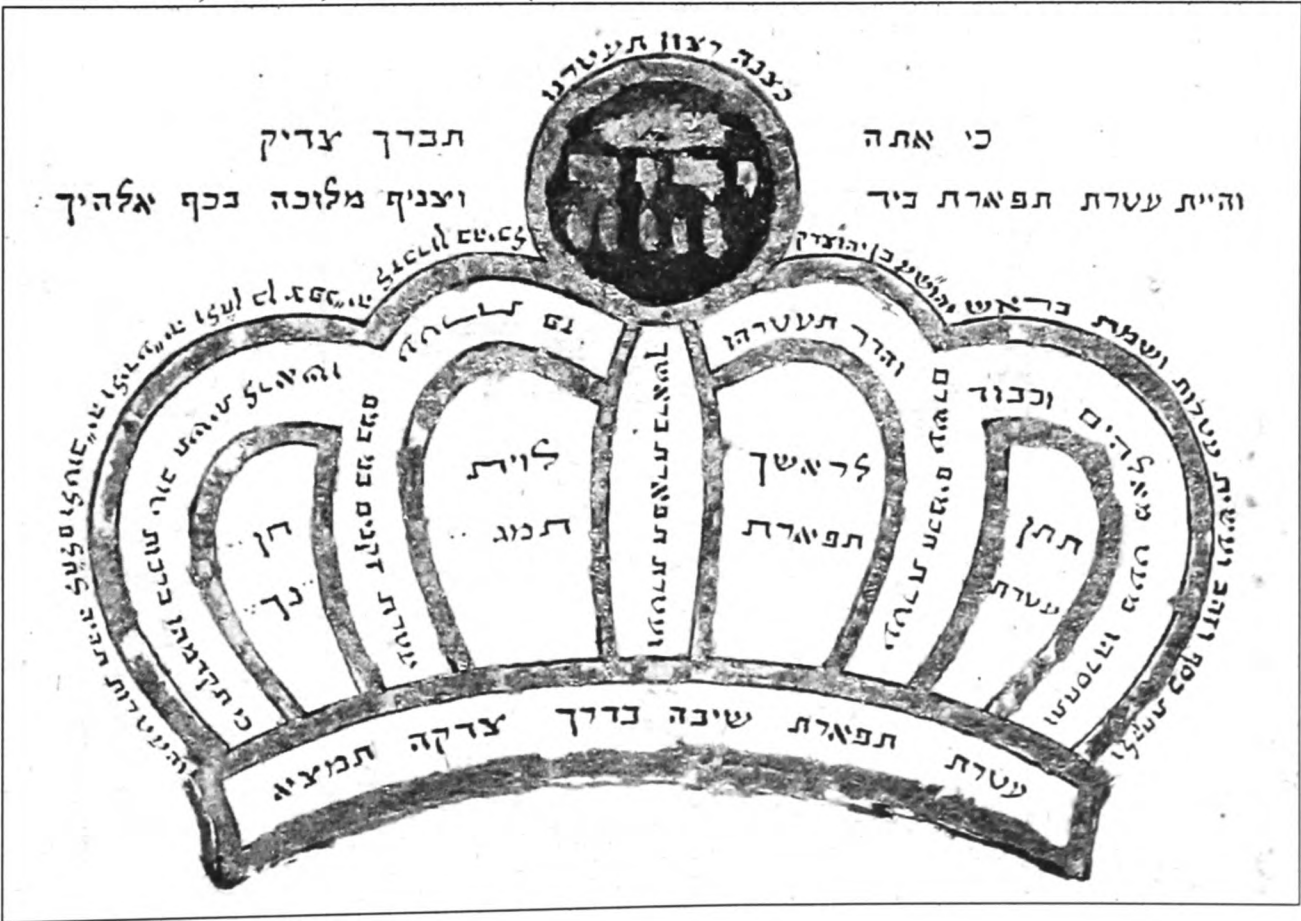


Fig. 5.6. Calendar for the year 5705 (1944/1945), Halicz (source: the Yurchenko MSS).

1944	תשרי כ"ה יום	תשרי
19	יום חנוכה	א
20		ב
21		ג
22		ד
23	האזינון שבת חזקה	ה
24		ו
25		ז
26		ח
27		ט
28	יום כפורים	י
29		יא
30	האזינון	יב
1		יג
2		יד
3	חג הסוכות	טו
4		טז
5		יז
6		יח
7		יט
8	טעג הקדשה	כ
9		כא
10	שמיני עצרת	כב
11		כג
12	יום טוב שמיני	כד
13		כה
14	בראשית שנת ה'תש"ה	כו
15		כז
16		כח
17		כט

Fig. 5.7. Facsimile of the Karaim poem “Kisenc” (“Longing”) by Zachariah-Isaac Abrahamowicz (source: Jan Grzegorzewski, „Ein türk-tatarischer Dialekt in Galizien. Vokalharmonie in den entlehnten Wörtern der karaitischen Sprache in Halicz,” *Sitzungsberichte der kaiserlichen Akademie der Wissenschaften in Wien. Philosophisch-historische Klasse* 146 (Vienna, 1903)).

קיסנען:

בוללסנידים צייצקא יזאא ג טוים .
ט אנדא בוללד טעם יידישקייט .
טע אול טווינגלר בקלייד אציגדי .
טעדי חן קעלרדי אויפא בעטם :

אול וחסידא סגא רוסטום שוור אטעם -
יזאידים אנד יי קיסין ביטין יידי .
יזאד יידי אויסלו ביטין איז וויידי .
טישנייד אין צעמדין קיסין ביצביטעם :

סגלדי אול יידיטן טעטע בידין אויללו .
יזיין אולדע באבול אול טולגוללו .
טעלדידי היי בידין איז טולגולדיקא :

קפלידי שוויקליקא אדא אוילגליין .
יזיין קוס איז בידי חלסע בילגליין .
אויטורי קייקני קפליד קעטלדיקא :

זכריה בן שמאל אברהמאווין

6. Printed materials.

Karaitica published in Austria and Hungary

Fig. 6.1. *Dod Mordechai* (Vienna: Anton von Schmid, 1830).

ס פ ר
ד ד מ ר ד כ י
ח ב ר ו
החכם השלם והרב התורני
מֹת מֶרְדֵּכִי בֶן הַחֶכֶם הַשְּׁלֵם כ"ה נִסָּן ז'ל'
לחשיב חשבות
לשאלות החכם יעקב טריגלאנדר חכם נוצרי אישכנז
מלומד בלשון הקדש
היוסב במדרש המהולל שבעיר לידה במדינת הוללנדיאה על כסא המורה, שאלם ארחת פלוקת
הקראים והרענים מאחה זמן נהיחה. על ידי כחצו טכחז להם בלשון הקודש כאלש טלחחיו סדורית
צחחלת הספר לעיני כל רואה ורולה לרעה הענין, והמשנים ערבו חטבות לשאלותיו הראשון ראשון
ועל אחרון אחרון והעמידום במדקים למען ירח קורא צי. הוסד מוסד הספר על פי הגדולים שגחם
וסדר והעתיק ע"י הקטן שגחם צום וחדש וטנה הנסחמים בטוף הספר צעיר קראשניי ארסטריו צחחום
לצב שהא מדינת רוסיה חחת ממשלת המלך איוגוסט שלישי מזה הסם צולבים שהי על פולניה
הגדולה וקטנה ורוססיה הגדולה של ליטוא והוא הי לפנים דוכס קא"ק ונחנקש
למלך על המלכות הזאת, וענין השאלות וחשבות נהי
צחח שנית לנלכו.

DOD MORDECHAI.
ו ו י ע ו
נעדרוקט ביא אנטאן עדלעם צאן שמיד. קייזערלי קעניגלי פרוויל' בוכדרוקער.
WIEN 1830, bey ANTON Edlen von SCHMID, k. k. priv. Buchdrucker.

Fig. 6.3. Adolf Jellinek, *Abraham Firkowitsch, das religiöse Oberhaupt der Karäer* (Vienna: Brüder Winter. 1875).

Abraham Firkowitsch,
das religiöse Oberhaupt der Karäer.
Ein Gedenkblatt
von
Dr. Ad. Jellinek.
Wien, 1875.
Brüder Winter (vormals Herzfeld und Bauer).

Fig. 6.2. Prayer book of the Galician Karaites: *Seder tefillot ha-Qara'im*, vol.1 (Vienna: Adalbert della Torre, 1854).

סדר תפלות
הקראים
חלק ראשון
הדפסה
אלו הסדורים היתה בהשתדלות שלמה הנביר בכ"ר יצחק החכם
בע"ס אור הלכנה ומשח הנביר טונגור
ע"
יצחק הנחור בכ"ר שלמה איסכוויץ
WIEN 1854.
Gedruckt bei Adalbert della Torre.

Fig. 6.4. *Siddur tefillah* (prayer book) published by the Egyptian Karaite community in two volumes in Budapest, 1903.

סדור תפלה
חלק ראשון
לערב ובקר חול וראש חדש ופורים.
וארבע צומות
הדפס בהוצאת
קהל הישראלים הקראים
במצרים
בהסכמת אנשי היעד ובית הדין
דוכא לבית הדפים ע"י הצעיר
ישועה ב"ר משה רצון י"ע סירגאני
בשנת התרס"ג
י"ט
זה השער ליהיה צדיקים יבא' בו.

Polish Karaitica

Fig. 6.5. Karaim poem *Halic* (Halicz) by Alexander Mardkowicz (Łuck, 1937).

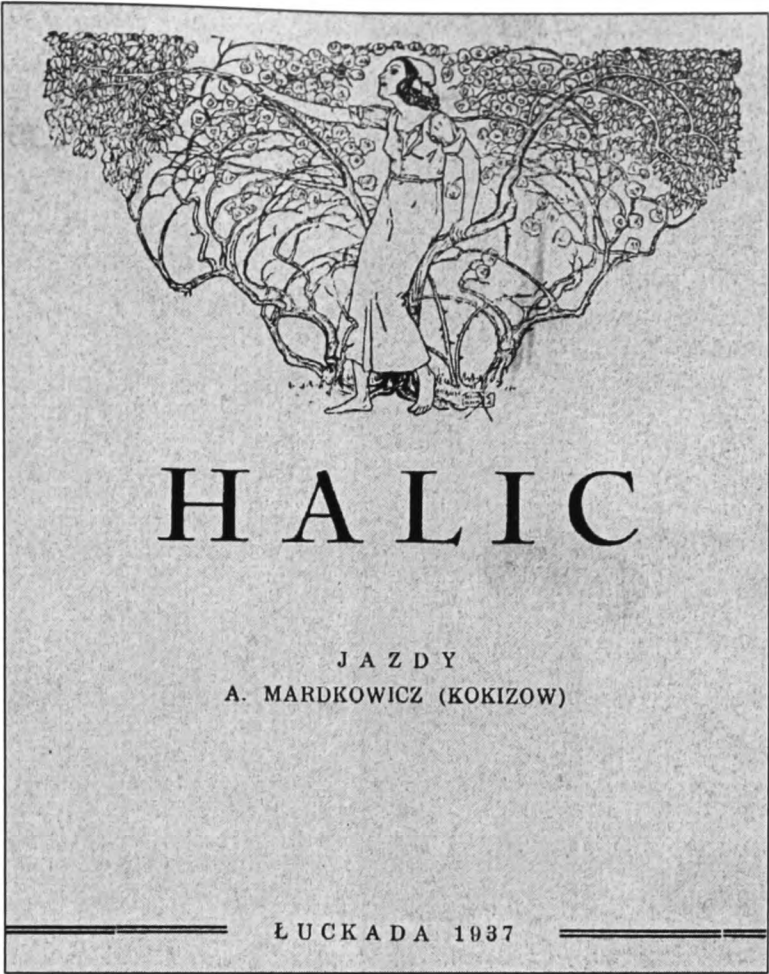


Fig. 6.6. *Karaj Awazy*, periodical in the Karaim language, published in Łuck from 1931-1939. Issue 3 (5) (1932).

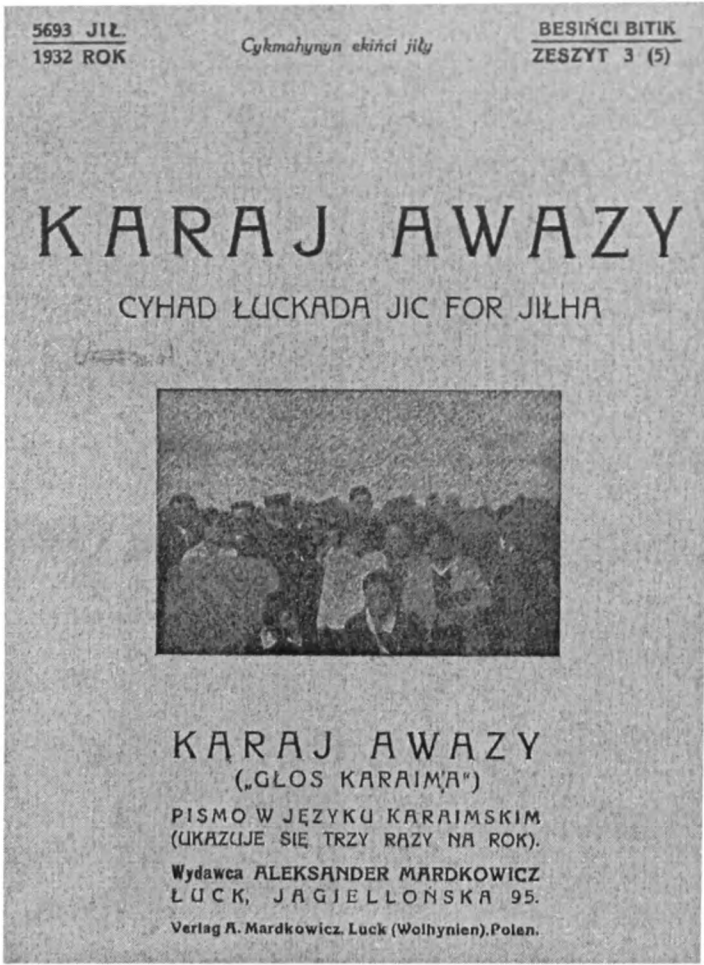


Fig. 6.7. *Karaim-Polish-German Dictionary* edited by Alexander Mardkowicz (Łuck, 1935).

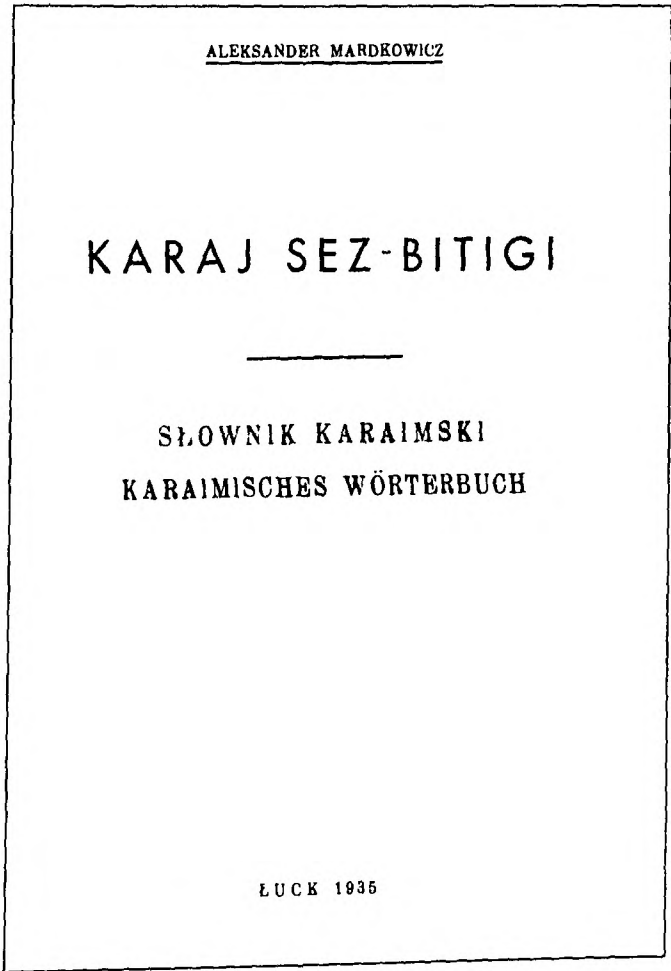


Fig. 6.8. *Myśl Karaimska*, Karaite periodical in Polish. Published in Wilno, 1924-1947.



Fig. 6.9. Book of the prophet Jeremiah, translated from Hebrew into Karaim by Joshua-Joseph ben Moses Mordkowicz and edited by Zarach Zarachowicz; copied on hectograph by Noah (Nowach) Szulimowicz in 28 copies in Halicz, 1927. The title page and fol. 9.



1. *Handwritten text in a cursive script, likely a letter or document, written on aged paper. The text is written in a single column and appears to be in a historical or literary context.*

7. Karaite seals and emblems.

Fig. 7.1. 19th-century community seal with bilingual Latin-Hebrew inscription (copied by M. Kizilov from the document kept in GAARK F.241, no. 1864).



Fig. 7.2. Community seal with the Star of David and Polish inscription "Council of the deputies of the Karaite religious community in Halicz;" 1910s – early 1920s (the Yurchenko MSS).



Fig. 7.3. Halicz community seal with Polish inscription and depiction of the Wilno Karaite synagogue-kenesa; late 1920s-1930s (the Yurchenko MSS).



Fig. 7.4. The seal of the Halicz hazzan with symbolic depiction of Tablets of the Law and Polish inscription; the interwar period (the Yurchenko MSS).



Fig. 7.5. Karaite coat of arms introduced by S. Szapszał in the 1930s with depiction of the hakham's headgear (above), talit gadol, shield, bicorn, and a fortress (Çufut-Qale or Troki).

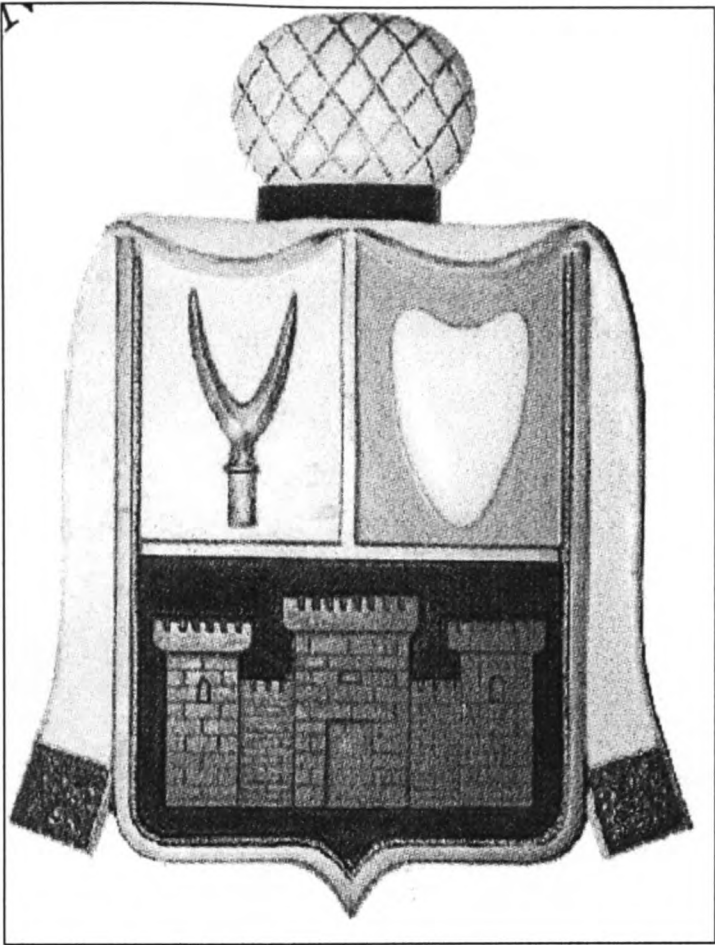


Fig. 7.6. S. Szapszał's coat of arms placed at the entrance to the Troki Karaite synagogue (kenesa) on the place of the Star of David after 1932 (photo by M. Kizilov, 2000).



Fig. 7.7. A group of the Halicz Karaites in slightly modified traditional dresses carrying the Karaite flag and coat of arms in September, 1934. Polish inscription above the coat of arms reads as „The Galician Karaites in homage to their patron Jan III [Sobieski]” (source: MKIK).



8. Objects

Fig. 8.1. The *kapporet* (a drapery for a Torah scroll) of Hanna ha-Rabbanit, wife of Levi, with gold embroidery; Halicz, 19th century (photo by M. Kizilov; source: MKIK).



Fig. 8.2. Hazzan's four-cornered mantle (*tallit kaplański*) with tassels (*tsitsit*). Silk, gold embroidery; Halicz, 1930s (photo by M. Kizilov; source: MKIK).

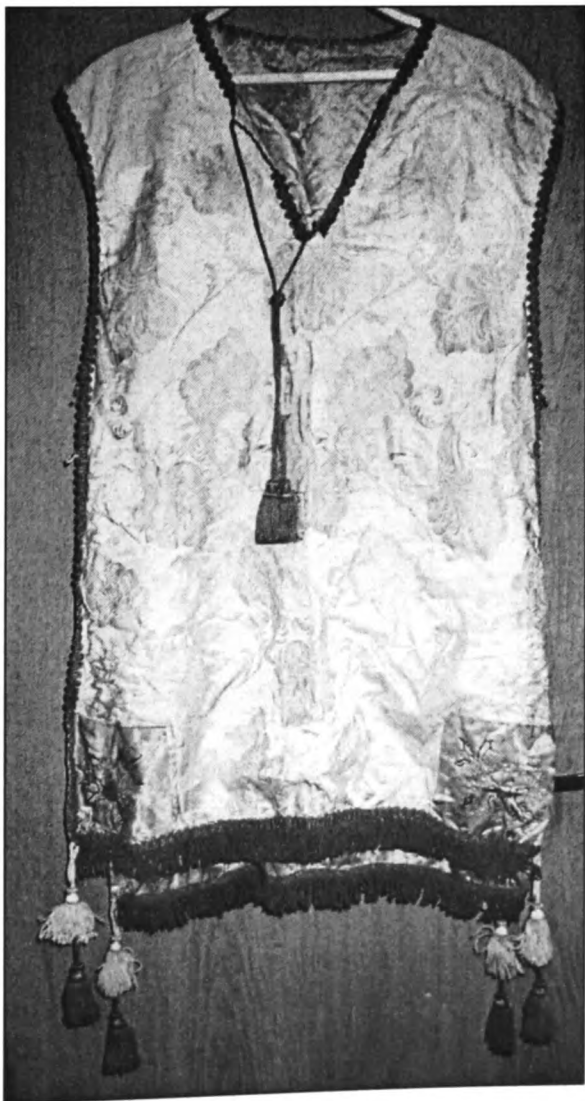


Fig. 8.3. Karaite *tallit gadol* with *tsitsit* and a bag for prayer book from Volhynia (19th century).



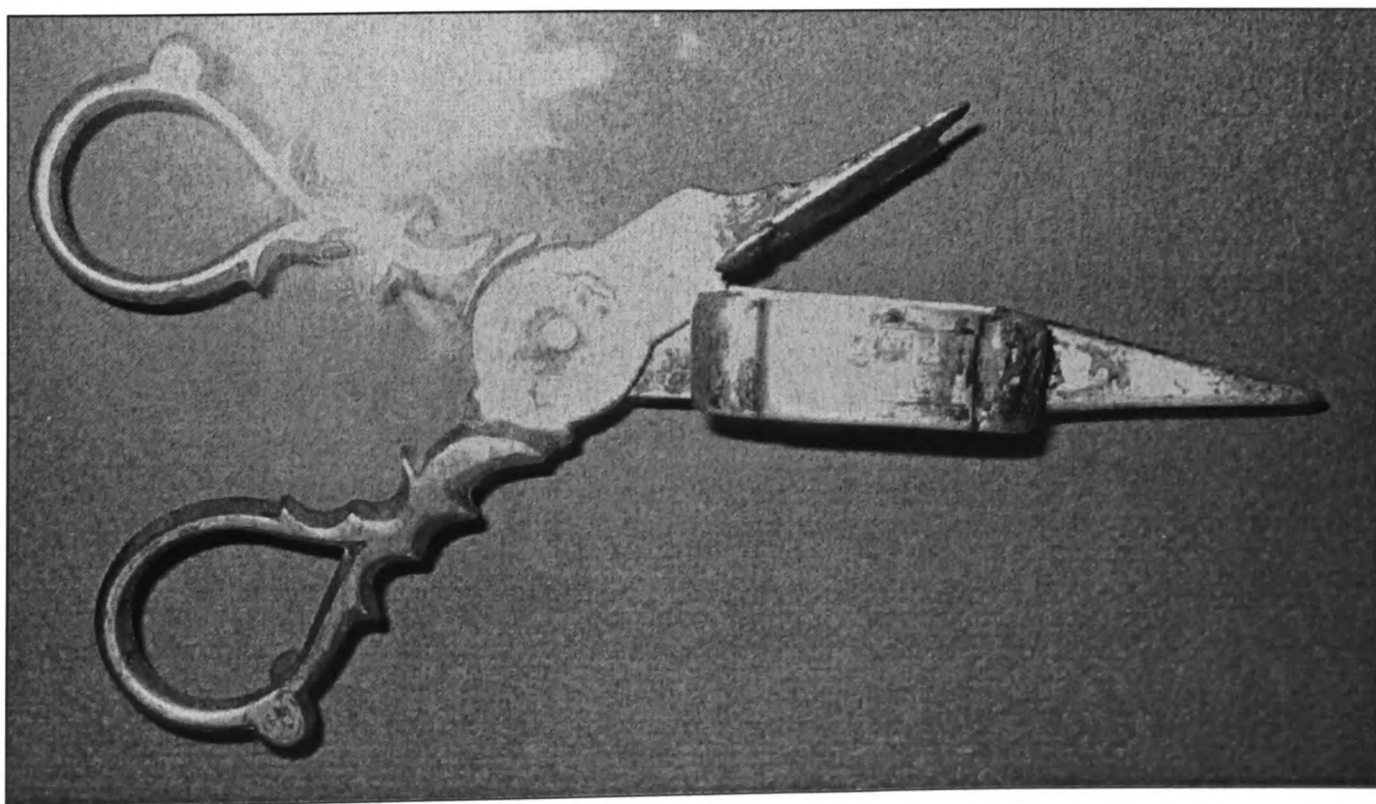
Fig. 8.4. Bronze *menorah* from the Halicz synagogue-kenesa. First half of the twentieth century (photo by M. Kizilov; source: MKIK).



Fig. 8.5. Silver *tas* (Tora shield) donated to the community of Halicz by Rachel, the wife of Simcha Łucki in 1783 (photo by M. Kizilov; source: MKIK).



Fig. 8.6. Ritual scissors for circumcision; Halicz, late 19th century – first half of the 20th century (photo by M. Kizilov; source: MKIK).



9. Personalia

Fig. 9.1. Fragment of the drawing by F. Weber “Wir schieden aus der Gegend des Dniesters und des Gottesackers der Karaimen”. Hazzan Shalom Zachariasiewicz shows the local Karaite cemetery to Joseph Rohrer in 1803 (source: Joseph Rohrer, *Versuch über die jüdischen Bewohner der österreichischen Monarchie* (Vienna, 1804)).



Fig. 9.2. Abraham Firkowicz (1787-1874). Drawn from the photo taken in Vienna in 1871, supposedly at the request of Francis Joseph (source: Abraham Firkowicz, *Avne Zikaron* (Wilno, 1872)).



Fig. 9.3. Karaite poet Zachariah-Isaac Abrahamowicz (back row, far right) as a soldier in the Austrian army ca. 1901 (source: MKIK).



Fig. 9.4. Karaite Leon Eszwowicz as a medical auxiliary during World War I, ca. 1917 (source: the Yurchenko MSS).



Fig. 9.5. Shalom ben Joseph Nowachowicz, Halicz hazzan from 1900 to 1922 (source: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Krakow, 1927)).



Fig. 9.6. The Karaites of Halicz before World War I: anthropological types
(source: Bohdan Janusz, *Karaici w Polsce* (Krakow, 1927)).



Fig. 9.7. Seraja Szapszał and important members of the Karaite community ca. 1929. Front row (left to right): Halicz hazzan Isaac Abrahamowicz, hakham Seraja Szapszał, scholar Tadeusz Kowalski, Troki hazzan Szemaja Firkowicz, Łuck hazzan Romuald Abkowicz (source: MKIK).



Fig. 9.8. Seraja Szapszał as the hakham of the Polish-Lithuanian Karaites (ca. 1928; source: MKIK).

Fig. 9.9. Seraja Szapszał as the tutor of the Persian Shah's son (ca. 1908; source: Edward Granville Browne, *The Persian Revolution of 1905-1909* (Cambridge, 1910)).



The Karaites of Halicz in the twenty first century.

Fig. 9.10. Sabina Zajączkowska (1912-2004) and her great-granddaughter during the conference on the history of the Galician Karaites (Halicz, September 2002).



Fig. 9.11. The last head of the community, Janina Eszwowicz (1931-2004), and Eupatoria hazzan Victor (David) Tiriya (seated, far left) (Halicz, September 2002).



Fig. 9.12. Turkologist Éva Ágnes Csátó (right) speaking Karaim to Sabina Zajączkowska; Halicz, September 2002 (photo by M. Kizilov).

