

Introduction

After years of neglect, the end of the 20th century brought a true revival of interest in Jewish Studies in Poland. This peculiar trend also became noticeable in Great Poland (Poznań), albeit with a certain delay and less conspicuity. However, in taking up my research on the history of Israelites in Poznań in the period of Partitions (which I had begun considerably earlier), I was guided by other factors. Not many realize that the province annexed by Prussia as a result of the Partitions (first dubbed South Prussia and later the Grand Duchy of Poznań) for many years remained the greatest concentration of Jews in the Hohenzollern monarchy. Israelites in Poznań cohabited with two majority ethnic groups, Poles and Germans. Following the Partitions of Poland, their position became rather difficult: trapped between the modernizing Protestant Prussian state that strove for full integration of the newly acquired territory and its German population with the heartland, on the one hand, and the (mostly Catholic) Polish population with its own national aspirations, on the other. As a result of Poznań's annexation to Prussia, the local Israelites gradually drifted apart from their coreligionists under Austrian and Russian rule, and grew closer to German Jews, forming a sort of a bridge between the Eastern and Western Jewry. Thus, investigating the history of Poznań Israelites under Prussian rule poses a substantive research problem yet also seems fascinating in its own right. Particularly significant within this history was the process of internal transformation of the Jewish community, as well as its attitudes to the two emerging modern nations whose interests were becoming increasingly divergent.

The need, if not the necessity, to probe into the history of Poznań Israelites in the period of Partitions was something I discerned at the virtual onset of my academic career, although I did not initially comprehend the gravity or, all the more so, the complexity of the problem. Today the inclusion of the Jewish population in ruminations on the 19th-century history of the region is completely obvious to me. But at that time I could not shake the impression that Jewish themes were especially obscure and virtually absent from historical publications, in particular in Poland.¹

¹ Deficiencies in the research on the history of Poznań Jews were also noticed by other historians, see Z. Grot, "Badania dziejów Wielkopolski okresu zaborów (1793–1918)," in: *Dzieje*

Many years ago, while working on a paper on the attitudes of Jews during the Spring of Nations in Poznań, I ventured more boldly into this research field and realized how problematic it was to even compile the literature concerning the subject. To this day, not even a fragmentary bibliography of Poznań Judaica exists. Unfortunately, general bibliographies of the history of Poland, Germany, Great Poland or Poznań are of limited assistance in this respect, as they feature a sparse number of publications, written exclusively in Polish and German, of which the majority have been published by Poznań-based publishing houses and periodicals. Similarly, studies on the body of historical writing on Great Poland or the territories under Prussian rule tend to either marginalize or virtually overlook Jewish themes. One may assume that it is for this very reason that, save for a few exceptions, the studies investigating the history of Poznań Israelites have for years been based on the same handful of publications released prior to World War I or, at best, World War II, whose findings and interpretations they have uncritically rehashed.² In view of this, I concluded that to change the existing state of affairs not only called for a detailed source research but also an in-depth and comprehensive assessment of the extant historiography on Poznań Jews in the period of Partitions. My conviction was founded on preliminary queries during which I had already ascertained that the extent of the subject literature was far wider than that which exists in academic circulation. The need to conduct specialized studies in the history of historiography—a research strand of which this monograph is a representative—was also voiced by Andrzej Feliks Grabski. He contended (and I am in complete agreement with him in this respect) that, given the vast body of historical research today,

any single scholar who takes up research on a subject that has «yielded» a rich body of academic literature will struggle—more so, the larger the extent of said subject—to do justice to the methodological challenge of becoming familiar with the entire body of subject literature.

Hence, adds Grabski,

the historical science [...] must find ways to come up with preliminary drafts of cumulative body of historical writing in order to free (at least to an extent) the researchers interested in the topic the burden of self-reliant exposure to studies that add

Wielkopolski, vol. 2: *Lata 1793–1918*, ed. W. Jakóbczyk (Poznań, 1973), p. 896; W. Molik, “Dzieje Wielkopolski pod panowaniem pruskim jako przedmiot badań historycznych,” in: *O uprawianiu i znaczeniu historii regionalnej. Materiały konferencji naukowej ‘Historia regionalna—jej miejsce w świadomości społecznej,’ Toruń 6–7 kwietnia 1990 r.*, ed. Cz. Niedzielski (Ciechanów–Toruń, 1991), p. 57; S. Jersch-Wenzel, “Juden in Preußen—Preußische Juden,” *Tel Aviver Jahrbuch für deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 20, 1991, p. 442; T. Gąsowski, “Dzieje Żydów w polskiej historiografii (do roku 2000),” in: *Polska i Polacy w XIX–XX wieku. Studia ofiarowane Profesorowi Mariuszowi Kulczykowskiemu w 70. rocznicę jego urodzin*, ed. K. Ślusarek (Kraków, 2002), pp. 441, 447.

² I have already addressed this problem; see among others K.A. Makowski, “Die Geschichtsschreibung über die Juden im Posener Land, 1772–1918. Ein vorläufiger Forschungsbericht,” *Studia Judaica*, vol. 5, 2002, no. 1 (9), pp. 59–67.

hardly any or no value to their respective research topics, and will point them instead towards the publications that warrant their attention.³

This book was written with that very goal in mind.

In my research, I have adopted a broad definition of historical writing. My analysis spanned all forms of publications, from syntheses and handbooks through even the most minute articles, contributions, reviews, biographical notes, and obituaries (including those unpublished) that concerned, either in whole or in part, the history of the Jewish population of Poznań in the period of Partitions, as written by historians and non-professionals. My field of interest thus encompassed not only academic literature but also popular scientific and didactic publications, as well as historical journalism and essay writing. Conversely, excluded from my studies were diaries and fiction, given that, in my view, these genres are usually driven by different ambitions and serve different purposes.

My research query also included historical writing on Poznań Jews in the post-Partition period, from its onset basically until 1999. I analyzed three types of publications. The first category was comprised of works in which Poznań Israelites were addressed *expressis verbis*. The second concerned publications featuring individually named representatives of the Jewish community, whose ethnic origin was not mentioned. Lastly, I also investigated those publications in which Poznań Jews were not referred to, even though, for substantive reasons, they should have been included.

Chronologically, I focused primarily on the studies concerning the period between the Second Partition of Poland in 1793 and the outbreak of the Great Poland Uprising in 1918. In terms of territory, the term 'Poznań' denotes the lands incorporated in the Grand Duchy of Poznań in 1815, which starting in the second half of the 19th century were more and more frequently referred to as Province of Poznań. On account of these limitations, my interest with respect to the period stretching between 1793 and 1806 was restricted to a portion of the-then South Prussia, i.e., the Poznań Department, along with the westernmost parts of the Piotrków Department (later known as the Kalisz Department), and the eastern and southern parts of the so-called Netzedistrict. In the lattermost case the initial caesura for my research is the year 1772, given that these lands were annexed by Prussia after the First Partition of Poland. In order to ensure a continuous narrative flow, in my ruminations I also comment on the publications concerning the Duchy of Warsaw. References to historical writing on the fate of Jewish residents from Poznań living in other countries are made sparsely throughout the book, since it is my view that this undoubtedly interesting and compelling phenomenon merits a separate study.

³ A.F. Grabski, "Historia historiografii w strukturze nauki historycznej," in: *Między historią a teorią. Refleksje nad problematyką dziejów wiedzy historycznej*, ed. M. Drozdowski (Warszawa-Poznań, 1988), p. 235. See also J. Maternicki, "Myśl historyczna jako przedmiot badań historiograficznych," in: *Metodologiczne problemy badań nad dziejami myśli historycznej. Materiały konferencji naukowej w Krynicy w 1989 r.*, ed. idem (Warszawa, 1990), p. 20.

This monograph is essentially structured chronologically. Over the course of five chapters, I characterize the respective phases of development in the historiography of Poznanian Jews during the period of Partitions. I try to capture its hallmarks and explicate the genesis of changes it underwent over time. The central theme of my narrative is structured around specific studies and their authors. When analyzing the body of historical writing in the respective periods, I pay attention to both its quantitative and qualitative aspects. Against the grain of traditional canons of history of historiography, my investigation is not limited to the exposition of specific publications and their contents. To the contrary, I found it important for my study to also provide a comprehensive evaluation of the discussed works. On the one hand, I strove to determine how many publications were released in the successive periods, and what type of writing they constituted in terms of both form and content. At the same time, I also sought to assess their substantive value. It goes without saying that the majority of my discussions concern the studies that have most significantly contributed to the advancement of the historiography of Poznanian Israelites under Prussian rule. I also refer to other distinctive publications, including those that stand out for their negative qualities. Furthermore, I attempted to provide a thorough review of the community of the authors by describing both individual authors and the *zeitgeist* of the writing milieu during successive periods. In some instances it was also possible to determine the motivation behind a given author's interest in the subject matter discussed in this book.

In each of the successive chapters, I focus primarily on the literature devoted exclusively to Poznanian Israelites, and secondarily on their presence in regional and general historical writing, in particular in the publications concerning the history of Jews in Poland and Germany or the history of Poland and Germany *per se*. In a separate supplement (*Excursus I*), I discuss two types of biographical publications: biographical lexicons and studies on Poznanians who left their homeland. At each stage of my analysis, I strive to determine the contributions of Jewish historiography (mostly Poznanian, but also Polish-Jewish and German-Jewish), as well as Polish and German (along with other) historiographies, to the evolution of historical writing as discussed in this study.

In the sixth chapter of this book, which serves as its recapitulation, I outline the main development curves in historical writing on Poznanian Jews under Prussian rule and their course over a period of nearly two centuries. First and foremost, I examine the scale of interest in the discussed themes in the aforementioned period, identifying phases of growth and downturn or a complete lack of interest among historians in the history of Poznanian Jews. Whenever possible, I try to account for the causes of such fluctuations. Moreover, I contemplate the question of whether studies on the history of Israelites in Poznania developed spontaneously or as a result of some stimuli, identifying the providers of such inspiration. Also considered are the possible traces of deliberate suppression of such studies, in particular after World War II. At the same time, I seek to establish the position of Poznanian Jews in Jewish, Polish, and German histori-

ography, including regional and general history. Furthermore, I try to characterize the milieu writing on Poznanian Jews under Prussian rule over the course of the past two centuries.

Another issue touched upon in the concluding section is a substantive assessment of said writing. I am particularly interested in the structure of publications released in the respective periods, along with their chronological and substantive range, and their general quality. I also evaluate the individual components of academic proficiency of the discussed authors, especially their knowledge of the subject literature, the body of primary sources referenced in their publications, the extent of their knowledge based on secondary sources, and the methodologies used in determining and interpreting historical facts. Another aspect of my evaluation concerns the narrative characteristics of the examined works. This qualitative assessment of historical writing on Poznanian Israelites under Prussian rule was undertaken against the background of Jewish historiography and general historical reflection. The overarching goal was to establish if the discussed publications kept up with the new historiographic currents of a given epoch.

In the subsequent sections of this chapter, I contemplate the impact of ideology on the discussed historical writing. In particular, I inquire about the intended messages of the studies on the history of Poznanian Israelites during the period of Partitions, carefully noting the era and affiliation (religious and national) they represented. Naturally, I was only able to address a select few problems. Owing to the aforementioned tri-ethnic character of Poznanian, I focus specifically on the accounts of the relations between Poznanian Israelites and their Polish and German neighbors, as well as the perceptions of the Jewish community and its identity. Above all, my intention was to determine whether they considered Jews 'their own' or 'aliens.' In the following subchapter, I address the myths (including stereotypes and simplifications) created by the examined historiography. My goal is not merely to generate a list, but to establish a typology of such myths, as well as the mechanisms of their creation. Some myths, for instance, emerged as a result of academic imperfections, while others resulted from deliberate 'modelling' of representations of the past. In the latter case, I trace their roots to the ideological standpoints adopted by the respective authors. Mapping the meandering formation of historical narratives required me to confront the analyzed literature with source materials, which was intended as a proposal to depart from traditional history of historiography.

The book ends with *Excursus II*, in which I take the liberty to present a perspective on the history of Jews in Poznanian in the period of Partitions that diametrically opposes the one that has dominated the subject literature so far.

Moving on to a review of the subject literature,⁴ I should first mention the theoretical publications that introduce one to the arcana of a historian of historiogra-

⁴ For an account of the subject literature on the history of Jews in Poznanian in the 19th century (which *de facto* constituted my sources in this study), see the subsequent part of the Introduction.

phy's toolbox. Most noteworthy in this respect are the numerous works by Jerzy Maternicki and Andrzej Feliks Grabski. Both authors outlined the existing body of research on the history of historiography in Poland, while also attempting to define the subject of interest in the history of historiography and delineate the prospective directions of research in the field.⁵ One should also include Christian Simon's accessible *Historiographie. Eine Einführung*,⁶ whose final chapter is devoted entirely to diverse theories and methods of investigation in historical writing. A concise overview of German history of historiography together with an interesting proposal of new approaches can be found in an intriguing article by Horst Walter Blanke.⁷ A set of directives for contemporary historians of historiography can also be identified in the copious theoretical oeuvre of Jerzy Topolski.⁸

With reference to subject-specific literature, I should reiterate that, as of today, no study has been published that would even fragmentarily evaluate the historical writing on Poznanian Jews.⁹ Studies on the historiography of Great Poland tend to glance over Jewish themes while also being sparse and modest in terms of size. Consequently, Great Poland has seen no exhaustive monograph that would account for its historiography. Even the first and most comprehensive publication on the subject by Adolf Warschauer,¹⁰ published in 1910, focused solely on German historiography, his account of historical writing on Poznanian Jews limited to a little more than a single page listing several authors and their major publications. The next thorough study on the historiography of Great Poland by Kazimierz Kaczmarczyk¹¹ in 1925 similarly devoted a little over a single page to the Jewish aspects of the region's history (admittedly, individual titles on the sub-

⁵ See among others J. Maternicki, *Wielkość historii. Rozważania o kulturze historycznej i badaniach historiograficznych* (Warszawa, 1990); idem, "Kierunki badań historiograficznych," in: idem, *Historiografia i kultura historyczna. Studia i szkice* (Warszawa, 1990), vol. 1, pp. 13–55; A.F. Grabski, "Rzut oka na dzieje refleksji historiograficznej w Polsce," *Studia Metodologiczne*, vol. 7, 1970, pp. 91–117; idem, *Historia historiografii*.

⁶ Ch. Simon, *Historiographie. Eine Einführung* (Stuttgart, 1996).

⁷ H.W. Blanke, "Typen und Funktionen der Historiographiegeschichtsschreibung. Eine Bilanz und ein Forschungsprogramm," in: *Geschichtsdiskurs*, vol. 1: *Grundlagen und Methoden der Historiographiegeschichte*, eds. W. Küttler, J. Rüsen, E. Schulin (Frankfurt/M, 1993), pp. 191–211.

⁸ One should above all list the copious book *Jak się pisze i rozumie historię. Tajemnice narracji historycznej* (Warszawa, 1996), in which the author thoroughly analyzes the process of creation of historical narratives, including myth-making, which constitutes a significant element of my study.

⁹ I have not mentioned my own contributions to the field, in which I presented the results of my earliest research, see K.A. Makowski, "Poznańscy Żydzi okresu zaborów w piśmiennictwie historycznym. Zarys problemu," in: *Żydzi i judaizm we współczesnych badaniach polskich*, vol. 2: *Materiały z konferencji Kraków 24–26 XI 1998*, eds. K. Pilarczyk, S. Gąsiorowski (Kraków, 2000), pp. 207–214; idem, "Die Geschichtsschreibung"

¹⁰ A. Warschauer, "Die deutsche Geschichtsschreibung in der Provinz Posen," *Zeitschrift der Historischen Gesellschaft für die Provinz Posen*, vol. 25, 1910, pp. 219–335.

¹¹ K. Kaczmarczyk, "Przegląd literatury poświęconej dziejom Wielkopolski," in: *Wielkopolska w przeszłości* (Poznań, 1926), pp. 251–314 (previously published in: *Roczniki Historyczne*, vol. 1, 1925, pp. 226–287).

ject are mentioned in other sections of his book), concentrating on the pre-Partition period and settling for a bare outline of references. Not until 1973 was another study on the historiography of Great Poland released (exclusively focused on the period of Partitions). Authored by Zdzisław Grot, the text was published in the second volume of *Dzieje Wielkopolski*.¹² However, Grot's article paid even less attention to the historiography of Poznanian Jews than his predecessors. Witold Molik's outline of regional historiography, *Dzieje Wielkopolski pod panowaniem pruskim jako przedmiot badań historycznych*,¹³ likewise glossed over the body of work devoted to the Jewish residents of Poznań. (In fairness, Molik's intention was to merely review the existing research areas).

Regretfully, not much good can be said of Dariusz Matelski's article, envisioned as a comprehensive review of literature on Germans in Great Poland.¹⁴ The author restricted his contribution to a highly selective enumeration of successive titles, and reduced his commentary to a wholesale condemnation of the entire extant body of literature on the subject. Matelski's handling of the period of Partitions is rather laconic and riddled with errors. Most notably, Matelski—whose other publications habitually referred to Jews as 'Germans of the Mosaic faith'—failed to mention any studies on the history of Poznanian Jews. The Jewish population of Poznań was likewise completely omitted in Lech Trzeciakowski's otherwise comprehensive study on the historical writing concerning Prussia's policy in the annexed Polish territories, and in Jan Wąsicki's perfunctory sketch on the same topic.¹⁵

Conversely, research on the history of Polish and German Jews tends to ignore Poznań. This is particularly striking with the latter group of studies, given the significant body of literature on the historiography of German Israelites. Even the most extensive monographs on the subject, such as those penned by Shulamit Volkov or Trude Maurer, make no mention of Poznanian Jews whatsoever.¹⁶ As to the historiography of Polish Jews, it has attracted considerably lesser attention and insight. Studies on the historiography of Poland during the period of partitioned Poland tend to overlook publications on Poznań, or merely

¹² Z. Grot, "Badania dziejów," pp. 881–908.

¹³ W. Molik, "Dzieje Wielkopolski," pp. 54–69.

¹⁴ D. Matelski, "Niemcy i mniejszość niemiecka w Wielkopolsce w historiografii," in: *Polska—Niemcy—mniejszość niemiecka w Wielkopolsce. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość*, ed. A. Sakson (Poznań, 1994), pp. 227–256.

¹⁵ L. Trzeciakowski, "Polityka Prus na polskich ziemiach zachodnich w XIX w. w historiografii polskiej i niemieckiej," in: *Stosunki polsko-niemieckie w historiografii*, vol. 2: *Studia z dziejów historiografii polskiej i niemieckiej*, eds. J. Krasuski, G. Labuda, A.W. Walczak (Poznań, 1984), pp. 134–324; J. Wąsicki, "Stan i potrzeby badawcze nad dziejami rządów pruskich na ziemiach polskich w okresie zaborów," in: *Dzieje Brandenburgii i Prus w historiografii*, ed. B. Wachowiak (Warszawa–Poznań, 1989), pp. 153–166.

¹⁶ S. Volkov, *Die Juden in Deutschland 1780–1918* (München, 1994), pp. 71–130; T. Maurer, *Die Entwicklung der jüdischen Minderheit in Deutschland (1780–1933). Neuere Forschungen und offene Fragen* (Tübingen, 1992).

account for singular titles.¹⁷ One significant exception to this rule can be found in Artur Eisenbach's sketches outlining the body of work of Jewish historiography in interwar Poland, which list several monographs and articles on Poznanian Israelites.¹⁸

In the end, the most comprehensive discussion of the literature on the history of Poznanian Jews in the period of Partitions can be found in the introductions to two immensely interesting and innovative studies published in the 1990s, namely Sophia Kemlein's book on the status of Jews in Poznania between 1815 and 1848, and especially Witold Molik's article on Jewish graduates of Poznanian gymnasia.¹⁹ Still, these discussions remain inherently succinct and of a rather general nature.

In spite of the above shortcomings, these two publications proved to be of great value for an altogether different reason. They did, in fact, enable me to determine the substantive and chronological fields of Polish and German research on the history of Great Poland and the history of Polish and German Jews (in the latter case I was also interested in the respective geographic regions), taken on across different periods, and to establish the underlying premises for specific tendencies. Another group of texts that turned out to be very serviceable in this respect included publications profiling the local academic milieu. Aside from the studies mentioned above, one should also list Jerzy Topolski's writings on the historiography of Great Poland and Ryszard Kabaciński's sketch on the development of historical sciences in Bydgoszcz.²⁰ Among the more comprehensive publications on the historiography of Polish Jews, Filip Friedman's and Daniel Grinberg's articles on the interwar period deserve a mention, as do Gershon David Hundert's studies on the postwar era and David Engel's examination of

¹⁷ See, e.g., I. Trunk, "לתולדות ההיסטוריוגרפיה היהודית פולנית (סקירה)," *Gal-Ed*, vol. 3, 1976, pp. 245–268; G.D. Hundert, G.C. Bacon, *The Jews in Poland and Russia: Bibliographical Essays* (Bloomington, 1984); P. Friedman, "Polish Jewish Historiography Between the Two Wars (1918–1939)," *Jewish Social Studies*, vol. 11, 1949, no. 4, pp. 373–408; T. Gąsowski, "Dzieje Żydów."

¹⁸ A. Eisenbach, "Historiografia żydowska w Polsce w okresie międzywojennym," in: *Środowiska historyczne II Rzeczypospolitej*, vol. 2: *Materiały konferencji naukowych w Cedzynie i Białymstoku 1986 i 1987*, ed. J. Maternicki (Warszawa, 1987), pp. 235–291 (republished in Yiddish in *Bleter far Gesichte*, vol. 26, 1988, pp. 5–70, and as a revised version under the new title "Jewish Historiography in Interwar Poland," in: *The Jews of Poland Between Two World Wars*, eds. Y. Gutman, E. Mendelsohn, J. Reinharz, Ch. Shmeruk (Hanover–London, 1989), pp. 453–493).

¹⁹ S. Kemlein, *Die Posener Juden 1815–1848. Entwicklungsprozesse einer polnischen Judentum unter preussischer Herrschaft* (Hamburg, 1997); W. Molik, "Sozialer Aufstieg durch Bildung. Jüdische Abiturienten im Großherzogtum Posen und die Richtungen ihrer Berufskarrieren in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Nordost-Archiv*, vol. 1, 1992, no. 2, pp. 461–485.

²⁰ J. Topolski, "Historiografia," in: *Nauka w Wielkopolsce. Przeszłość i teraźniejszość. Studia i materiały*, ed. G. Labuda (Poznań, 1973), pp. 257–292; idem, "Kierunki rozwoju nauki historycznej w Wielkopolsce," in: *Wybitni historycy wielkopolscy*, ed. J. Strzelczyk (Poznań, 1989), pp. 11–28; R. Kabaciński, "Historia i nauki pokrewne," in: *Nauka i szkolnictwo wyższe w Bydgoszczy*, ed. S. Michalski (Bydgoszcz, 1980), pp. 127–143.