



Studies in Jewish Civilization in Poland

edited by Michał Galas
Institute of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University

In previous decades, studies on history and culture of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish relations have developed in Poland, Israel, the US as well as several other countries. The series, "Studies in Jewish Civilization in Poland", has been established by the Jagiellonian University Press to promote achievements in these fields of research. One very important issue is also to introduce research of Polish scholars to the international academic world. This series is supported by the The Marcell and Maria Roth Center for the History and Culture of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish Relations at the Institute of Jewish Studies of the Jagiellonian University.

The first volume is dedicated to Rabbi Ozjasz Thon (*A Romantic Polish-Jew. Rabbi Ozjasz Thon from Various Perspectives*, edited by Michał Galas and Shoshana Ronen). The second volume scheduled in 2016 will present the legacy of Salo W. Baron (*From Galicia to New York. Salo W. Baron and His Legacy*, edited by Hava Tirosh-Samuelson and Michał Galas).

Authors interested in publishing their studies in the series "Studies in Jewish Civilization in Poland" are requested to contact the editor of the series.

A Romantic Polish-Jew

Rabbi Ozjasz Thon
from Various Perspectives

Edited by
Michał Galas, Shoshana Ronen

JAGIELLONIAN UNIVERSITY PRESS

Series: Studies in Jewish Civilization in Poland, edited by Michał Galas, vol. 1

Reviewer
Prof. Antony Polonsky

Cover design
Barbara Wiślak
Photograph on the cover natasha-fotolia.com

Publication subsidized by the Marcell and Maria Roth Center for the History and Culture of Polish Jews and Polish-Jewish Relations, Jagiellonian University

© Copyright by Michał Galas, Shoshana Ronen & Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego
First edition, Kraków 2015
All rights reserved

No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers

ISBN 978-83-233-3872-7



www.wuj.pl

Jagiellonian University Press
Editorial Offices: Michałowskiego 9/2, 31-126 Kraków
Phone: +48 12 663 23 81, +48 12 663 23 82, Fax: +48 12 663 23 83
Distribution: Phone: +48 12 631 01 97, Fax: +48 12 631 01 98
Cell Phone: + 48 506006 674, e-mail: sprzedaz@wuj.pl
Bank: PEKAO SA, IBAN PL 80 1240 4722 1111 0000 4856 3325

Contents

Introduction	7
1. Ela Bauer, <i>The Intellectual and the City. Lvov (Lwów, Lemberg, Lviv) and Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon</i>	11
2. Jan Woleński, <i>Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon and Sociology</i>	27
3. Anat Weisman, "Perhaps This Poor Literature Will Be Enriched by It" – <i>Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon on Herbert Spencer</i>	37
4. Jürgen Heyde, <i>Ghetto and Emancipation. Reflections on Jewish Identity in the Early Works of Ozjasz Thon</i>	47
5. Avner Holtzman, "The Young Writers" Legend – <i>Yehoshua Thon and the Formation of a Hebrew Literary Revolution</i>	61
6. Shoshana Ronen, <i>Yehoshua Thon's Correspondence with Michał Josef Berdyczewski and Mordecai Ehrenpreis</i>	73
7. Yitzhak Ben-Mordechai, <i>Notes on Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon's Art of Writing (and Preaching)</i>	87
8. Joanna Nalewajko-Kulikow, <i>When Goethe's Poetry Was Not Enough. Yehoshua Thon on Germany, Optimism and Anti-Semitism (1932–1933)</i>	95
9. Magda Sara Szwabowicz, <i>Yehoshua Thon's Lualı Ah'asaf: an Editor and a Journal</i>	107
10. Stanisław Obirek, <i>Homilies by Ozjasz Thon and the Ars Predicandi of the Polish Christian Tradition</i>	119
11. Alicja Maślak-Maciejewska, <i>Samuel Schmelkes and Hirsch Pfefferer – Two Forgotten Rabbis of the Krakow Tempel Synagogue</i>	127
12. Hanna Kozłowska-Witt, <i>Conquer the Municipalities? Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon's Followers in the Municipal Self-government of Krakow</i>	139
13. Natalia Aleksion, <i>Marcus Braude and the Making of the Future Jewish Elite in Poland</i>	151
14. Natasza Styrna, <i>Ozjasz Thon and Jewish Artists in Krakow</i>	169
15. Anna Jakimyszyn, <i>The Funeral of Rabbi Ozjasz Thon</i>	179
Selected bibliography	197
Notes on contributors	211

Ela Bauer

The Intellectual and the City. Lvov (Lwów, Lemberg, Lviv) and Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon

In one of the essays that Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon dedicated to the city of Lvov (or Lwów), he wrote the following, "I am a Lvover (meaning from Lvov). During my life I have lived in many countries and in different cities, but nevertheless, I always remain a Lvover."¹

Thon's statement can be understood as an expression of nostalgia that can be heard from any person who has feelings for the place in which he was born and raised. But several sentences further in this same essay, Thon described the Lvov of his youth as a special place with a multicultural atmosphere. The uniqueness of Lvov was not only noticed by Thon. Others who grew up in Lvov were aware of their city's distinctiveness,² as were various scholars who included Lvov in their studies.³ In this paper I will reflect upon the ways in which the city's uniqueness influenced Thon's intellectual development.

Thon lived in Lvov during the final decades of the 19th century, in what is considered to be the city's Polish era, which began in 1867 with the symbolic shift of the city's name. From 1772 until 1867, the city, which was the administrative capital of the Habsburg monarchy, was known by its German name

¹ Joshua Thon, "Demuyot MiLvov", in *Pirkei Galicia*, eds. Yisrael Cohen and Dov Sadan (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1957), 343.

² Mordechai Ehrenpreis, *Bein mizrach Emarav* (Tel Aviv: Am-Oved, 1986), 15–24; Simon Bernfeld, "Zikhronot", *Reshumot* 5 (1926), 182.

³ Rachel Manekin, "Politics, Religion and National Identity, the Galician Jewish Vote in the 1873 Parliamentary Elections", *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 12 (1999): 100–119; eadem, "Deitschn' Polanim' o 'Ostrim'? Dielema ha-zehut shel yehude Galitsya 1848–1851", *Zion* 68 (2003): 223–62; Ezra Mendelsohn, "From Assimilation to Zionism in Lvov: The Case of Alfred Nossig", *Slavonic and East European Review* XLIX, 117, October (1971): 521–534; idem, "Jewish Assimilation in Lviv: the Case of Wilhelm Feldman", *Slavic Review* 28 (1969): 577–90.

of Lemberg. In 1867, as a result of changes in the Polish autonomous conditions of the whole Galician province, the Polish name of Lwów was added to the city's official name. From this point until the First World War, Polish was designated as the official language of the local bureaucracy and educational systems. In addition, the city became the central arena for the development of Polish political and cultural life. Lvov was known at that time as the *stolica*.⁴

Throughout this period, the local Jewish community had a reputation for tolerance, in that the traditional circles – and in particular the local Hasidic circles – did not interfere with the Jewish *masklic* activities.⁵ The local community's tolerant reputation brought a relatively large number of young Jews from different parts of Galicia and the Russian Empire to the city. These young people also chose Lvov because of the official Austrian policy in Galicia, which provided more options for Jews to acquire a modern, non-traditional education than other parts of Eastern Europe.⁶ At the end of the 19th century, the proportion of Jews among gymnasium students was 18.8%. In several gymnasiums, Jewish students comprised 25% of the total student body. In 1850–51, there were 351 Jewish students among 4,571 non-Jewish students in different gymnasiums. In 1881–82, there were 2,189 Jewish students and 11,209 non-Jewish gymnasium students. By 1890, there were already 8,024 Jewish students compared to 20,946 non-Jewish students. At the end of the 19th century, about one fifth of the student body in the university in Lvov were Jews.⁷

While in the first half of the 19th century, gymnasium students came from exclusive social circles, after 1867 students (including Jewish students) were from much broader social circles. Nonetheless, the opening of the gates of higher educational institutions to Jewish students who were not necessarily from exclusive social circles created new challenges. Many of the Jewish gymnasium students did not have the right intellectual and educational backgrounds. Jewish students from Orthodox backgrounds found that the knowledge they had acquired using autodidactic methods was not always enough for gymnasium studies. Many had difficulties filling the academic and cultural gaps they had, and some did not have the financial ability needed in order to bridge these gaps. Still, many young Jews from various other places flocked

⁴ Harald Binder, "Making and Defending a Polish Town: Lwów (Lemberg) 1848–1914", *Austrian History Yearbook* (2003): 57–81.

⁵ Simon Bernfeld, "Zikhronot", *Reshumot* 5 (1926): 169.

⁶ Jerzy Holzer, "Enlightenment, Assimilation and Modern Identity; the Jewish Elite in Galicia", *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry* 12 (1999): 79–85.

⁷ These numbers are according to Majer Bałaban, *Historja projektu Szkoły Rabinów i nauki rel. mojż. na ziemiach polskich* (Lwów: Zbór Izrael, 1907), 29; and "Listy z Galicji", *Izraelita* (January 11, 1890).

to Lvov to study at local gymnasiums and universities; however, young, local Jews such as Thon and his friends chose to study at various academic institutions in Central and Western Europe.

After 1867, when the province had become autonomous under Polish rule, local gymnasiums that had been German gymnasiums turned into Polish educational institutions. Thus, Jews who were much more familiar with Germany's cultural environment had to adjust themselves to a new cultural and educational environment. Among those Jews who made the necessary transition from the German cultural environment to the new cultural environment was Alfred Nossig (1864–1943). His father, who was the secretary of the Jewish community and an activist for public rights, was so close to German culture that he did not even know Polish. Thus, after the political transition of 1867, Nossig's father could not continue with his public activities. His son Alfred, like other Jews from his generation, had already studied in a Polish gymnasium and at the local Polish university. At the beginning of the 1880s, Alfred Nossig was one of the leading promoters of the idea of Jewish integration into Polish society.⁸

However, there were others from Nossig's generation who, as a result of the political circumstances during their studies in Polish gymnasiums, found themselves struggling with the Polish language. One of them was Judah Leo Landau (1866–1942), a highly regarded Hebrew writer who began his literary career at a very young age.⁹ Landau was not satisfied with the appreciation garnered by his poems and plays from his Hebrew readers. He wanted to study at university, and therefore needed a gymnasium diploma. He was familiar with German culture, but for his gymnasium studies he needed to study in Polish and even to pass a qualifying language exam.¹⁰ He wrote in detail in his diary about the struggles he faced during his time as a gymnasium student, and how these sufferings even caused him to consider quitting his studies.¹¹

⁸ More information on Alfred Nossig can be found in Ela Bauer, "Alfred Nossig", in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2, 1274; and Mendelsohn, *From Assimilation to Zionism in Lvov*, 521–534.

⁹ At the beginning of the 20th century, Landau was appointed Chief Rabbi of South Africa. For more information about Landau, see Dora Sowden, "Chief Rabbi J.L. Landau the Man in the Community", in *Rav meshorr ve machazi, Juda Leo Landau*, eds. Yehnda Friedlander and Rafael Weiser (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1990), 1–40.

¹⁰ An indication of Landau's connection to German culture can be found in a lecture he gave in 1905 in Germany on Friedrich Schiller: "Festrede zur Schiller – Feier gehalten in der Deutschen Turnhalle am 3. Mai 1905 von Dr. J.L. Landau", in Jewish National Library of Israel (JNLI), Landau collection 4°798, Landau personal archive, file number 17.

¹¹ JNLI, 4°798, Judah Leo Landau's diary.

In addition, the encounter of Thon and others from his generation with the Polish language and culture happened at a time when many members of Polish society refused to cooperate with the progressive Jews who wanted to integrate into the Polish culture. But their encounter with the Polish intellectual and cultural environment did not completely push the German culture aside. After all, Galicia was a crossroads between Western and Eastern Europe. The Western and Eastern intellectual, political and cultural atmospheres integrated with each other while challenging each other at the same time. Both German and Polish ideas influenced the local Jewish Galician intellectual milieu and created a unique intellectual fusion.¹² The shift from Lemberg to Lwów did not necessarily prevent the young Jewish generation from becoming familiar with German culture. As Ezra Mendelsohn argues, the secularised Jewish intelligentsia in Galicia was layered with varying cultural tendencies.¹³

Thon and other members of his generation studied in Polish educational institutions, but they did not disconnect their affiliations with German culture. The fusion between the German and the Polish intellectual environments was part of the intellectual development of Thon and his friends from a relatively young age. Throughout his life, Thon had intellectual and social connections with Mordechai Braude and Mordechai Ehrenpreis.¹⁴ These strong friendships began when they were children playing together in the public garden. "In the Jesuit Garden on summer evenings it was possible to find three youngsters," wrote Ehrenpreis in his memoirs, "we were friends from early childhood ... since that time the bonds between us did not disconnect."¹⁵ As teenagers, they struggled together with the difficulties that arose in the course of their studies at the local gymnasium. And when they were adults living in different places, they corresponded, informed each other about their lives and consulted with each other when necessary.¹⁶

The friends came from different social and economic backgrounds. Thon was from a traditional family with a low socio-economic background.¹⁷

¹² More about the uniqueness of Galicia can be found in Larry Wolf, *The Idea of Galicia History and Fantasy in Habsburg Political Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010).

¹³ Ezra Mendelsohn, "Jewish Assimilation in Lvov: The Case of Wilhelm Feldman", *Slavic Review* XXVIII, 4 (1969): 577.

¹⁴ On Braude see among others Robert Moses Shapiro, "Braude Markus", in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe* (New Haven-London: Yale University Press, 2008), 231. On Ehrenpreis see among others the introduction of Avner Holzman in *Mordekhai Ehrenpreis Le'an masot sifrutiyot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Bialik, 1998).

¹⁵ Ehrenpreis, *Bein mizrach l'marav*, 15.

¹⁶ Thon's letters to Ehrenpreis are in the Ehrenpreis collection at JNLI, 4°672, file number 11.

¹⁷ On Thon see among others Emanuel Melzer, "Pomiędzy polityką a duchowością dr Ozjasz Thon – rabbin z Krakowa (1870–1936)", in *Duchowość żydowska w Polsce*, ed. Michał Ga-

Braude's family was one of the most respected Orthodox families of the local community, and yet they had strong connections with the non-Jewish world. It was Braude who introduced his friends to non-Jewish cultural philosophy, as well as German and Polish literature. He was the one who shared with his friend Thon the books of Friedrich Schiller that he had received as a bar mitzvah present, and it was he who introduced the others to Polish Positivist thinking. Braude became aware of the philosophy of Polish Positivism during his studies with his tutor, Henric Bilgson, who was the grandson of Nahman Krochmal. It was Bilgson who introduced Braude to classic Polish literature and the western liberal philosophy that influence Polish Positivism; Braude then shared this knowledge with Thon.¹⁸ Ehrenpreis's family was in publishing and had a printing house that produced holy Jewish texts and Jewish pamphlets. His home contained an interesting cultural fusion that suited the local cosmopolitan atmosphere of the city. This was a multicultural atmosphere that integrated traditional Jewish heritage, modern Hebrew texts and German literature. Ehrenpreis, for his part, was the one who introduced his friends to modern Hebrew literature.¹⁹

From a very young age, Thon's world contained a variety of traditional and non-traditional Jewish sources, along with Polish philosophy and German literature. These ingredients would often come together in a synchronised way, but sometime they also clashed with each other, as in the case of the *Mikra Kodesh* association that Thon and his friends joined in the mid-1880s. In Jewish historiography, this association is mainly known as having made a significant contribution to the development of Zionism and Jewish nationality in Galicia.²⁰ My research does not challenge the contribution that this association made regarding the Jewish national aspirations in Galicia, but rather suggests that we also view it as a social and intellectual framework that demonstrated the nature of the Jewish Polish intelligentsia group that was active in Lvov during the last decades of the 19th century.

las (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Akademickie, 2000), 335. Michał Galas, "Ozjasz (Jehoszua) Thon (1870–1936), kaznodzieja i rabin", in *Ozjasz Thon. Kazania 1895–1906* (Kraków–Budapeszt: Austeria, 2010), 5–16.

¹⁸ *Sefer hayuvel lekvod Dr. Mordekai Zeev Braude* (Warsaw: Ha'hevra Iehafatsat mada'ey hayahdut bepolanya, 1931), 44–50.

¹⁹ Ehrenpreis, *Bein mizrach l'marav*, 15–24. For more about the Ehrenpreis family's activity as booksellers and publishers, see Hagit Cohen, *Be-hanuto shel mokher ha-sefarim* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 2006), 65–67.

²⁰ Gershon Bader, "Ha-tenoa ha-zionit be-Galicia", *Lu'ah Achiasaf* (1898); Natan M. Gelber, *Toldot ha-tenua ha-tsiyonit be-Galitsyah 1875–1918* (Jerusalem: Reuven Mass, 1958); Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

Mikra Kodesh was established in 1883 in order to help young Jews such as Thon and his friends who wanted to acquire a non-Jewish education.²¹ Shortly after the association was launched, Mordechai Ehrenpreis reported to the readers of the Jewish weekly *Ha-magid* that two distinguished persons, Rabbi Kōbak and Dr Biere, had established a new association in Lvov in order to study Jewish manuscripts and literature using ways and methods that were different from those that had been used in those days in other Jewish frameworks.²²

The founders of the association were Rabbi Josef Kobak (1835–1913), who can be considered a traditional Galician *maskil*, and Dr Reuben Biere (1835–1931), who was part of the local Jewish professional intelligentsia. Both men grow up in Lvov, left the city in order to receive higher education (in Breslau and Vienna), and returned to Lvov after a relatively long time. Although the two men belonged to the same generation, each had a different path to his intellectual development. Kobak obtained his traditional Jewish education from one of the most admired figures in Lvov: Rabbi Ori Wolf.²³ Despite Kobak's traditional background, his parents sent him to the local gymnasium, since at that time Jews who studied in non-Jewish institutions did not have to serve in the Austrian army. After Kobak completed his gymnasium studies, he decided to continue with academic, non-Jewish studies. He did not want to study a profession such as law or medicine because he feared that studies of these kinds would distance him from the traditional Jewish way of life. He therefore decided to go to the rabbinical seminar in Breslau, graduating as Doctor Rabbi. In 1883 Kobak returned to his hometown of Lvov, where he earned his living in temporary positions as a preacher at the local prison, religion teacher in different gymnasiums, and from time to time preacher at the temple of Lvov.²⁴ Dr Reuben Biere, the second founder of *Mikra Kodesh*, became a medical student at the University of Vienna when he was 45 years old. Before he went to study in Vienna, he served as an unofficial medic and was involved in the Jewish public sphere. In 1873 Biere was a founding member of the Liberal Jewish election committee and one of the founders of the local Jewish association *Shomer Yisra'el*.²⁵ In Vienna, Biere was

²¹ Michael Berkowicz, "Lemberg", *Ivri Anochi* (2 November, 1883).

²² Mordechai Ehrenpreis, *Ha-magid* (February 26, 1885).

²³ More details on Rabbi Uri Salat can be found at Joshua Thon, *Dimuyot MeLvov*, 250–354. It was Salat who ordained Thon (at the age of seventeen) as an Orthodox rabbi.

²⁴ Josef Kobak, "Toldot Ha-rav ve-hamekaber Dr. Josef Kabak Ketovot Beydi Azmo", *Talpyot* (1895).

²⁵ For more about Biere see Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia*, 50–54. On *Shomer Yisra'el*, see Rachel Manekin, Gerahon Hundert, "Shomer Yisra'el", in *YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, vol. 2 (New Haven–London: Yale University Press, 2008), 1726–8.

involved with Jewish national activities. He was a member in the *Kadimah* Jewish students association and was also associated with the Hebrew writer Perets Smolenskin and the Jewish intellectual Nathan Birnbaum.²⁶ After he returned to Lvov as an official doctor in the 1880s, Biere continued with his involvement in Jewish public life.²⁷ Along with Kobak and Biere were three others who can be considered founders of the association: Ozer Rothiy, who was an entertainer at Jewish weddings and who taught Bible at *Mikra Kodesh* in a non-traditional way;²⁸ Isaac Bernfeld, the editor of *Ojczyzna* – a bilingual periodical in Polish and Hebrew; and the poet Yitzhak Peled, who was the one who introduced the members of the association to classic German literature.²⁹ Several years later, Peled became known as the poet who wrote the first Zionist song in Galicia.³⁰

Mikra Kodesh was an association with cultural and educational missions.³¹ Its educational activities were aimed primarily at young Jews who wanted to acquire a non-Jewish education and to those who wanted to become familiar with core Jewish concepts but in non-traditional ways. To various members of *Mikra Kodesh* who came from different cultural and social backgrounds, it was clear even from the first days of the association that this was something new. It was not difficult for them to notice that Rothiy and Kobak taught Bible and Hebrew grammar in a very different way than that taught in traditional Jewish institutions. *Mikra Kodesh's* mission statement attracted local young Jews who had grown up in Lvov, including Thon, Ehrenpreis, Braude, Adolf and Karol Stand, and Benjamin Segel. Another group that joined the local band were young Jews such as Judah Leo Landau, David Neumark, Salomon Schiller, Michael Berkowitz and David Malz, who came to Lvov because of its reputation as a place in which they could acquire a non-traditional Jewish education without confronting the Jewish traditional environment.³² To both

²⁶ For more information on *Kadimah* see Robert Wistrich, *The Jews of Vienna in the Age of Franz Joseph* (Oxford: Littman, 1989), 347–80.

²⁷ In 1884 he organised memorial events for the French Jewish leader Adolphe Cremieux, see Mordechai Ehrenpreis, "Chag crimieu be-lvov", *Ha-magid* (March 6, 1884).

²⁸ From the announcement on his death, *Ha-magid* (January 24, 1889).

²⁹ For more information on the *Ojczyzna* see Rachel Manekin, "Die Habsburger Monarchie 1848–1918", in *Politische Öffentlichkeit und Zivilgesellschaft 2 Teilband Die Presse als Faktor der politischen Mobilisierung* (Wien: Austrian Academy of Sciences, 2006), 2350.

³⁰ His famous Zionist song in Yiddish was *Dort, wo die Zeder* ("Where the Cedar Is"). The song was translated into Hebrew at the beginning of the 20th century.

³¹ See *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia*, 54. Joshua Shanes wrote that *Mikra Kodesh* was what Shmuel Feiner labeled as national *Haskala*. I believe that we have to look upon *Mikra Kodesh* not only through the lens of *Haskala*, but throughout the Jewish and non-Jewish intellectual life of Lwów during the last decade of the 19th century.

³² The only person who arrived in Lwów not from Galicia but from the Russian Empire was Salomon Schiller.

the local and the non-local members of the association, *Mikra Kodesh* served as a bridge between the Jewish rabbinical world and the non-Jewish universal culture.³³ Their affiliation with *Mikra Kodesh* was the first step on their intellectual and public path. Later on in life, nearly all the members of *Mikra Kodesh* played a significant role in Jewish cultural and political life in Poland and beyond its borders. Thon and Braude, in addition to their other public activities, served as deputies in the Polish Sejm. Adolf Standat served as a Jewish representative of Galicia in the Austrian parliament at the beginning of the 20th century. Judah Leo Landau was the Chief Rabbi of South Africa and was also a known Hebrew writer. David Neumark became a philosopher in the USA, and Salomon Schiller a prominent educator in the early 20th century in Palestine. Michael Berkowicz served as Theodor Herzl's Hebrew secretary and was one of the first to translate Herzl's books into Hebrew. Thon's best friend, Ehrenpreis, was the Chief Rabbi of Stockholm, among other positions. The prominent positions in the Jewish world to which these men rose were not accidental, since in addition to being a bridge between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds, *Mikra Kodesh* provided its young members opportunities to think and outline their own agendas for the roles of the Jewish intellectual in the societies they were part of. The founders and members of *Mikra Kodesh* did not have common cultural, social and economic backgrounds. They belonged to different generations. Each of them was influenced by different cultural and intellectual atmospheres. The establishment of social and cultural clubs was part of the German culture that Kobak and Bierer, the founders of *Mikra Kodesh*, became familiar with when they were students in Breslau and Vienna. Various cultural and social organisations, such as *Lesegesellschaften* (reading societies), were already part of German cultural life at the end of the 18th century. These cultural and social organisations contributed significantly to the development of the modern public sphere in German areas.³⁴ Kobak and Bierer were involved in various Jewish-German associations, and this involvement inspired them, after their return to Lvov, to establish a similar association. But at the same time, the establishment of associations such as *Mikra Kodesh* could also have been inspired by local intellectual sources. As stated in the Hebrew weekly *Ha-magid*, Kobak and Shperling learned from the Polish teachers in the town who know how to introduce their language to their students.³⁵

The establishment of social organisations that took upon themselves educational and cultural missions was a part of the Polish public sphere in

³³ Ehrenpreis, *Bein mizrach U'marav*, 25.

³⁴ Henry Vaserman, *Ach Germania Heykhan hi?* (Tel Aviv: Ha'universita haptuha, 2001), 248.

³⁵ Shmuel ben Selome Rappaport, "Ostria Hongarya," *Ha-magid* (April 5, 1888).

Galicia. Members of the Jewish elite were familiar with the activities of assorted members of the Polish intelligentsia on behalf of national rights, as well as with the involvement of members of the non-Jewish intelligentsia in the establishment of social and cultural clubs.³⁶ In a speech that Florian Ziemalkowski, a member in the Galician parliament and the city council, gave at the temple in Lvov, he declared his support for equal rights for the Jews and encouraged his Jewish audience to establish Jewish cultural and social clubs.³⁷ The concept that inspired *Mikra Kodesh's* founders the most was the German idea of *Bildung*. This concept, which developed from the end of the 18th century and throughout the 19th century in German areas, suggested a new observation on the educational process, viewing it not just as the provision of certain external knowledge, but a lifelong process, the continual expansion of human development by means of education. The cultural and literary baggage that an individual acquired via this process became a central tool in the process of his personal self-improvement. The concept of *Bildung* played a central role in the formation of new layers of elites in German areas. In particular, this concept was significant in the formation of the professional intelligentsia.³⁸ In various German social strata, especially among the Jewish-German bourgeoisie, *Bildung* was understood as the means that would help individuals to become free from previous traditional, local social and economic connections, and would allow them social and economic mobility.³⁹ The young members of *Mikra Kodesh* were inspired by social and philosophical Polish concepts that were part of the Polish intellectual discourse during the second half of the 19th century. Chief among these concepts was *pomoc własna* (self-aid), meaning that an individual who acquired higher education had to use it not only for his own self-improvement, but also for the improvement of his society.⁴⁰ *Bildung* was an essential part of the personal

³⁶ For more about the Polish intelligentsia in Galicia in the second half of the 19th century see Magdalena Micińska, "Inteligencja na rozdrożach, 1864–1918," in *Dzieje inteligencji polskiej do roku 1918*, ed. Jerzy Jedlicki (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Neriton, 2008), vol. III, 81–86; Kai Struve, "Gentry, Jews and Peasants: Jews as Other in the Formation of the Modern National in Rural Galicia during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century," in *Creating the Other Ethnic Conflict and Nationalism in Habsburg Central Europe*, ed. Nancy Wingfield (New York: Berghahn, 2003), 103–26.

³⁷ Zbigniew Fras, *Die liberale Strömung unter den galizischen Demokraten 1848–1882*, Hans-Georg Fleck and Ryszard Kolodziejczyk (ed.), *Liberale Traditionen in Polen* (Warsaw: Friedrich-Naumann-Stiftung, 1994) 152.

³⁸ Karl Mannheim, "The Problem of the Intelligentsia: an Enquiry into its Past and Present Role," *Essay on the Sociology of Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1956), 96–156.

³⁹ George Mosse, "Haunivrsalyot shel rayon ha-bildung," *Zemanim* 61 (1998): 13–6.

⁴⁰ For more about this concept in Polish society and discourse see Brian Porter, *When Nationalism Began to Hate, Imagining Modern Politics in Nineteenth-Century Poland* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 44–48.

and intellectual development of Kobak and Biere. Their experiences during their studies in Vienna and Breslau demonstrated to them how useful it could be for young Jews in Lvov to have an association that would support them in their own *Bildung* process. However, they did not take into consideration the fact that Lvov in the last decades of the 19th century was a different city from the one in which they had grown up. It was no longer the environment that they had experienced several decades earlier when beginning their own non-Jewish academic education. The aims that the founders of *Mikra Kodesh* set, following the concept of *Bildung*, did not match with the Polish concept that was such a central part of the intellectual world of the young members of the association.

The young members of *Mikra Kodesh* grew up at a time in which the purpose of academic education in Galicia, Lvov and other Polish cities was understood to be not only a tool for individual improvement for self-social mobility. Rather, academic education was viewed as a tool to be used on behalf of the society the individual was part of. As stated several years later in *Die Welt*, the German Zionist organ, "After we finish our academic studies, sooner or later we will have to take a stand in public life. We will have to stand in front of the Galicia Jewry."⁴¹

The idea that the individual's personal academic education had to be used on behalf of the whole society to which he belonged was the central component in the development of the Polish intelligentsia.⁴² Thus, although the founders and the young members of *Mikra Kodesh* believed that they had mutual aims, there was an intellectual gap between them. In 1888, the intellectual and academic activities that the founders of *Mikra Kodesh* set were no longer enough for Thon and his friends. At the beginning of the 1880s, they needed assistance with their first steps into the academic world, but several years later this support was no longer relevant. In October 1888 they decided to adopt a new name for the association – *Zion* – and to change its regulations, since by that point Thon and his friends no longer agreed with the original aims that Kobak, Biere and the other founders of the association had set up several years earlier.⁴³ The new association did not abandon its cultural tasks, but it could no longer be considered a purely academic association. The strong notion of cosmopolitanism that was part of the *Bildung* concept was replaced by Jewish national aspirations.⁴⁴

⁴¹ "Tribune", *Die Welt* (June 23, 1899).

⁴² On the Polish intelligentsia in the second half of the 19th century see Micińska, *Inteligencja na rozdwożach*.

⁴³ On the shift from *Mikra Kodesh* to *Zion* see Joshua Shanes, *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia*, 82–109.

⁴⁴ "Ausrich Hungarn", *Ha-magid* (October 11, 1888).

Thon and his friends were not the only group in the Austrian Empire that abandoned the German cosmopolitan hierarchies' ideas and chose a new direction of local national aspiration. This shift happened to other minorities in Galicia and in other parts of the Austrian Empire as well.⁴⁵ Several years later, Thon and Adolf Stand described the shift from *Mikra Kodesh* to *Zion* as a shift from a direction of cosmopolitanism towards a national one.⁴⁶ However, it was also a classic struggle between older and younger generations – an attempt of the younger generation to implement what they understood to be the obligation they had as intelligentsia towards the rest of the society they were part of, as can be noticed from the following quotation:

The young Jewish generation [in Lvov] did not find its place in the presence of Jewish organisations. The old organisation *Shomer Yisra'el* that was founded at a time of liberalism and constitution was almost dead, and that was the case regarding *Agudat Akhim* that it was a younger organisation. In the 1880s, new organisations began to form. This was a result of dissatisfaction of the young generation with the progressive Jewish associations. It was the same generation who gained its education at the Polish gymnasiums.⁴⁷

Undoubtedly, *Mikra Kodesh* contributed significantly to the development of local modern Jewish cultural life, and this contribution continued after the establishment of *Zion*. The various activities of the association were carried out in different languages, and few members of the association spoke Hebrew. When Judah Leo Landau gave a lecture in Hebrew in 1883, he noted in his diary that his lecture was one of the few delivered in Hebrew at the association's club.⁴⁸ However, both the founders and the members agreed that Hebrew was the national language, and not just one to be used for the purpose of religious rituals. The association also added new rituals and events that were not necessarily part of the traditional Jewish calendar. Members of *Mikra Kodesh* commemorated memorial days and the birthdays of various Jewish writers, such as Mikhah Yosef Levinzon and Yitshak Ber Levinzon-Ribal.⁴⁹ Thon and his friends made significant contributions to the formation of the commemoration of the Hebrew writer Perets Smolenskin as a national Jewish writer. When Biere, one of the founders of *Mikra Kodesh*, was a medical student in Vienna, he joined many other Jewish students, writers and intellectuals in

⁴⁵ Dmitry Shumsky, "Histoyografia leomiut ve do leomiut yahdut zco germanit", *Zion* 69 (2004): 50.

⁴⁶ Thon, *Demuyot MiLvov*, 366. Adolf Stand, *Kitvei Stand* (Tel Aviv: Defus hapoel hamizrahi, 1945).

⁴⁷ Stand, *Kitvei Stand*, 3.

⁴⁸ The title of the lecture was "New Haskalah or Assimilation", and it was published as a pamphlet in Lemberg 188. See JNLI, 4^o798, Landau diary.

⁴⁹ *Ha-magid* (March 1, 1888), *Ha-magid* (October 11, 1888) in the section report from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire.

visiting Smolenskin. *Ha-Shahar*, the periodical that Smolenskin founded and edited, was popular reading material among young Jews in Eastern Europe, even though this periodical is not mentioned in the list of books that members of *Mikra Kodesh* read. *Ha-Shahar* was the name of one of the first Zionist youth organisations founded in Galicia. The first memorial ceremony for Smolenskin took place in 1885, a short time after his death. These memorials were conducted in numerous languages. In 1888, a poem by Judah Leib Gordon and a poem in German were read at the memorial, and members of the association lectured about Smolenskin in Hebrew and German.⁵⁰ The ritual of commemoration of Smolenskin developed by *Mikra Kodesh* was not only the first commemoration event for Smolenskin held in the Eastern European Jewish sphere; it was also the development of a new kind of ritual, different from that identified with the traditional Jewish lifestyle. Members of *Mikra Kodesh* asked the Jewish society to take an example from the way Polish society commemorated various people, such as the writer Józef (Ignacy) Kraszewski.⁵¹ To some of the members of *Mikra Kodesh*, Smolenskin seemed a good candidate for the position of Jewish national writer. However, certain implications regarding the implementation of this new concept of national writer were not yet clear enough to them. The way their Polish neighbours used the concept seemed to be something they could adapt; after all, literature and other writings were fundamental components of the way Polish society in Galicia and other places maintained their national existence throughout the 19th century. In a Hebrew book published in 1890 and dedicated to Adam Mickiewicz, Reuben Braudes, who lived in Lvov and was involved in the city's Jewish intellectual scene, wrote about how he and other Jewish writers were inspired by the way the Polish society in Galicia and other places honoured Mickiewicz when the writer was buried in Kraków in 1890.⁵² As for the members of *Mikra Kodesh*, their reference to literature was not only via the commemoration of dead writers; the association also tried to provide financial aid for writers who needed assistance.⁵³ This activity also continued after *Mikra Kodesh* turned into *Zion*.⁵⁴

Furthermore, *Mikra Kodesh* was one of the first Jewish associations to celebrate Chanukah in a new, non-traditional way. The winter holiday was observed in the same way that *Kadima*, the Jewish students association to

⁵⁰ See section report from the Austrian-Hungarian Empire, *Ha-magid* (February 9, 1888).

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

⁵² Reuben Braudes, *Adam Mickiewicz toldot hayav erko bameshorerim uyihuso le'am benei Yisrael bisfarav uvepeulotav* (Kraków: A Poist, 1890).

⁵³ Hill Ben Sechar, "(Judah Leo Landau) 'alof ha-marich'", *Ha-magid* (March 8, 1888).

⁵⁴ JNLI, 4^o798, Landau diary.

which Biere belonged when he was a student in Vienna, celebrated it.⁵⁵ The rituals that *Mikra Kodesh* developed at the beginning of the 1880s continued to be part of the public, non-traditional Jewish sphere of Lvov in the following years. All the events held by *Mikra Kodesh* and *Zion* were conducted simultaneously in Hebrew, German and Polish. This ritual demonstrated the national aspirations of the association, but at the same time it also reflected the progressive, non-traditional bourgeois environment that the association was part of.⁵⁶ *Mikra Kodesh's* new rituals and ceremonies took place on special occasions, while the educational programmes took place during the week. Cultural events such as special lectures and discussions were held on Saturday nights and were conducted in assorted languages. Most, if not all, of *Mikra Kodesh's* activities were aimed at narrow social circles. The nature of these activities was elitist. In contrast, a new attitude had been developed in *Zion*, and its activities were aimed at wider social circles.

Mikra Kodesh gathered together people from different generations and assorted intellectual backgrounds. The association was not only a crossroads between the old and young generation; it was also a crossroads between different intellectual milieus. Various scholars who wrote about *Mikra Kodesh*, *Zion* and the beginnings of the Jewish national movement in Galicia, and who wanted to draw attention to the differences between these organisations and other local ones such as *Shomer Yisra'el* and *Agudat Akhim*, argued over the models of the previous associations, and in particular the fact that the local political orientations of both associations did not match the national aspirations and the local political atmosphere that were prevalent in the city in the mid-1880s. Hence, instead of adapting a non-Jewish orientation, they chose the Jewish national one. This developed in a very clear way: neither German nor Polish, but rather Jewish nationalism.⁵⁷ Nevertheless, although the members of *Mikra Kodesh* and *Zion* rejected the option of Jewish integration into Polish society and the option of affiliation with the German-Austrian environment, they were inspired by German and Polish concepts and

⁵⁵ On the celebration of Chanukah in Kadima in Vienna, see François Guesnnet, "Chanukah its Function in the Invention of Jewish Heroic Tradition in Early Zionism 1880-1900", in *Nationalism Zionism and Ethnic Mobilization - the Jews in 1900 and Beyond*, ed. Michael Berkowitz (Leiden: Brill, 2004), 230-31; "Joshua Shanes", in *Diaspora, Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia*. There is also a long discussion on the celebration of Chanukah in *Mikra Kodesh*, 62-69.

⁵⁶ Zvi Eliezer Ha-Levi Teller, "Lwov Chanukah", *Ha-magid* (January 12, 1888). The writer of this report emphasized that members of the association were the first in Lwów to commemorate the national uprising at Chanukah. Among others the celebration of Chanukah included public lectures reading different literature in Polish and Hebrew. One of the readers at this celebration was a woman affiliated with the Rapport family.

⁵⁷ "Joshua Shanes", in *Diaspora Nationalism and Jewish Identity in Habsburg Galicia*.

implemented assorted non-Jewish practices that had been used in their local environment. In 1898, when the 100th birthday of Adam Mickiewicz was commemorated all over Galicia, various Jewish communities wanted to take part in these events. These attempts faced strong resistance from the Polish population.⁵⁸ Hence the exclusion of the Jews from this and other Polish national events did not prevent the Jews from adapting various Polish and German social and national patterns.

A close look at the founders and members of *Mikra Kodesh* and *Zion* can indicate the way in which *Mikra Kodesh*, and later *Zion*, zigzagged between Polish and German influences. Even the disagreements between the founders and members of the associations were a type of clash between the German concept of *Bildung* and the Polish interpretation of intelligentsia.

It appears that in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, despite the strong German influence, with regard to the adaptation of the meaning of the concept of intelligentsia, Thon and his friends adapted its Polish interpretation. Thon and his friends had the opportunity to implement the tasks of the intellectual towards his society. They believed that members of the intelligentsia had obligations to exert influence in assorted arenas, and that Jewish intellectuals should be involved in public life throughout the political arena but also in the cultural and the literature arenas. In the 1880s and 1890s, Thon and his friends were involved in several attempts to publish a number of Jewish periodicals in Yiddish and Polish. The publication of the *Kantchik* in 1892 and the *Judischen Volkskalaender* in 1895, as well as the later publication of *Przyszłość*, the Jewish national periodical in Polish, indicate that in the 1890s Thon and his friends hoped to make the traditional Jewish masses in Galicia their supporters and partners for their various activities. They understood that political and public activities could not be the exclusive activities of the elite. Rather, the wide base of support of the Jewish masses was needed.⁵⁹ But this was not their only goal, as they had another purpose in mind; namely, to make the traditional Jewish masses become better citizens in the place they lived – Galicia. The different publications that Thon and his friends were involved with were not aimed only at the Jewish masses. They believed that by writing in Yiddish they would be able to hold a dialogue with the masses and with the elite. It was their hope to convince enlightened circles to increase their involvement in Jewish public activity. They wanted to use their Yiddish and Polish writings to bring the Jewish masses closer to the non-Jewish

⁵⁸ Daniel Unowsky, "Peasant Political Mobilization and the 1898 Anti-Jewish Riots in Western Galicia", *European History Quarterly* 40, no. 3 (2010): 412–435.

⁵⁹ See for example Ozjasz Thon's article "Dir politish partyien ein der gefbuart", *Judischen Volkskalaender* (1895).

world and at the same time to bring the progressive circle closer to the Jewish world.⁶⁰ This was part of the method that allowed them to work simultaneously with assorted Jewish social layers, and it was their own interpretation of the Polish concept of organic work (*praca organiczna*).⁶¹ Around that time, in view of the ideas of positivism and organic work, the Polish intelligentsia in Galicia tried to develop national interests among different social groups.⁶² Despite the influence and presence of German culture in Galicia, the Jewish intelligentsia in Galicia was, for better or for worse, seen as a Polish-Jewish intelligentsia.⁶³

Lvov during the last decades of the 19th century had its unique intellectual atmosphere. This intellectual atmosphere offered Thon a diversity of thinking as well as several political and cultural models that he could learn from. Indeed, we can trace the effects of the intellectual atmosphere of Lvov on numerous political and intellectual choices that Thon made later on in his life, including his decision to introduce the English philosopher and sociologist Herbert Spencer to Hebrew readers⁶⁴ and his choice, along with other members of *Mikra Kodesh* and *Zion*, to become rabbis in communities throughout Poland and other parts of the world. This latter decision reflected the interpretations of Thon, Ehrenpreis, Braude, Judal Leo Landau, David Neumark, and Samuel Gutman – who at the beginning of the 20th century was the rabbi in the Temple of Lvov – of the way in which different members of Polish intelligentsia interpreted the meaning of intellectual leadership. Perhaps Kobak, the founder of *Mikra Kodesh* who served as the rabbi for several communities in German areas and in Lvov, was the one who gave them the inspiration to become rabbis. In various letters that Thon wrote to his friends over the years, he distinguished between the traditional rabbis of Galicia and the beardless rabbis from Germany.⁶⁵ Thon wanted to be a different kind of rabbi: a rabbi who could lead and direct his community and the whole people. He understood that Judaism could not exist without the synagogue, but that did not mean that as a rabbi he could not change the synagogue to meet the contemporary needs of Jewish society. His method of integrating politi-

⁶⁰ See *Kantchik* (1892).

⁶¹ More on this concept in English can be found in Stanislaus Blejwas, *Realism in Polish Politics, Warsaw Positivism and National Survival in Nineteenth Century Poland* (New Haven: Slavica Publishes, 1984).

⁶² Struve, *Gentry, Jews and Peasants*, 104.

⁶³ Moshe Kleinman, "Shnei Olamim", *Revivim* (1908); David Malz, "Odpowiedź Syonisty na głos antysyonisty do polskiej inteligencji żydowskiej zwrócony Dr. Henryka Nussbauma", *Przyszłość* (April 5, 1898).

⁶⁴ The series of articles that Thon wrote on Herbert Spencer was first published in *Ha-schiloah* in 1910. Later that same year, the series of articles was published as a book.

⁶⁵ Thon to Ehrepreis, May 30, 1898, JNLI, 4^o672, file number 11.

cal literature with the world of religion was based on the intellectual models that he became acquainted with in Lvov. The first steps that Thon took in the Jewish public life of Lvov offered him several options to integrate between the different ingredients that were part of its cultural baggage; between non-Jewish Polish and German intellectual concepts and Jewish ideas, both modern and traditional. The way that he learned to combine the Jewish, Polish and German worlds helped him later in life to define his unique voice as a rabbi and his distinctive cultural path in the interwar period, a path that uniquely integrated Jewish nationality and Polish patriotism.⁶⁶

Jan Woleński

Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon and Sociology

Yehoshua Ozjasz Thon studied philosophy in Berlin in 1891–1895. In particular, he attended classes conducted by Georg Simmel (philosopher and sociologist), Friedrich Paulsen (philosopher) and Adolph Wagner (sociologist, economist). Simmel became Thon's principal intellectual mentor. Simmel was one of the leading representatives of Neo-Kantianism in Germany, but he was also quite strongly influenced by American pragmatism. Thon obtained his PhD on the basis of the study *Die Grundprinzipien der kantischen Moralphilosophie in ihrer Entwicklung*;¹ this topic was suggested to him by Simmel, who was more interested in practical and ethical issues than theoretical ones. In this work, Thon argues that Kant represented eudaimonism (the doctrine that happiness is the *summum bonum* – the highest goodness) before his critical ethics, that is, ethical theory derived from the principles of *reine Vernunft*; Kant's mature ethical views, based on the categorical imperative, are displayed in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, one of his principal books, published in 1788.

In 1897, Thon graduated from the rabbinic school in Berlin. He sacrificed his later years entirely to Jewish life.² Although Thon himself never returned to his PhD dissertation and its problem, one can ask whether Kantian motifs could be found in his Judaic teaching. The answer can only be hypothetical, because Thon did not refer to Kant in his later writings. However, it seems that some Kantian motifs are present in Thon's sermons. Clearly, Thon as a rabbi justified his ethical recommendations with the Torah and Talmud, that is, the most sacred sources of Judaism. However, when he stressed the internality of morality, the externality of civil law, moral autonomy of the individual, good will or freedom, these points are very close to Kant's ethical

⁶⁶ Shoshana Ronen, "Ozjasz Thon – rabin syjonista i polski patriotas", in *Żydowski Polak, polski Żyd. Problem tożsamości w literaturze polsko-żydowskiej*, eds. Alina Molisak and Zuzanna Kołodziejaska (Warszawa: Dom Wydawniczy Elipsa, 2011), 82–92.

¹ Ozjasz Thon, *Die Grundprinzipien der kantischen Moralphilosophie in ihrer Entwicklung* (Berlin: Mayer & Müller, 1895).

² Details are presented in other papers in this volume.