

The Jewish Community in Kraków and Kazimierz and the Jewish Communal Authorities in the Light of Internal Sources (16th – 18th Centuries)

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The Jewish community in Kraków were an example of the organizational forms used in the Jewish communities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. They varied from community to community. The administration system and system solutions were defined under state authority regulations, local and private legislation and internal regulations of Jewish authorities. For the Jewish community in Kraków in the modern period the most important internal sources were the Kraków Community Charter and the community record books – pinkasim. People who worked for the community could be divided into two groups. To the first group belong the Kraków Community Board (parnasim, towim and fourteen kahal members). In addition to the Kraków Community Board there were a number of other officials of the community. They had several areas of responsibility: finances, maintenance of order in the Jewish quarter and supervision of crafts and trade. To this group belong also judges [three to each of the three governing bodies]. To the second group of the people working for the community belong rabbi, cantor, ritual slaughterer and beadles, community secretary, midwives, doctors, street cleaners, public bath personnel, prison guards and sentries watching over the gates leading to the quarter. The analysis of the list of the Kraków's community officials and functionaries showed as the power was in the hand of a small groups of inhabitants. Nevertheless, the system of the communal institutions proved very durable, probably because till the end of the 18th century there was no other alternative solutions.

Key words: Jews. Kraków. Community. Pinkasim. Charter. Regulations. Sources.

The oldest references confirming the presence of Jews in Kraków dates back to the second half of the 12th century.¹ However, the existence of the Jewish religious community dates back to the 14th century due to the fact that the first information about the „the Jewish street“², synagogues, cemeteries, mikveh and hospitals – all places and objects that are necessary for the functioning of the organized Jewish community – is found in this period.³

All properties were located in the north-western part of the city, in the quarter called platea Judaeorum – the Jewish quarter, where the life of the Jewish community focused. However, platea Judaeorum was not a closed area, away from Christians.⁴ Its existence was not in fact based on the provisions of the church law, ordering the Jews to create a separate residential area, but it resulted from the fact that it was easier for the group to live in accordance with the requirements of Judaism, to prepare kosher food, organize prayers and holidays.⁵

The next century – the 15th century – proved to be very difficult for the Jewish community living in Kraków. Previous relations between Jews and Christians deteriorated. Christians were

1 WYROZUMSKI, J. Żydzi w średniowiecznym Krakowie. In *Krzysztofory. Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa* (15) 1988, 8. See also: ZAREMSKA, H. *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Europie Środkowej : w Czechach, Polsce i na Węgrzech*. Poznań 2005, 70-81.

2 *Najstarsze księgi i rachunki miasta Krakowa od r. 1300 do 1400* (I) 1877, 28.

3 ZAREMSKA, H. *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Polsce. Gmina krakowska*. Warszawa 2011, 342-409; WYROZUMSKI, J. *Żydzi w średniowiecznym Krakowie...*, 9.

4 ZAREMSKA, H. *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Polsce...*, 345-362.

5 ZAREMSKA, H. *Żydzi w średniowiecznej Europie Środkowej...*, 28-31.

observed to incline to anti-Jewish speeches and riots more and more frequent. The situation of the Jews in Kraków was also visible in the real sense. In 1469, the Jews sold their land and property to the chapter of Kraków, which in turn forwarded it to the Academy of Kraków, and they moved to the area lying to the north-east of Market (Szpiłgarska Street).⁶ However, most of them did not stay in the area for too long. Deteriorating living conditions, harassment by the citizens, limiting sources of income, which were the result of the agreement concluded in 1485, as well as the conflagration, which in 1494 destroyed the part of the Jewish building were the reasons for decision made by the members of the Kraków community to once again look for a new headquarter and began to move to Kazimierz.⁸

Kazimierz was a town in the south of Krakow, in the alluvial terrace of the Vistula. It was created by the Town Charter issued on February 27, 1335 by King Kazimierz the Great, who it also owed its name. Kazimierz was the center of transit, through which a variety of goods circulated. It was probably the economic factors that attracted Jews, whose presence in the area was already confirmed in the 14th century.⁹ However, it was the migration of the Jews of Kraków contributed to the development of the local Jewish community.

Most of the Jews living in Kazimierz were the members or descendants of the representatives of the community of Kraków.¹⁰ Owing to the fact that they never resigned from belonging to the community of Kraków, Jewish residents of Kazimierz were specified as „the members of the community in Kazimierz, Kraków”¹¹, and for this reason, further analysis will focus on the group.

Jews did not settle the whole Kazimierz, and only the fifth part, called Oppidum Judaeorum – the Jewish town.¹² Initially, their houses bordered with facilities belonging to Christians. In the course of time, the Jews began to repurchase the properties and parcels from Christians. Furthermore, they enlarged the area of „Jewish Quarter” by purchasing new plots in the years 1553 – 1554, 1583 and 1608.¹³

Gradually, the two parts of Kazimierz – Jewish and Christian – were separated from each other. The first distinction by a wooden fence was replaced with the wall that separates the lands of the two communities in the 17th century. Built to provide for the „peace and security” wall created a closed territory of „the Jewish town”, which in the form of non-enlarged with any part of the land, survived until the end of the 18th century.¹⁴ Over the centuries and the number of inhabitants of the area changed, in the 70s of the 16th century it

6 BAŁABAN, M. *Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304-1868, vol. I: 1304-1655*. Kraków 1931, 56-58.

7 *Kodeks dyplomatyczny Krakowa* (1) 1871, 192.

8 MIECHOWITA, M. *Cronica Polonorum*. Cracoviae 1521, 349; WYROZUMSKA, B. Czy Jan Olbracht wygnał Żydów z Krakowa? In *Rocznik Krakowski* (LIX) 1993, 5-11.

9 WYROZUMSKA, B. *Czy Jan Olbracht...*, 9.

10 *Ibidem*.

11 *Ibidem*.

12 PIECHOTKA, M. – PIECHOTKA, K. *Oppidum Judaeorum. Żydzi w przestrzeni miejskiej dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*. Warszawa 2004, 153-163.

13 KRASNOWOLSKI, B. Rozwój urbanistyczny i architektoniczny Miasta Żydowskiego na krakowskim Kazimierzu. In *Krzysztoforzy. Zeszyty Naukowe Muzeum Historycznego Miasta Krakowa* (15) 1988, 84-98; KRASNOWOLSKI, B. *Ulice i place krakowskiego Kazimierza*. Kraków 1992; KRASNOWOLSKI, B. Z badań nad architekturą i urbanistyką krakowskiego Kazimierza w okresie późnośredniowiecznym i nowożytnym. In *Rocznik Krakowski* (55) 1989, 103-111; ŚWISZCZOWSKI, S. Miasto żydowskie na Kazimierzu w świetle nowych badań. In *Biuletyn Krakowski* (2) 1960, 47-72; ŚWISZCZOWSKI, S. Założenie i rozwój miasta Kazimierza. In *Biuletyn Krakowski* (3) 1961, 34-79; ŚWISZCZOWSKI, S. *Miasto Kazimierz pod Krakowem*. Kraków 1981.

14 BAŁABAN, M. *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, 199.

was estimated to be 2,000¹⁵, and in the 18th century it reached 4,500 people.¹⁶ The population growth was the reason for a lack of space. Added to this, overcrowding resulted in a lack of privacy and control of the co-believers over the neighbours.

Despite the difficulties arising from the territorial limitations, the Jewish quarter was the epicenter of religious, cultural and intellectual Ashkenazi Jews. Moses Isserles, Nathan Spiro, Jom Tov Lipman Heller lived and worked there.¹⁷

With reference to administration, Oppidum Judaeorum subjected to the magistrate of the town of Kazimierz. However, „Jewish town“ was managed by the Jewish authorities. For this reason, it was an example of the management and operation of the Jewish communities in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.¹⁸

In the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth two types of rules governing the functioning of the administrative and political solutions adopted in the Jewish communities were in force. The first group of rules were rules of state: general and special privileges¹⁹, royal decrees and orders of regional governors.²⁰ The other one included internal regulations of the Jewish authorities. In the case of the community of Krakow, one of the groups consisted of the Kraków Community Charter and the Record Books.

Both types of the Jewish materials have unique character and interesting history. Statute of the community of Kraków consisting of 93 paragraphs written on more than 110 cards, and containing provisions in force in the community was issued by the communal authorities in 1595.²¹ The statute was to be valid only for three years, until 1598.²² However, over the next decades, the provisions were supplemented, corrected and expanded.²³ As a result, the provisions of statutes governed the life of Kraków's Jews to the time of the partition, and it became the basic law, which was a model for codes valid in other Polish and Lithuanian communities.²⁴

The statute of the community of Kraków stand out from other similar collections with the language in which it was prepared. Jewish provenance documents were written in Hebrew – the language of the liturgy and law, and the statute was drawn up in Yiddish – the everyday language of the contemporary Polish Jews.²⁵ Lawmakers made such a decision in order to

15 ŚWISZCZOWSKI, S. *Miasto żydowskie na Kazimierzu...*, 55.

16 REDEROWA, D. Studia nad wewnętrznymi dziejami Krakowa porozbiorowego 1796–1809, part II : Zagadnienia ustrojowe i ekonomiczno-społeczne. In *Rocznik Krakowski* (XXXVI) 1962, 73.

17 *Krakowianie. Wybitni Żydzi krakowscy XIV–XX wieku*. Ed. Kutylak, A. Kraków 2006.

18 BAŁABAN, M. Ustrój gminy żydowskiej w XVI–XX w. (nowe badania naukowe). In *Głos Gminy Żydowskiej*, (I) 1937, 4–7, 33–34, 81–82, 101–103, 129, 131; (II) 1938, 30–32, 53–55, 82–84, 103–105, 130–132, 176–178, 204–207; (III) 1939, 6–8, 29–31, 54–56, 79–82, 104–107; BAŁABAN, M. Ustrój kahału w Polsce XVI–XVIII wieku. In *Kwartalnik Poświęcony Badaniu Przeszłości Żydów w Polsce* (I) 1912, 2, 17–54.

19 *Jewish Privileges in the Polish Commonwealth. Charters of Rights Granted to the Jewish Communities in Poland-Lithuania in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries*. Ed. Goldberg, J. Jerusalem 1985.

20 See also: *Materiały źródłowe do dziejów Żydów w księgach grodzkich dawnego województwa krakowskiego z lat 1674–1696*, vol. I : 1674–1683. Ed. Kaźmierczyk, A. Kraków 1995; *Materiały źródłowe do dziejów Żydów w księgach grodzkich dawnego województwa krakowskiego z lat 1674–1696*, vol. II : 1684–1696, Kraków 2009.

21 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej z 1595 roku i jego uzupełnienia : Tłumaczenie sporządzone na podstawie odpisu Majera Batabana*. Ed. Jakimyszyn, A. Kraków 2005, 100, LXIX.

22 Ibidem.

23 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 101–109, LXIX–LXXVII.

24 *Gminy żydowskie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej : Wybór tekstów źródłowych*. Ed. Michałowska, A. Warszawa 2003, VII–XVII.

25 See: GELLER, E. *Jidysz – język Żydów polskich*. Warszawa 1994.

be sure that the provisions of the statute (the first such regulation in the Jewish community resulting from the Polish lands) would be understood by everyone, even by uneducated members of the community (Fig. 1).²⁶

The statute was stored with other important communal documents in one of the synagogues in Kraków. There it was found by Nathan Dembitzer, who made a summary in Hebrew, which was published by Chaim N. Wettstein.²⁷ However, it was not the original text, but only an extract of the statute. Full copy was made by another Jewish historian Meir Balaban, who published it in two parts in the years 1912 – 1916.²⁸ It is the only fully preserved copy of Kraków's community statute.²⁹

The record books were handwritten by local Jewish institutions. Communal pinkasim, provincial assemblies pinkasim (regional council) and pinkasim of the Council of Four Lands belonged to this group. Communal pinkasim were the most important for the community of Kraków. All issues relevant to the community in Kraków were recorded: protocols for local council election, authorities provisions, financial settlement, the provisions concerning the distribution and collection of taxes, decisions on economic and judicial matters as well as various issues related to social and religious life. Owing to the fact that the community of Kraków belonged to large communities, the number of made decisions was large, and hence records; however, it was impossible to include all records in one pinkasim. For this reason, the community of Kraków had several types of pinkasim for administration alone, among others special pinkasim included authorities provisions, pinkasim of nominations, including records from the communal elections, pinkasim of communal counter with the provisions relating to taxes or pinkasim of judges with provisions of the Jewish courts. In addition, separate pinkasim were written by brotherhoods, associations and the Jewish organizations operating in the community, as well as they were owned by the synagogues and beit-hamidrash.³⁰

Pinkasim were regarded to be a document confirming made decisions, and therefore who or what the issue concerned and the features of issues were described in detail. In order to validate made decisions, people representing the government and participated in the case were listed, and signed by the highest communal officials and witnesses.³¹ In the case of litigations sometimes the person of the concerned case signed. Thus, depending on the nature of the case the sign was of three to several people (Fig. 2).

The record books were bounded, paginated and binded volumes.³² Over the years they formed a subsequent volumes, consisting of tens or hundreds of notes prepared in Hebrew.³³ Some of the records in Kraków pinkasim was collected and developed by Chaim N. Wettstein,

26 *Gminy żydowskie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej...*, XIX.

27 WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Otzar ha-Sifrut*. Kraka 1892.

28 BAŁABAN, M. Die Krakauer Judengemeinde Ordnung von 1595 und ihre Nachträge. In *Jahrbuch der jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft I*. Frankfurt a/M. 1912 – 1913, 296-360; *part II*. Frankfurt a/M. 1916, 88-114.

29 Translation: BAŁABAN, M. *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*; *Gminy żydowskie w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej...*, 3-7, 25-32, 46-50, 84-86, 125-127; CYGIELMAN, S. A. *Jewish Autonomy in Poland and Lithuania until 1648 (5408)*. Jerusalem 1997, 46-104.

30 Par ex. FRAM, E. D. From the Pinkasim of Kraków in the Early Eighteenth Century. In *Gal-Ed. On the History and Culture of Polish Jewry 23*. Ed. Engel, D. Tel Aviv 2012, 165-175; WEINRYB, B. D. *Texts and Studies in the Communal history of Polish Jewry*. New York 1950; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot yeshanim*. Kraka 1892; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim: Mi-pinkase ha-kahal be-Kraka*. Kraka 1900; SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11.

31 Ibidem.

32 State Archive in Kraków (SA Kraków), Acta judaica, III-1-11.

33 ALTBAUER, M. O języku dokumentów związanych z samorządem żydowskim w Polsce. In *Żydzi w dawnej Rzeczypospolitej*. Wrocław; Warszawa 1991, 12-22.

a part is to be published.³⁴ Pinkasim that were not published covers the court books with records dating from 1762 and it is the only original and preserved to this day, part of the extensive collection of materials of Jewish provenance from the community of Kraków.³⁵

The records in both the communal statute and pinkasim determine the range of the impact of the provisions. The Statutes of the community reported that its provisions apply to „the Jewish street” that is in the Jewish quarter of Kazimierz, and „in Kraków, Kazimierz, Stradom”³⁶, which allowed for conclusion that the Jews of Kraków did not perceive Kraków and Kazimierz to be two separate town centers (formally Kazimierz was included in Krakow only in 1800).³⁷ In turn pinkasim records stated that the decisions were valid in „the holy town of Kraków”, and in the areas belonging to it, in the suburbs. In the case of the rabbinical court decisions it happened that the its announcement was expected, and hence the respect in the whole Community of Kraków.³⁸

Both statutes of the community of Kraków and pinkasim were the documents of the provenance of Jewish determining the overall communal life in the sixteenth to the 18th century, as well as the structure and operation of community activities and scope of works and competences of its authority, and dependencies and relations between the representatives of the communal hierarchy.

People who worked for the community did not constitute a unique community, but were divided into two groups. The first one were the officers who carried out the duties entrusted to them, free of charge. The second group consisted of functioners and officials who were paid for performance their duties.³⁹ In addition to the remuneration, the differences between the two groups concerned the competences and responsibilities, workplace and position in the hierarchy of the community.

The group of communal officials included people among of whom three levels can be distinguished. The first of these was the Community Council (referred to as the Board or the appropriate kahal). Community councils of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth areas ranged from a dozen to several dozen people. In Kraków, there was a principle according to which the number of members was equal to the number of people sitting in minor Sanhedrin. Thus, each time the council had 23 members, who were divided into three groups: parnasim (4 people), towim (5 people) and kahal (14 people).⁴⁰ Therefore, the community council retained three-level-principle, analogous to the force valid in the boards of German towns and Polish towns arising under the Magdeburg Law.⁴¹

Every month, of the four seniors the highest officer of „the Jewish town” was elected, the mayor. It was called the Parnas of the month, due to the fact that he took over power in the „Jewish town” for a period of one month. This solution was considered to be more

34 See: WEINRYB, B. D. *Texts and Studies in the Communal history...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim: Mi-pinkase ha-ka-hal be-Kraka*. Kraka 1900.

35 SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11; FRAM, E. D. *From the Pinkasim of Kraków...*, 175. This part which wasn't published is preparing now to the publication by Prof. Maciej Tomal and Anna Jakimyszyn (Institute of Jewish Studies, Jagiellonian University).

36 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 60, 82, 84, XXXV, LIII, LV.

37 BIENIARZÓWNA, J. – MAŁECKI, J. M. *Dzieje Krakowa II : Kraków w wiekach XVI–XVIII*. Kraków 1984, 9.

38 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 100, LXVIII.

39 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 28-31, VII-XI.

40 Ibidem.

41 BAŁABAN, M. *Ustrój gminy żydowskiej...* (I) 1937, 82.

democratic than putting the power of one person, and each Parnas functioned duties for 3 months each year.⁴²

Community board members were called sometimes the elders of the community. Their responsibilities related to the relevant issues concerning the community: community representation to non-Jewish authorities, supervising the work of other people acting on behalf of the whole community, participation in litigation and prosecution of criminals who broke the valid rules, controlling finances and communal accounts as well as social monitoring and the everyday existence of the inhabitants of „the Jewish city“.⁴³

The second level constituted the members of the community commission. In the community of Kraków four committees acted: the judicial committee, the treasury committee, the welfare committee and the community public order committee. The first one consisted of judges – three in each of the colleges of judges, dealing with issues related to communal jurisdiction. The other committee dealing with treasury issues created valuers, whose responsibilities containing assessment of the income and assets of each resident, and to determination of the amount of taxes paid by him/her. The charity matters dealt with gabaims. Except for gabaims dealing with the poor, in the community of Kraków gabaims acted as managers of synagogues and beit-hamidrash. Their duties included monitoring the state and property of synagogue and supervision of the sale of all honors (e.g., a call for the Torah reading). However, kosher supervision, control over accuracy of weights and measures used, the purity and safety of the Jewish quarter belonged to memunim – members of the community public order committee.⁴⁴

The third, and also the lowest level in the group comprised the men who participated in brotherhoods and associations – in the number of several in the community of Kraków. Each of them, in particular the two oldest and largest – Talmud-Tora association and Chewra Kadisha – based their existence on separate legal regulations (statutes).⁴⁵

All officers, regardless of representation of the level of the community hierarchy of, were obliged to perform their duties diligently. Owing to the fact that Parnas of the month was responsible for all of them, upon taking this position on behalf of all officers he should have made the oath of proper fulfillment of the undertaken duties and acting in accordance with the provisions of the statute.⁴⁶

In order to meet the given tasks communal officials discussed all issues that emerged in the course of their work, as well as issues raised by residents during the held regularly meetings needed to be discussed by officials. Each of the meeting participant had an opportunity to express his opinion, because it was assumed that the decision needed to be taken with the approval of the public. At the same time in order to avoid impossibility of making a decision due to the absence of one of the members of the community board, it was accepted that in the event of departure each of the board member had to provide his point of view to his deputy, who would present it in a public forum. The final position of the solution emerged after listening to the views of all participants. Then, to give it legal effect, the taken decision was recorded in pinkasim.

Communal officers were elected to perform their duties for a year, in the elections took part all adults male members of the community who had the right to vote. Elections were

42 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 19-28, I-VII.

43 *Ibidem*, 19-28, 35-42, I-VII, XIII-XIX.

44 *Ibidem*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim...*; SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11.

45 BAŁABAN, M. *Historja Żydów w Krakowie...*, 471-474.

46 *Statut krakowskiej gminy żydowskiej...*, 19-28, 35-42, I-VII, XIII-XIX.

always held in the spring and took place during the feast of Passover. They were carried out only in the „Jewish Quarter“, and had an indirect nature. In the first stage, each of the member of the living communal authorities showed one of the members of the community, nine of those men were elected and formed a group of pre-electors, who elected five men from all the inhabitants, and they elected the communal officers.⁴⁷

During the feast of Passover except for the election of officers, electors pointed the members of the second group of people working for the benefit of the community – the community officials. Some of them were also appointed differently – by the town council at its first meeting.⁴⁸

It has been already mentioned that communal officials is a group of people who perform their duties for remuneration of communal fund or as a proportion of the fees obtained from the result of their actions. Officials differed from the officers that were employed by the community on the basis of the contract.

Communal officials, like the officers, created a hierarchical and diverse group. Among the top officials were the rabbi – the first, most important municipal official, leading prayers in the synagogue, the cantor – concerned with ritual slaughterers, the chairman of the Talmudic college known as the Head of the Yeshiva, as well as communal primary school teacher leading activities for children and young people from the community of Kraków. All the above mentioned needed to hold a vast religious knowledge in order to properly perform their duties. People holding knowledge of secular sciences (medical) belonged to the second group, among other doctors and communal midwives. Another group was created by people who performed their daily work in constant cooperation with the management of the community. They were communal beadles who performed all the work assigned to him by the members of the board, community writer who was required to protocol all decision-making authority and all communal contracts, accounts and documents, communal clerk who kept money, bills and contracts belonging to the community, and shtadlan representing the community and the communal authorities against non-Jews. The last group of communal officials contained janitors and guards of the gates of the Jewish town, public bath personnel, and jailers.⁴⁹

The presented division of officials, however, was not the only one. In fact, it sometimes happened that the person referred to with the same title did not have a single duty routine, the office of beadle is an example of this phenomenon. Not only communal beadles worked in the community of Kraków, but also beadles of synagogue and beadles of the Jewish courts. Furthermore, all beadles, regardless of where or with whom they worked, were divided into „higher“ or senior, more experienced, and thus have greater competences and „lower“ or junior beadles, with less experience.⁵⁰

Two main factors were crucial as far as belonging to a group of communal authorities in Kraków. The first was the financial status of the individual. The higher the property of a person, the more likely he would be a part of the community government. However, it was not the case of removing the poorer from power. Such system was in fact caused by other factors, namely, as it was already mentioned, some people working in the community did not receive remuneration for duties performance. As the entrusted tasks prevented from

47 Ibidem, 28-31, VII-XI.

48 Ibidem.

49 Ibidem; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim...*; SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11.

50 SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11, 31 and next.

taking up paid work, their performance could only be by wealthy people. Moreover, working for the entire community was also very heavy burden, i.e. due to the fact that the members of the government should remit their own money to be used in a situation where the whole community was in a difficult financial position. Knowledge was the second criteria allowing to enter into the communal elite. It was not, however, a secular education, but of religious knowledge – the Torah and the Talmud, and the ability to use this knowledge for the benefit of the whole community. This requirement was related mainly to those who made decisions of a religious nature or passed on the knowledge to others (dajani, rabbi, ritual slaughterers, cantor and teacher).

Specific titulary characterized people entering the ranks of communal government. Both in the statute and records from communal pinkasim men acting as the legislature were defined with titles divided into three groups.⁵¹ The first one referred to tasks and functions performed in the community, the second group was of religious education. The third one contained honorary titles of a respectful person. Titles of each group were associated, for example, in relation to Kraków communal rabbis the following terms were used: „our teacher“, „wise man“, „outstanding“, „noble“, „Light of Diaspora“, „presiding judge“, „President of Yeshiva“, combining them in a long forms „our teacher, wise man, light of Diaspora, presiding judge“ or „our teacher, lord and master, the President of Yeshiva“. A number of accepted meanings were also broken, i.e. the title of „saint“ added after the names of those recognized as martyrs who sacrificed their lives for their faith. In the community of Kraków it was used in conjunction with the title „wise man“ in determining the persons acting as witnesses to confirm the accuracy of these decisions.⁵²

It was also observed that universal titles were used for the wealthiest and most influential members of the community, occupying positions in the structure of the government. One of those titles was „dignitary“. However, it happened that the title was attributed to people who could obtain it because of the affinity of the communal elite. Then it was not only the differentiator, but also emphasized the social status of the individual.

Records from each pinkasim allowed to make a list of office-holders and office functions in the community.⁵³ However, the point does not concern only the people who were at the highest level of power, but the list of all communal officials. It would be difficult to determine who, for example, served as beadles in synagogues in Kraków in 1796 only based on the preserved documents. This information is included in one of the records to the court pinkasim of the year 1796, where beadles of four synagogues in Kraków are mentioned by names: two Moses (one of the Old Synagogue, the second of the Isaac Synagogue), Menachem of New Synagogue (Rema), Gecel Segal Hurwic of the High Synagogue.⁵⁴

Records of the statute and pinkasim of the community of Kraków are so detailed that it is possible to identify the individual. In addition, owing to the fact that in many cases due to the fact that by people mentioned in the statute and in pinkasim the names of parents or spouses were given, there is a possibility to make the genealogical trees of Jewish families from the community of Kraków and determine the degree of relatedness between individuals. It is also possible to determine whether at the time of record the mentioned persons were still

51 Ibidem; *Statut krakowskiej gminy...*, 47-50, XXIV-XXVII.

52 WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim...*; SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11.

53 It is impossible to reconstruct, year after year, a complete list of all persons occupying the position in the community.

54 SA Kraków, Acta judaica, III-1-11, 31.

alive, because the deceased were used a form specific to the Jewish tombstone inscriptions, such as „of blessed memory“.⁵⁵

The presented Kraków community management system does not cover all of its aspects. On the other hand, it proves that the Jewish administration system was advanced and above all bureaucratic. It presents a wide range of rights and duties of officers and communal officials. Furthermore, it shows the rotation at different positions, dependencies between them, and what group of people wielded power. It is also an example of the way of community management, which was duplicated in other Jewish communities in Polish or Lithuanian lands.

The main conclusion arises in the analysis of the functioning of the community of Kraków, is that there was full control over the communal authorities and the existence of the institutions within the community. This is due to supervision of all areas of life centralized in the hands of a small group of officials and communal officials.

Despite many inconveniences arising from the operation of such organized community administration system, development a different model failed over the centuries. Lack of alternatives was the reason that quoted principles and arrangements concerning people governed in the community were valid to the late 18th century.

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⁵⁵ Ibidem; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Kadmoniyot mi-pinkasot...*; WETTSTEIN, CH. N. *Dewarim atikim...*; See also: HONDO, L. *Stary żydowski cmentarz w Krakowie. Historia cmentarza. Analiza hebrajskich inskrypcji*. Kraków 2000.

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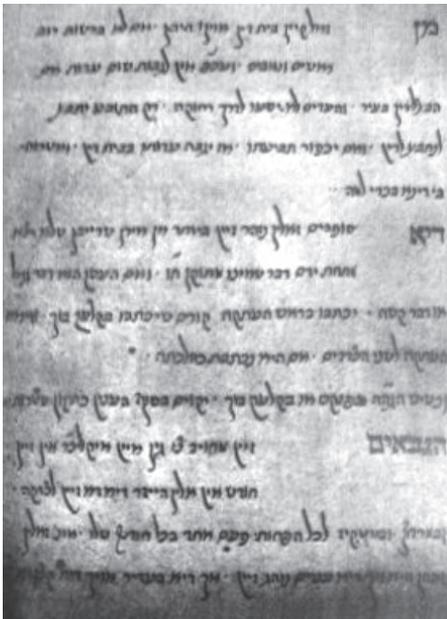


Fig. 1.
Page from the statute of the community of Kraków.
Source: M. Bałaban, *Historja Żydów w Krakowie i na Kazimierzu 1304–1868*, vol. I: 1304–1655, (Kraków, 1931 reprint 1991), 466b.

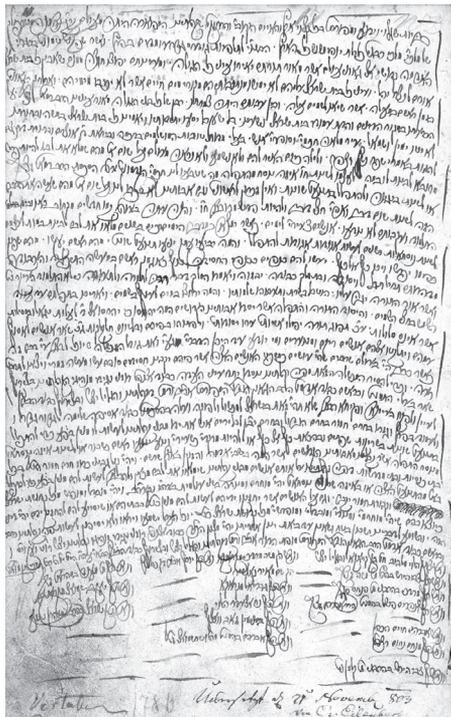


Fig. 2.
Page from the Kraków's pinkas.
Source: State Archive in Kraków, Acta judaica, sygn. III-1-11, 17.