



# Hebrew as a Subject of Research and Teaching in Poland from the Early 16th Century to the 20th Century. A Contribution to Further Reflections

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**Abstract:** The paper explores the history of Hebrew studies in Poland from the early 16th century to the 20th century. The beginnings of academic studies and thorough research into biblical Hebrew can be traced back to the 16th century as the first lecturers of classical languages appeared at the Kraków University. They were also the first to write textbooks for learning this language, and some of them translated biblical books from their original languages. Jewish printing houses had a significant impact on the growing interest in Hebrew studies, both in the Jewish and Christian communities. Passion for Hebrew was still observed in Poland in the 17th and 18th centuries. In turn, the late 18th century and the 19th century were the times of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and disputes about the shape of Hebrew. At universities theological studies included biblical Hebrew courses. The 20th century saw the emergence of numerous centres for Hebrew studies at leading Polish universities, offering full-time Bachelor and Master's programmes, conducting interdisciplinary research, developing scholarly publications in the field and establishing organizations aiming to promote research on Jewish history, culture and language.

**Keywords:** Hebrew studies, biblical Hebrew, Jewish Enlightenment, translations of the Bible

The paper, as the title suggests, aims at presenting the research and teaching of the Hebrew language in Poland from the early 16th century to the late 20th century. *Hebrew studies* should be understood to mean research on the Hebrew language and university programmes. Consequently, Hebrew courses conducted in primary and secondary schools, major theological seminaries, religious communities (both Jewish and Christian) and other non-academic institutions have not been discussed here. My intent is to present the most important places of scholarly interest in the Hebrew language in Poland, i.e. academic centres as well as their scholars and publications. Naturally, it would not be possible to exhaust the topic. Hence, the expansion of the title indicates that this article is meant to be a contribution to further considerations.

Publications on the history of the Hebrew language in Poland are rare. Among the older studies, it is worth noting Mojżesz Schorr's article entitled "Język hebrajski w Polsce" [The Hebrew Language in Poland]<sup>1</sup>. In turn, newer publications include

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<sup>1</sup> Schorr, "Język hebrajski w Polsce," 425–438.

my articles “Z dziejów polskiej hebraistyki” [Sketches from the History of Hebrew Studies in Poland] and “על תולדות הלשון העברית בפולין”<sup>2</sup> as well as my research relating to the state of the Hebrew language in Poland in the 18th century and the early 19th century. Focusing on the recent publications, one should mention studies and research on biblical Hebrew in Christian circles, especially the works by Rev. Rajmund Pietkiewicz. (His and my works will be listed further.) This article also takes into account the contribution of Jewish circles to the research and development of the Hebrew language in Poland.

Finally, this paper does not provide sources of textbooks or other aids for teaching Hebrew used in Jewish schools, which I have extensively analysed in other publications.

## 1. Hebrew Studies in Poland in the 16th Century

Interest in the Hebrew language as a subject of study in Europe dates back to medieval times, when knowledge of this language was perceived as indispensable for the exegesis of Sacred Scripture as well as for the Christian missions induced by the Crusades. At the beginning of the 16th century, Hebrew courses were included in the academic curricula of most European universities, following the view that mastering three ancient languages: Greek, Latin and Hebrew, completed the ideal humanistic education of those times.

In Poland, the beginnings of academic studies and thorough research into the Hebrew language (in particular, biblical Hebrew<sup>3</sup>) can be traced back to the sixteenth century.<sup>4</sup> New intellectual currents from the West began to flow into Poland. The Renaissance spread throughout Europe, including Poland. One of the manifestations of these changes in the spirit of *humanitas* or rediscovery was the “tendency to base religion on the original text of the Bible,” favouring the study of Semitic languages.<sup>5</sup> Interreligious friction forced a better understanding of the original languages of the Bible, including Hebrew. At the beginning of the 16th century, one of the first teachers of classical languages at the Kraków University (Wszechnica Krakowska,

2 Marcinkowski, “Z dziejów polskiej hebraistyki,” 72–105. See also Marcinkowski, “על תולדות הלשון העברית בפולין,” 102–108.

3 The Hebrew language was revived at the end of the 19th century, and Eliezer ben Yehuda is considered to be its reviver (1881).

4 Questions about the reception of Hebrew studies in the renaissance Poland have been dealt with by Rev. Rajmund Pietkiewicz (“Początki polskiej hebraistyki,” 8).

5 See Reychman, “Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka,” 53.

now the Jagiellonian University) was Waclaw Koler,<sup>6</sup> better known as Waclaw of Jelenia Góra, who was employed<sup>7</sup> at the University in 1507 and 1513.<sup>8</sup> He had a good command of Greek, Latin and Hebrew.<sup>9</sup> Koler is considered to be the first Hebrew teacher in Kraków, who taught mainly privately,<sup>10</sup> following the example of German universities. In turn, Leonard Dawid<sup>11</sup> was probably the first formal lecturer of Hebrew at the Kraków University around 1528; he took over this post thanks to the efforts of Bishop Piotr Tomicki. In 1530, Dawid succeeded in publishing *Elementale hebraicum, in quo praeter caetera eius linguae rudimenta, declinationes et verborum coniugationes habentur* by Philipp Novenian of Hassfurt in Maciej Scharffenberg's printing house. This work was a textbook intended primarily for students. Leonard Dawid could have written a Hebrew grammar textbook, which was, however, lost.<sup>12</sup> Other sources regarding Hebrew language classes being taught at the Kraków Academy in 1528<sup>13</sup> give credit to Jerzy Liban of Legnica (1464–1550),<sup>14</sup> a student of Waclaw of Jelenia Góra. Yet, Liban had to stop his research and teaching activities after a short time<sup>15</sup> and to leave the university.<sup>16</sup> Soon, other eminent Hebrew scholars became

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- 6 The inventory of Koler's library was given by Artur Benis ("Materyały do historyi drukarstwa," 207–210). See also Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 86–88; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 11.
- 7 Due to the difficulty of determining the specific forms of employment as well as the titles and degrees of scholars in earlier centuries, and their outdating in the 21st century, in most cases academic titles were not given; only the names of scholars dealing with Hebrew or broadly with Jewish culture were provided. As for the late 20th century scholars, I have mentioned only those who had a Master's degree in Hebrew Studies.
- 8 See Madyda, "Z dziejów filologii klasycznej," 15.
- 9 The equal treatment of these three ancient languages in Kraków in the middle of the 16th century is confirmed by the fact that one of the university professors, Benedict of Koźmin (d. 1559), allocated his property to a permanent fund enabling the acquisition of novelties concerning these languages, see Madyda, "Z dziejów filologii klasycznej," 20.
- 10 See Zajączkowski, "Z dziejów orientalistyki," 368.
- 11 A Jewish scholar who converted to Christianity taking the name Leonard; his godfather was the very Bishop Tomicki.
- 12 This is confirmed by Jan van Campen in his grammar textbook published in Kraków, cf. Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 89–90. See also Barycz, "Dawid Leonard," 461; Zajączkowski, "Z dziejów orientalistyki," 368.
- 13 According to Reychman ("Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka," 52), Jerzy Liban was to introduce Hebrew classes at the Kraków Academy as early as 1520. The Council of Vienne (1311) decided to establish the chairs of Hebrew, Arabic and Aramaic in Rome, Paris, Bologna, Oxford and Salamanca, but already in 1325, Pope John XXII ordered control over lecturers of the Semitic languages for fear of disastrous teachings (*peregrina dogmata*). See Reychman, "Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka," 51; Dugat, *Histoire des orientalistes de l'Europe*, VIII–IX, XIII.
- 14 Jerzy Liban of Legnica is known as the first Polish Hellenist, see Madyda, "Z dziejów filologii klasycznej," 11, 15.
- 15 Probably already in 1535, cf. Madyda, "Z dziejów filologii klasycznej," 9. See also Voisé, "Twórczość naukowa," 29–35.
- 16 Jerzy Liban was to defend Hebrew and Greek lecturers who had been suspected of preaching heresy: "it is not right that these people should be expelled from the Academy for teaching languages, opening the door to all science, under the pretext that their teaching leads to heresy." See Reychman, "Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka," 52–53. Let us also recall that the outstanding German humanist, expert in Hebrew and Greek, Johann Reuchlin (1455–1522), author of the Hebrew grammar *Rudimenta Linguae Hebraicae*

known: the Dutch Jan van Campen,<sup>17</sup> a professor of Collegium Trilinguae in Leuven, as well as the Italian Franciszek Stankar (better known as Francesco Stancaro [1501–1574]), a professor who taught at several European universities. Lecturers of biblical Hebrew were the first to write textbooks for learning this language; some of them also translated biblical books from their original languages. In 1532, Jan van Campen translated *Psalter Dawidowy. Psalmorum omnium iuxta hebraicam veritatem paraphrastica interpretatio* (Kraków 1532), and two years later, he wrote a Hebrew primer entitled *Libellus de natura litterarum et punctorum hebraeorum* (Kraków 1534). In 1547, he published his translation of the Proverbs of Solomon, entitled *Proverbia Salomonis...*<sup>18</sup> In the same year, Franciszek Stankar published his Hebrew textbooks *Ebraeae grammaticae compendium* and *Ebraeae grammaticae institutio* in Basel. Bishop Samuel Maciejowski of Kraków financed the publication of Stankar's Hebrew grammar, *Grammatica institutio linguae Hebraeae*, in the printing house of Jan Halicz<sup>19</sup> in Kraków, around 1547 and again in 1555.<sup>20</sup> It is believed that in 1530, Stankar published his first work on Hebrew issues, entitled *De modo legendi Hebraicae institutio brevissima*,<sup>21</sup> in Venice.

Another well-known teacher of Hebrew at the Kraków University was Walerian Pernus who, after graduating in Paris, worked in Kraków from 1536 until the 1537/1538 academic year. He used the Hebrew grammar by Jan van Campen.<sup>22</sup> At the Faculty of Philosophy of the Kraków University, only four holders of Master's degree took up teaching the Hebrew language from 1540 to the late 16th century. They were: Jan of Trzciana, a student of Leonard Dawid and Jan van Campen, who in the 1556 summer semester lectured on comparative grammar of *trium linguarum*; Andrzej Troper, who taught Hebrew grammar in the 1556/1557 winter semester; Wojciech Buszowski, who in 1564–1569 conducted Hebrew grammar courses three

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(Pforzheim 1506), whom Wilhelm Gesenius called “the father of Hebrew studies among Christians,” acted against burning Hebrew books, considering them valuable materials for teaching this language, for which he fell out of favour with the Church. Reuchlin is also credited with introducing Latin terminology into Hebrew grammar.

17 Jan van Campen, a student of Elias Lewita (Elias Levita), Latinized Johannes Campensis (c. 1490–1538), author of *Ex variis libellis Eliae grammaticorum omnium doctissimi*.

18 This date of publication of the translation of the Proverbs of Solomon is given by Schorr (“Język hebrajski w Polsce,” 430). According to another source, the translation *Przypowieści Salomona* appeared in Kraków in 1534, see Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 430.

19 See Gmiterek, “Franciszek Stankar,” 158–163.

20 The information regarding the reprint of F. Stankar, *Grammar* in 1555 can be found at [http://www.archive.org/stream/bibliografiapols16estre/bibliografiapols16estre\\_djvu.txt?estrel\\_djvu.txt](http://www.archive.org/stream/bibliografiapols16estre/bibliografiapols16estre_djvu.txt?estrel_djvu.txt) (access 31.03.2022).

21 See Gmiterek, “Franciszek Stankar,” 159.

22 See Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 369. See also Reychman, “Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka,” 53, quoting after: Sołtykiewicz, *O stanie Akademii Krakowskiej*, 296–298; Morawski, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 257–259; Barycz, *Historia Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, 84–95.

times; and Jan Porębný, lecturing on Hebrew grammar in the 1590 summer semester.<sup>23</sup> A notable exception was the resolution of the Council of the Faculty of Philosophy in 1579, encouraging the teaching of Greek and Hebrew grammar. The knowledge of the Hebrew language was poor at the Kraków University, and with time it completely disappeared.<sup>24</sup>

The above-mentioned, Jerzy Liban and Waclaw of Jelenia Góra, came from the Silesian Protestant milieu, with which other Silesian scholars of the Hebrew language were associated: Scholtzius, Springer and Jan Jacobellus or Jocissas of Legnica (d. 1587).<sup>25</sup>

In the second half of the 16th century, the first Polish translations of the Bible were made directly from the original languages, or these languages were taken them into consideration. The Protestant Brest Bible (Polish: *Biblia Brzeska*)<sup>26</sup> was published in 1563.<sup>27</sup> In 1572, there appeared the so-called Zaslów Bible (Polish: *Biblia Zaslawska*),<sup>28</sup> based on the Septuagint and the Hebrew Bible, i.e. a translation by Szymon Budny, who was firstly a Calvinist and then an Arian pastor. Szymon Budny, who is supposed to improve the translation of the Brest Bible, stated that it was in fact a translation from Latin and French. Thus he made his own translation of Sacred Scripture, which was the first Polish translation of the Bible made by one translator. In 1599, the so-called Jakub Wujek Bible (Polish: *Biblia Jakuba Wujka*), i.e. translation of the Jesuit Jakub Wujek, based on the Vulgate and taking the original languages into account, was published.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>23</sup> In 16th-century Kraków, in the time of the Renaissance, there were more *virī trilingues* who were not directly involved in teaching Hebrew, e.g. Mateusz of Kościan (d. 1545), Wojciech Nowopolczyk (d. 1559), Stanisław Grzepski (d. 1570), Stanisław Mareniusz (d. 1580); see Pietkiewicz, "Początki polskiej hebraistyki," 7–26.

<sup>24</sup> See Zajączkowski, "Z dziejów orientalistyki," 369–370.

<sup>25</sup> See Reychman, "Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka," 56–57.

<sup>26</sup> *Biblia Brzeska* (the name comes from the place of its publication); also called *Biblia Radziwiłłowska* (from the name of the benefactor of the undertaking: the Radziwiłł family) and *Biblia Pińczowska* (from the place of its translation: Pińczów). It is the second translation of the entire Holy Scriptures into Polish (after the Catholic *Biblia Leopolda*, whose source was the Latin Vulgate) made by Polish Calvinists in 1563. It is also one of the world's first modern translations of the entire Bible from the original languages: Hebrew and Greek (the Latin version was also utilised). More on the Brest Bible, see Pietkiewicz, "Hebraica veritas," 44–62; Pilarczyk, "Biblia Radziwiłłowska," 64–104.

<sup>27</sup> Pietkiewicz ("Początki polskiej hebraistyki," 13) provides a list of Hebrew scholars, associated with the center in Pińczów.

<sup>28</sup> *Biblia Zaslawska*, also known as *Biblia Nieświeńska* (Nesvizh Bible) or simply *Biblia Szymona Budnego*, is a Polish translation of the entire Bible from the original languages, made by the Polish-Lithuanian biblical scholar, Szymon Budny, mainly for use by the Polish Brethren (Bracia Polscy). It was translated in Nieśwież and printed in Zaslów or in Uzda in 1572 by Maciej Kawęczyński.

<sup>29</sup> A translation of some New Testament books appeared in 1593, revised and reprinted in 1594. The translation of the whole New Testament was completed in 1595. The author's Jesuit confreres revised the translation to adjust it to the version of the Vulgate, which they regarded as correct. Thus, the translation of the entire Bible was not published until two years after the death of Rev. Jakub Wujek in 1599. For the background of this translation of the Bible and its references to Jews, see Pietkiewicz, "Jews and Their Language," 9–18.

Norman Davies even claims that Szymon Budny was called “the greatest Hebrew scholar of the sixteenth century.”<sup>30</sup> Budny was undoubtedly one of the greatest Polish biblical scholars of the 16th century, besides the Jesuit Jakub Wujek. The aforementioned Franciszek Stankar (Francesco Stancaro) and Jan van Campen certainly made great contributions to the field of Hebrew studies, since in addition to translating, they both wrote works on strictly Hebrew issues. Franciszek Stankar is the author of a Hebrew grammar textbook and was also one of the translators of the Brest Bible. He taught Hebrew at many universities, including Padua (1530s), Vienna, Augsburg and Basel (1540s), Transylvania (1548/1549 academic year), and in Kraków (from the 1549 academic year).<sup>31</sup> Besides translating biblical books, Jan van den Campen authored a script on Hebrew consonants and vowels, also known as a Hebrew grammar textbook, based on the work of his master, Elias Levita.<sup>32</sup> Van Campen came to Kraków in 1530,<sup>33</sup> after being formerly a professor at Leuven. Both were lecturers at the Kraków University, which was later named the Jagiellonian University (1817).

Franciszek Stankar was strongly involved in religious disputes, which earned him a reputation of a quarreller. After he had been expelled for his views from the University of Vienna, he was employed at universities in Germany, Switzerland, Transylvania, as well as in Kraków and Królewiec.<sup>34</sup> After Stankar had left Kraków, Hebrew studies in the Kraków University were disapproved by the church authorities and fell into decline.<sup>35</sup>

## 2. Hebrew Studies in Poland in the 17th Century

Passion for the Hebrew language, which was deeply rooted in the Reformation, was still observed in Poland in the 17th century, after the Calvinist Maciej Ambroski, who had tried to translate the Psalms from the original language, became famous as a Hebrew scholar. Among the seventeenth-century scholars, attention should be drawn to Marcin Słonkowiec, a lecturer at Kraków around 1650 and author of a grammar textbook.<sup>36</sup> In the 17th century, there were Hebrew scholars at the University

<sup>30</sup> Davies, *Boże igrzysko*, 260.

<sup>31</sup> See Gmiterek, “Franciszek Stankar,” 158–163.

<sup>32</sup> Levita – Münster, *Grammatica hebraica absolutissima*, cf. Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 368. Sebastian Münster is also the author of the Hebrew dictionary (*Dictionarium Hebraicum*). More on Protestant Hebrew studies in the 16th and 17th centuries, see Pietkiewicz, “Hebraistyka protestancka,” 371–403; Pietkiewicz, *W poszukiwaniu „szczyrego słowa Bożego”*, 87–91.

<sup>33</sup> Some sources say that it was in 1534. Probably his first stay in 1530 was temporary. See Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 368.

<sup>34</sup> See Gmiterek, “Franciszek Stankar,” 158–163.

<sup>35</sup> See Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 369.

<sup>36</sup> *Synopsis Grammaticae Hebraicae*. See Baczkowska, “Słonkowiec,” 27–28, quoted after Pietkiewicz, “Początki polskiej hebraistyki,” 12.

of Kraków: Marcin Hankowicz, Jan Kłobucki, Jakub Vitelius, Mikołaj Żórawski and Wojciech Griglicius. Jakub Najmanowicz, who served as Rector of the University for a long time, was believed to know Hebrew.<sup>37</sup>

Jewish printing houses<sup>38</sup> had a significant impact on the growing interest in Hebrew studies in Silesia (southwest Poland), both in Jewish and Christian communities. The oldest Jewish printing house in this region was in Oleśnica, in the years 1529–1532.<sup>39</sup> Thanks to Chaim Schwarz of Prague and David ben Jonathan, a Hebrew edition of the Pentateuch, entitled *The Pentateuch*,<sup>40</sup> was published in 1530. The heyday of Hebrew studies in Silesia took place in the 17th century and the first half of the 18th century. Many enthusiasts studied Hebrew there.<sup>41</sup> The most famous were: Piotr Kirsten, a physician from Wrocław (Latinized Kirstenius, 1577–1640), a Silesian Orientalist, who was primarily interested in the Arabic language and culture<sup>42</sup>; Andrzej Akolut<sup>43</sup> (Latinized Acoluthus), a native of Bierutów (1654–1704), known as an Arabic scholar and translator of the Koran; Jan Herbinus (1630–1679, whose grandfather's family name was Kapusta), a poet, teacher, religious scholar and Orientalist; he tried to find Hebraicisms in Slavic names<sup>44</sup>; Daniel Springer (1656–1708)<sup>45</sup> and Kasper Neumann (1648–1715).<sup>46</sup> Samuel Weinisch (1700–1764)<sup>47</sup>

<sup>37</sup> See Zajączkowski, "Z dziejów orientalistyki," 370.

<sup>38</sup> More on this topic, Pilarczyk, *Leksykon drukarzy*.

<sup>39</sup> Kocowski, *Zarys dziejów drukarstwa*, 43–44.

<sup>40</sup> Brann, *Geschichte der Juden*, 167–171. The only copy of this edition is in the Bodleian Library, Oxford; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 18.

<sup>41</sup> For example, Gotfryd Hensel, Rector of the Evangelical school in Jelenia Góra, issued *Diatriba, mirandam exhibens Linguae Germanicae indolem Hebraeam, Persicaeque...*, in 1739, in which he tried to prove that Hebrew was the oldest language in the world; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 43.

<sup>42</sup> He mainly dealt with secular Oriental studies, but also in biblical philology. In 1610, he published *Notae in Evangelium S. Matthaei ex collatione textuum Arabicorum, Aegyptiacorum, Hebraeorum, Syriacorum, Graecorum, Latinorum*. Quoted after Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 38. An extensive bibliography on Kirsten was included in Migoń, "Z dziejów recepcji," 229–239.

<sup>43</sup> He also published the voluminous work *De aquis amaris*, a biblical and philological study devoted to the ritual rules in the Book of Numbers 5:11–31; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 25. See also Migoń, "Wrocławski orientalista," 325–335.

<sup>44</sup> See Reychman, "Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka," 58–60; see also Ciszewski, "Hebraismi sclavi," 298.

<sup>45</sup> Springer dealt mainly with the Hebrew language and with Judaism. He translated into Hebrew *De imitatione Christi* by Thomas à Kempis. He possessed the 1551 Venetian edition of Maimonides' *More Nevukhim* (Hebrew: מורה נבוכים – *The Guide to the Lost*) which was supposed to belong to the Polish King Sigismund Augustus. See Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 12, and also Jöcher, *Allgemeines Gelehrten-Lexikon*, 760; Peucker, *Kurze biographische*, 129. A copy of Maimonides' work can be found in the University Library in Wrocław (Cat. No. 561061).

<sup>46</sup> He wrote *Genesis linguae sanctae Veteris Testamenti*; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 13, see also Gesenius, *Geschichte der hebräischen Sprache*, 126. Kasper Neumann considered Hebrew the proto-language of all mankind. At the end of his life, he became a member of the Berlin Academy of Sciences, as the second inhabitant of Wrocław after Andrzej Akolut; Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 13; see also Guhrauer, "Leben und Verdienste," 7–17, 141–151, 202–210, 263–272.

<sup>47</sup> None of his Hebrew works have survived. His library included over two hundred books in Hebrew. *Catalogus bibliothecae*, quoting after Migoń, "Śląscy orientaliści," 14.

stood out particularly in the 18th century, and Christian Unger at the turn of the century (1671–1719).<sup>48</sup>

### 3. Hebrew Studies in Pomerania in the 17th and 18th Centuries

In the 17th and 18th centuries, there were scholars of the Hebrew language in Pomerania, including Jan Fabrycy (1608–1653) from Gdańsk, who was a Hebrew and Arabic scholar and author of *Dissertatio philologica de nomine Jehova* (Gdańsk 1636). The Grodek family, coming from Silesia, made a significant contribution to Hebrew studies. Gabriel Grodek (d. 1709) published *Chilches Lilew ex antiquitate iudaica philologicae explanata*. Benjamin Grodek (1720–1766) wrote *Dissertatio de litteris hebraicis*.<sup>49</sup> Gotfryd Ernest Grodek (son of Benjamin Grodek) promoted Hebrew among the Vilnius youth. Jan Reychman called him “father of Vilnius Oriental studies.” Jan Fidalke (1703–1763) wrote, among other works, *Theocratiam iudaicam*. Bogumił Wernsdorf (d. 1768), professor of the Gdańsk gymnasium (secondary school), published *Commentatio historico-critica de fide historica librorum Maccabaeicorum*. The Hebrew language was also studied by Michał Bogusław Ruttich (d. 1729), a proficient Hebrew and Arabic scholar, who was a professor in Moscow in 1705–1708, and later in Toruń.<sup>50</sup>

In Pomerania, Hebrew studies were also undertaken by Daniel Ernest Jabłoński (1660–1741), publisher of *Biblia hebraica cum notis hebraicis*. His son, Paweł Ernest Jabłoński (1693–1757), conducted pioneering research on Egyptian lexical borrowings in Old Greek. Jabłoński’s disciple, Gotfryd Wojde (1725–1790), was supposed to have dealt with Hebrew. He was better known as an expert on Coptic and editor of the grammar textbook entitled *Grammatica aegyptica utriusque dialecti* by Jabłoński’s brother-in-law, Christian Scholz. Hebrew was taught at the school associated with St. Elizabeth’s Church in Wrocław as well as the school of Mary Magdalene’s Church in Wrocław.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Chrystian Bogumił Unger, considered by some scholars (F. Babinger) to be the greatest Silesian Hebrew scholar, had a large collection of Hebrew-Jewish books, including Hebrew manuscripts. For example, he compiled *Index typographicus Dyrrhensfurtensis* as well as *Collectanea ad bibliothecam rabbinicam*, referring to the Sabataj Bass printing house from Brzeg Dolny. He also translated the New Testament into Hebrew; Migoń, “Śląscy orientaliści,” 15–16.

<sup>49</sup> See Szantyr, *Działalność naukowa Godfryda Ernesta Grodka*, 37; Hirsch, *Geschichte des academischen Gymnasium*, 64. The bibliography was quoted after Reychman, “Zainteresowania orientalistyczne,” 75.

<sup>50</sup> See Reychman, “Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka,” 64–67.

<sup>51</sup> See Reychman, “Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka,” 60–64; quoted after Reychman, “Śląska i pomorska orientalistyka,” 64; see also Fuchs, *Die Elisabethkirche zu Breslau*, 47; Fuchs, *Gymnasium zu St. Elisabeth; Meister, Beiträge zur Geschichte*, 20–21 (on teaching Hebrew).



#### 4. Hebrew Scholars in Kraków in the Second Half of the 18th Century

Tomasz Małyżsko and Sebastian Salomon should be mentioned among the experts in the Hebrew language in Kraków in the second half of the 18th century; they both taught Hebrew in 1755.<sup>52</sup> From then on, Hebrew was taught mainly by Catholic priests at the Faculty of Theology of the University of Kraków: Rev. Antoni Żołędziowski in 1744, Rev. Idatte between 1780 and 1783, and Rev. Wincenty Smaczniński<sup>53</sup> in 1783.

#### 5. Tendencies to Revive Hebrew on Polish Lands

There were growing tendencies to revive the Hebrew language in Poland. Although Jews spoke Yiddish on a daily basis, there was also private correspondence written in Hebrew. It was used in private records when trading with non-Jews. There were memoirs written in Hebrew. Some of them have survived and are important witnesses to the use of Hebrew during that period.<sup>54</sup> The Hebrew of the 18th century was far from being grammatically correct; punctuation marks were not used, and there were borrowings and clichés from Polish. However, this form of Hebrew was completely sufficient to express thoughts and describe events. We are speaking about the 18th century Hebrew, so a language that was to be revived over a century later. The diaries written in Hebrew testify to the state of its use in Poland. Some of them, such as *זכרונות רב דוב מבוֹלחוב* [The Memoirs of Dov Ber of Bolechow], are an important source of information on the history of Jews in Poland. We learn about their attempts to use spoken Hebrew in the 18th century; we learn about young people who met to speak Hebrew, for example in Tyśmienica. Some scholars consider the author of these memoirs, Dov Ber of Bolechów (1723–1805), a pioneer of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah). He also translated historical books into Hebrew, having in mind the enlightenment of his nation<sup>55</sup>.

<sup>52</sup> See Schorr, “Język hebrajski w Polsce,” 430; Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 370.

<sup>53</sup> See Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 370.

<sup>54</sup> For example, *זכרונות רב דוב מבוֹלחוב* [The Memoirs of Dov Ber of Bolechow] or *קורות משה ווסרצוג* [Autobiography of Moses Wasserzug]. On these diaries and the peculiarities of the Hebrew language at that time, see Marcinkowski, *Critical Edition of the Hebrew Manuscript No. 42*; Marcinkowski, *Pamiętniki reba Dowa z Bolechowa (1723–1805)*, and also the article: Marcinkowski, “Żydzi w Galicji Wschodniej,” 153–167; Marcinkowski, *Pamiętniki reba Dowa z Bolechowa*; Marcinkowski, “העברית על אדמת פולין בתקופת ההשכלה,” 59–62; Marcinkowski, “Dow Ber z Bolechowa,” 183–190; Marcinkowski, “19- ובתחילת המאה ה-18 ובהחילת המאה ה-19,” 62–67; Marcinkowski, “ראשית 'ההשכלה' היהודית על אדמת פולין,” 30–39; Marcinkowski, “Jews in Eastern Galicia,” 41–58; Marcinkowski, “The Precursor,” 45–56.

<sup>55</sup> Marcinkowski, “העברית על אדמת פולין בתקופת ההשכלה על פי זכרונותיו של דוב בר מבוֹלחוב,” 117–120; Marcinkowski, “ראשית 'ההשכלה' היהודית על אדמת פולין,” 30–39.

## 6. Hebrew Studies in Poland during the Haskalah

The end of the 18th century and the 19th century were the times of the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah). There were disputes about the shape of the Hebrew language between the followers of the Enlightenment (*maskilim*), Orthodox circles (*chasidim*) and clear opponents of changes (*mitnagdim*). From the beginning of the 19th century, both popular and scientific Hebrew magazines began to appear, such as *Kerem Chemed* (“Vineyard of Pleasure” or “Vineyard of Delight”) headed by Galician Hebrew scholars who cared for the purity of Hebrew by eliminating all foreign influences, clichés or lexical borrowings from it. Marking out influences from Yiddish and the rabbinical (Talmudic) style, they limited themselves to the language of the Bible, getting rid of any elements of post-biblical Hebrew. When they lacked Hebrew terms, they used biblical ones, creating new meanings, and thus making the language artificial and unnatural. This style is termed *melitsah*. New studies on the language emerged, such as the Hebrew grammar by Judah Leib Ben Zeev (1764–1811), which was an indispensable aid to teaching Hebrew in Jewish schools throughout the 19th century. Noteworthy is the work of Isaac Erter (1792–1851, born near Przemyśl, died in Brody), entitled *Ha-Tzofeh* [The Watchman], which is a collection of polemics against Hasidic Jews, written in a pure biblical style. What is important, the author demanded to develop grammatical rules, establish vocabulary and even an institution ensuring the purity and correctness of the Hebrew language.<sup>56</sup>

Jakub S. Abramowicz (b. 1836) published *Toldot hateva* [The History of Nature] in four volumes, creating the basis for Hebrew terminology in the field of zoology. Zevi Hirsch ben Meir ha-Kohen Rabinowitz (Hirsz Rabinowicz [1832–1889]) published *אוצר ההכמה והמדע* [The Treasure of Wisdom and Knowledge] in Vilnius, 1876, in three parts, creating terminology in the field of physics and chemistry, while Chaim Zelig Słonimski<sup>57</sup> in the field of astronomy and mathematics.<sup>58</sup>

## 7. A Growing Interest in Hebrew in 18th and 19th Centuries

With the development of Hebrew literature, interest in the language itself increased. The most important Hebrew scholars at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries undoubtedly include the above-mentioned Ben Zeev Judah Leib, author of the Hebrew grammar textbook *Talmud leshon ivri* [Learning the Hebrew Language], in

<sup>56</sup> See Schorr, “Język hebrajski w Polsce,” 432–433.

<sup>57</sup> Chaim Zelig Słonimski, born in Białystok on March 10, 1810, died in Warsaw on May 15, 1904, of Jewish origin, a writer, mathematician, astronomer and inventor. In 1862, he founded the first periodical in Hebrew called *הצפירה* [Morning Star] to promote science.

<sup>58</sup> See Schorr, “Język hebrajski w Polsce,” 434–435.

five parts; its first edition was published in Wrocław in 1796. Moreover, he published a Hebrew-German dictionary in three parts, entitled אוצר השורשים – *Otsar Ha-Shorashim* [Treasury of Roots], in Vienna in 1807. Its sixth edition, edited by Moses Schulbaum (Lwów 1880–1882), included another volume devoted to new Hebrew literature. In the 19th century, it should be indicated that Chayim Zvi Lerner (1815–1889) published the Hebrew grammar מורה הלישון – *More Halashon* [Language Teacher] in Leipzig (1859) and the Aramaic לשון ארמית לקדוק – *Diqduq lashon aramit* [Grammar of the Aramaic Language]. Joshua Steinberg developed the Hebrew grammar מערכי לשון עבר – *Maarke leshon ever* [Study of the Hebrew Language] in Vilnius (1884) and the Hebrew-Russian-German biblical dictionary, entitled אוצר המילים – *Otsar hamilim* [A Treasury of Words].

## 8. Biblical Hebrew in the New Theology Study Programmes

At the beginning of the 19th century, Austrian universities introduced a new curriculum for theological studies including Biblical Hebrew. This was also to be required at the Kraków University. In 1802, Hebrew classes were taken over by Rev. Florian Kudrewicz. In 1805, under the imperial decree to merge the University of Lwów with the Kraków University, a project was introduced to create a chair of Semitic languages, including Hebrew. Biblical Hebrew was taught mainly by priests: Marcin Altegger (1808–1809), Jan Kanty Górnicki (1810–1814) and Florian Kudrewicz<sup>59</sup> (he resumed lectures in the 1815/1816 academic year), Piotr Pękalski (1827–1832), Aleksander Jan Schindler<sup>60</sup> (1832–1836), Jan Stanisław Przybylski (1836–1838), Ignacy Penka (1839–1840), Leon Laurysiewicz (1840–1841), Jan Drożdżewicz<sup>61</sup> (1860–1863 and 1871–1883), Zygmunt Lenkiewicz (1883–1891) and Władysław Knapieński (1887–1909).

## 9. Development of Centres for Hebrew Studies in Vilnius and Warsaw

At the beginning of the 19th century, centres for Hebrew studies were founded in Vilnius and Warsaw. In his project of the Vilnius Academy, Hugo Kołłątaj

<sup>59</sup> He wrote the textbook *Compendium hermeneuticae*, see Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 371.

<sup>60</sup> He used the grammar of Johanne Jahn (*Grammatica linguae hebraicae* from 1824). In 1840, he obtained an honorary doctorate from the Jagiellonian University, see Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 371–373.

<sup>61</sup> He wrote “O napisie hebrajskim,” cf. Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 373.

indicated the need to create a chair of the Hebrew language. Tadeusz Czacki wrote to Prince Adam Czartoryski that “teachers of Hebrew, Chaldean and Arabic are ready”<sup>62</sup> in Krzemieniec. In another letter to the same addressee, on November 17, 1807, the Rector of the University of Vilnius, Jan Śniadecki, pointed to the seminarian Szymon Feliks Żukowski, who had learned Hebrew with Fabrycy, a Basilian monk. Rev. Szymon Żukowski was the author of *Początki języka hebrajskiego przez Sebastiana Żukowskiego* and *Wypisy hebrajskie* [Hebrew Excerpts] (with a Hebrew-Polish dictionary). He also translated fragments of the Psalms, which he published together with their Hebrew texts in *Dzieje dobroczynności krajowej i zagranicznej, 1823* [Acts of National and Foreign Charity]. Among Żukowski’s students at the Major Seminary in Vilnius, the following should be mentioned: Piotr Chlebowski, a later translator and co-worker of Luigi A. Chiarini; Jan Chrzyciel Gintyła (d. 1857), the author of a Hebrew-Polish dictionary; he was also fluent in Arabic; Hebrew scholar Herbert Mamert (1789–1873) as well as Jan Skidła and Michał Bobrowski. Jan Nepomucen Wiernikowski (1800–1877), a translator of fragments of the Psalms from the original, and Ludwik Spitznagel (1805–1829), who taught Oriental languages, including Hebrew,<sup>63</sup> to Adam Mickiewicz, were also associated with the Vilnius community. Spitznagel committed suicide, an incident which echoed in Juliusz Słowacki’s work.<sup>64</sup>

<sup>62</sup> See Dębicki, *Puławy*, 95; quoted after Reychman, “Zainteresowania orientalistyczne,” 72.

<sup>63</sup> Perhaps it was because of him that the famous wording by Adam Mickiewicz “and his name shall be forty and four” was created. Adam Mickiewicz in *Dziady* [Forefathers’ Eve], part III, Scene V, through the mouth of Father Piotr, spins the following vision (translated by Dorothea Prall Radin, in Mickiewicz *Poems*, 291–294, <https://books.openedition.org/ceup/2369>:

*The restorer of our land!*  
*Born of a foreign mother, in his veins*  
*The blood of ancient warriors – and his name*  
*Shall be forty and four.*

According to many literary critics, with these words Mickiewicz foretold the coming of a hero who would become the nation’s restorer, symbolically called “forty and four.” This is probably a misreading of the numerical value of Hebrew consonants in the word “Adam,” which is Hebrew for “man.” Adam is also the poet’s name. In the Polish word “Adam” we have two consonants *d* and *m*, which correspond to the Hebrew consonants  $\daleth$  and  $\mem$ . Their numerical value in the Hebrew alphabet is 44. The correct numerical value of the word  $\daleth\mem$  is 605 because we have three consonants.  $\aleph$  is a consonant with a value of 1,  $\daleth = 4$ ,  $\mem = 600$ , total 605. At least a few Vilnius Orientalists were in close contact with Adam Mickiewicz, among them, usually standing in opposition to the bard, Józef Sękowski. And “foreign mother” is probably the poet’s mother, Barbara Majewska, who was supposed to come from the Jakub Frank’s sect, whose members were baptized in the mid-18th century. Such a hypothesis was developed by Artur Sandauer (“Nie czy, lecz po co ‘Z matki obcej’” 3).

<sup>64</sup> See Reychman, “Zainteresowania orientalistyczne,” 73–74, 89.

## 10. Lecturers of Hebrew at Polish Universities in the Late 18th Century and the 19th Century

Among the lecturers of the Hebrew language at Polish universities in the late 18th century and the 19th century, the following should be mentioned: Szymon Żukowski in Vilnius, Piotr Pękalski in Kraków, Innocent Fessler (1755–1839) at the Josephine University in Lwów and Luigi A. Chiarini<sup>65</sup> at the University of Warsaw. M. Molinary and Villaume lectured at the Jesuit Academy in Połock. The most important publications on Hebrew include I. Fessler's *Antologia hebraica*; S. Żukowski's *Początki języka hebrajskiego z wypisami* [The Beginnings of the Hebrew Language with Excerpts]; Giraud's *Vocabulaire hebreu-français*; and Luigi A. Chiarini's *Grammatyka hebrajska*.

## 11. Hebrew Studies at the University of Warsaw until World War I

### 11.1. The Beginnings

The Hebrew language as an auxiliary subject of theology existed almost from the very beginning in most academic centres in Poland. This was also the case at the University of Warsaw,<sup>66</sup> where the teaching of Hebrew was initiated as early as two years after the establishment of the University, i.e. in 1818. The first lecturer of the Hebrew language at the University of Warsaw was Rev. Prof. Paweł Szymański. Soon after, Rev. Sebastian Ciampi<sup>67</sup> joined the teaching staff, having been invited from Tuscany to conduct Hebrew language classes by another Italian clergyman, Rev. Luigi Chiarini.<sup>68</sup> Soon, with the consent of Tsar Nicholas I, scholars began translating the Talmud into

<sup>65</sup> Rev. Chiarini was friends with the Krasiński family. He taught Hebrew and Arabic to Zygmunt Krasiński; they read the Bible and the Quran in original languages. Chiarini died in Warsaw at the Krasiński Palace in 1832. More on Chiarini, see Manteufflowa, "Chiarini Alojzy Ludwik," 290–291; Parente, "Chiarini Luigi," 582.

<sup>66</sup> On the beginnings of the University of Warsaw, see Bieliński, *Królewski Uniwersytet Warszawski*, I–III.

<sup>67</sup> In the 1817/1818 academic year, Sebastian Ciampi was one of the first professors of the University of Warsaw. He taught classical languages at the Faculty of Philosophy, which at that time also included philological and historical sciences. That is why he is mentioned in the history of the Faculty of History of the University of Warsaw. He made a mark in Polish historiography as a researcher of Polish-Italian relations. See also Bieliński, *Królewski Uniwersytet Warszawski*, II, 392–395; Caccamo, "Sebastiano Ciampi," 131–134; Barycz, "Sebastian Ciampi," 15–17; Barycz, "Sebastian Ciampi i jego działalność literacka," 467–479.

<sup>68</sup> Rev. Chiarini, in addition to the aforementioned Hebrew grammar textbook, compiled *Słownik hebrajski*; from Latin translated by P. Chlebowski. For the beginnings of Hebrew studies at the University of Warsaw, see Marcinkowski, "לואיג'י קיאריני בורשה ומאמצינו לתרגם את התלמוד לצרפתית," 9–18; Marcinkowski, "Luigi Chiarini (1789–1832) – jeden z pierwszych hebraistów Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego," 24–25; Marcinkowski, "Luigi Chiarini (1789–1832) – an Anti-Judaistic Reformer of Judaism," 237–248; Marcinkowski, "Reformator judaizmu czy antyjudaista?," 52–59.

French. Their translation and teaching of Hebrew were interrupted by the November Uprising and the closure of the University of Warsaw in 1831. After the university had been reactivated in 1861, first as the Warsaw Main School and then from the Imperial University of Russia in 1869, there were no Hebrew studies there (although Celestyn Disnart opened a chair of Hebrew at the Warsaw Main School, due to the lack of students, Hebrew classes were suspended after two years<sup>69</sup>).

### 11.2. The Restoration of Hebrew courses in 1915

Courses of Hebrew were restored only in 1915 after the University of Warsaw had resumed its activity as a Polish university. At that time, biblical Hebrew was taught at three faculties: Catholic Theology (Rev. Prof. Jan Stawarczyk, an excellent Hebrew teacher and head of the Biblical Philology Department), Evangelical Theology (Rev. Prof. Jan Szeruda, a well-known translator of the Old Testament books) and Orthodox Theology (Asst. Prof. Sergiusz Kisiel-Kisielewski). Hebrew courses were treated as an auxiliary science of theology, enabling its students to study the Old Testament.<sup>70</sup>

## 12. Hebrew Studies at the Jagiellonian University in the First Half of the 20th Century

In the first half of the 20th century (interrupted by the wars), biblical Hebrew was taught at the Faculty of Theology. The lecturers were: Rev. Jan Korzonkiewicz<sup>71</sup> (1909–1920), Rev. Józef Archutowski<sup>72</sup> (from 1920 to autumn 1939), Rev. Alfons Bielenin (1923–1949, including the break of World War II with), Rev. Jan Mazer-ski (1938/1939), Rev. Aleksy Klawek<sup>73</sup> (after the war until 1954), Rev. K. Gliński (1946/1947), and later Rev. Władysław Smereka (1947–1953) and Rev. Stanisław Grzybek (1945–1953).

<sup>69</sup> In 1877–1880, a twelve-volume bibliography, entitled אוצר הספרים, was published; it contains a list of Hebrew manuscripts and prints published before 1863.

<sup>70</sup> See *Skład Uniwersytetu i Spis Wykładów*. Cf. Tyloch, “Hebrew Studies in Poland,” 11–17.

<sup>71</sup> He was primarily concerned with the history of the Bible, and his main work is a monograph entitled *Jehošua – studium biblijne*, see Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 373–374.

<sup>72</sup> One of the leading Polish biblical scholars, author of *Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego*. A little earlier *Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego* by Rev. Klemens Sarnicki, professor at the University of Lwów, second edition, Lwów 1906, was published. Also in the Jewish community, textbooks for teaching Hebrew in schools were prepared: Szenhak, *Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego*; Hausner, *Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego*; Weissberg, *Słownik hebrajsko-polski*.

<sup>73</sup> He was particularly concerned with the etymology of Hebrew biblical names. He translated the Book of Psalms (*Psalter*).

## 13. A Growing Interest in Modern Hebrew

### 13.1. In Kraków

In the late 19th century and the early 20th century, one could observe an increasing interest in modern Hebrew, to which the example of Eliezer ben Yehuda contributed. The Jewish diaspora began establishing primary and secondary schools, where Hebrew was not only a subject but also the language of instruction. From 1926 until the outbreak of World War II, the teaching of modern Hebrew as part of a foreign language course was introduced at the Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. The classes were conducted in turn by Dawid Rosenman, Edmund Stein and Bencjon Katz.<sup>74</sup>

### 13.2. In Warsaw

In Warsaw, the Institute of Judaism became the Centre of Hebrew Studies at the university level. Its lecturers included Moses Schorr<sup>75</sup> and Majer Bałaban.<sup>76</sup> Thus there were no Hebrew studies at first at the Institute of Oriental Studies, established in 1932.<sup>77</sup>

## 14. Break Caused by World War II

The intense development of Polish Hebrew studies in the mid-1930s was interrupted by the outbreak of World War II, which resulted in irreparable losses for both Jewish and Polish experts in the subject. The academic staff was exterminated, and institutions dealing with the Hebrew language and its culture were destroyed.

<sup>74</sup> See Zajączkowski, “Z dziejów orientalistyki,” 379.

<sup>75</sup> Moses Schorr was undoubtedly a great figure (born in Przemyśl on May 10, 1874 and died in a labour camp in Posty, Uzbekistan, on July 8, 1941). He was a Polish historian and Orientalist, an outstanding expert in Babylonian law, Semitist, rabbi, political activist, senator of the Second Polish Republic, Vice-President of B'nai B'rith, and one of the founders of modern historiography of Polish Jews. He authored many scientific publications on the history of Polish Jews, Hebrew language and culture, as well as old Semitic languages and Babylonian legislation. See Prokopowicz, *Żydzi polscy*, 291–293, Żebrowski, *Mojżesz Schorr*; Marcinkowski, “קורות חייו ופועלו המדעי של פרופ' משה שורר,” 113–117.

<sup>76</sup> Majer Bałaban (1877–1942), a historian and educator, rabbi, precursor of research on the history of Jews in Poland from the 14th century to his contemporary times; author of many publications on the history, culture and customs of Polish Jews. For the purposes of this study, a particularly important publication by Prof. Majer Bałaban is *Historja i literatura żydowska*, which covers the history of the Jewish nation and their literature written in Hebrew in three volumes.

<sup>77</sup> Cf. Tyloch, “Historia studiów hebraistycznych,” 107.

## 15. Hebrew Studies after the War

After World War II, Hebrew studies in the field of biblical languages were resumed at only three universities: the Jagiellonian University in Kraków, the University of Warsaw, and the Catholic University of Lublin.<sup>78</sup> Hebrew studies were treated as an auxiliary science of theology. Some of the biblical scholars were also good philologists, not only at the Catholic University of Lublin, but also at other universities. One of them was undoubtedly the aforementioned Rev. Prof. Aleksy Klawek (1890–1969), who worked at the University of Lwów before the war. Later he worked at the Jagiellonian University, teaching the Faculty of Theology till 1954 and then in the Department of Oriental Philology until 1969. The first post-war teacher of Hebrew at the Faculty of Theology, University of Warsaw, was Rev. Prof. Paweł Nowicki.<sup>79</sup>

In 1954, the communist authorities removed faculties of theology from all Polish state universities. They created the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw (ATK), which embraced the Faculty of Theology of the University of Warsaw. The academic staff of the Faculty of Theology of the Jagiellonian University opposed the merger with the Academy of Catholic Theology and, despite the repression, remained in Kraków, although they were forced to limit their activities only to educating seminarians preparing for the sacrament of Holy Orders.

The teaching of biblical Hebrew was continued at the Academy of Catholic Theology by Rev. Paweł Nowicki (1888–1980) and the Franciscan priest Józef Wiesław Rosłon (1929–1993),<sup>80</sup> who gained fame through their achievements. The author of this article also taught Hebrew at the Academy of Catholic Theology from 1990 until 2003. In the last decade of the 20th century, Rev. Krzysztof Bardski and Anna Kuśmirek, who wrote her Master's thesis "*Sefer Elijahu*" jako przykład żydowskiej literatury apokaliptycznej under my supervision at the University of Warsaw in 1997, joined the ATK team of Hebrew scholars.

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<sup>78</sup> An outstanding biblical scholar, Rev. Prof. Stanisław Łach (1906–1983), was the author of many translations, studies and commentaries to biblical books. He lectured biblical Hebrew at the Catholic University of Lublin in 1948–1976. For many years, the Polish version of Paul Jouon's grammar, edited by Rev. Paweł Leks (*Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego*), served as a textbook there. At the Catholic University of Lublin, this tradition was continued by Rev. Prof. Ryszard Rubinkiewicz (1939–2011).

<sup>79</sup> He moved to the Academy of Catholic Theology, working there till 1969. He wrote the textbook Nowicki, *Hebrajszczyzna biblijna*.

<sup>80</sup> Author of many teaching aids for ATK students, including Rosłon, *Podręcznik języka hebrajskiego*, and Rosłon, *Wypisy do nauki języka hebrajskiego*.



## 16. Hebrew Studies at the University of Warsaw after World War II

After the restoration of the Institute of Oriental Studies at the University of Warsaw in 1945, Hebrew was first offered again at the Chair of Ancient Eastern Philology, headed by Prof. Rudolf Ranoszek in 1948, and then in the Chair of Semitic Studies, headed by Prof. Stefan Strelcyn<sup>81</sup> in 1950. For Semitists, Hebrew was one of the subjects of their main interests. At the time, modern Hebrew also began to be taught.<sup>82</sup> One of its first lecturers, apart from Prof. Strelcyn, was Władysław Tubielewicz,<sup>83</sup> who worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies until 1962 and then in 1990–1995. In 1959, the study programme was expanded, with a stronger emphasis on Israel's history and Hebrew literature. In 1968, the Chair of Semitic Studies was transformed into the Department of Semitics and African Studies. In 1969, Witold Tyloch took over managing the Department as an associate professor. At the time, separate programmes were developed, comprising three specialties: African studies (Hausa and Swahili), Ethiopian studies and Hebrew studies. The curriculum of the Hebrew studies was changed in 1973, expanding the scope of the programme to include modern Hebrew classes. In 1975, Hebrew studies became part of the Middle East and Maghreb Department.<sup>84</sup> In 1979, it was part, along with Assyriology, Egyptology and Hittology, of the Division of Ancient East and Hebrew Studies, which was then renamed the Department of Ancient East Philology, Egyptology and Hebrew Studies.

In the late 1970s and 80s, the teaching and research staff of the Department of Hebrew Studies included Prof. Witold Tyloch, Ewa Świdarska<sup>85</sup> and Tomasz Federowicz.<sup>86</sup> (I joined the team upon graduation in 1982<sup>87</sup>). The whole team, through

81 Stefan Strelcyn was primarily an Ethiopist, but also a Hebraist. Together with F. Kupfer, he published a book on strictly Hebrew topics (Kupfer – Strelcyn, *Mickiewicz w przekładach hebrajskich*). In 1969, he left Poland, first working at the School of Oriental and African Studies in London, then he became a professor at the University of Manchester. His scientific achievements were appreciated when he was appointed a member of the British Academy in 1976, see Tyloch, "Historia studiów hebraistycznych," 109.

82 An undoubtedly important lexicographic event at that time was the publication of the two-volume *Słownik hebrajsko-polski*, compiled by Miriam and Dawid Szir and known in Poland as "Słownik Sieraczków," in Tel-Aviv in 1958. The same authors developed a three-volume *Słownik polsko-hebrajski*, Tel-Aviv 1975/1976 (unfortunately, less successful than the first one).

83 Tubielewicz, "Vom Einfluß europäischer Sprachen," 337–351. Earlier, Moshe Altbauer published "O technice zdrobnień," 189–198, and also "Elementy słowiańskie," 64–68.

84 In 1972–1977, Witold Witakowski worked as an assistant at the Department of Semitics and African Studies. Later he left for Scandinavia.

85 She wrote her Master's thesis on the stories of Shmuel Yosef Agnon, winner of the 1966 Nobel Prize in Literature. She worked at the University of Warsaw from 1973 till 1988. She wrote, inter alia, Świdarska, "Wpływy słowiańskie," 339–340.

86 His Master's thesis *Funkcje imiesłowu w języku „Ksiąg Królewskich”* was written under the supervision of Prof. W. Tyloch. He worked at the University of Warsaw in 1977–1986.

87 I began writing my MA thesis on the prepositional rection of Hebrew verbs, but as a result of the imposition of martial law in Poland in 1981, my contacts with international science were limited and I had to

their excellent work especially in the field of didactics, set high standards in Hebrew studies.<sup>88</sup>

## 17. The Department of Hebrew Studies at the University of Warsaw

A severe blow to the department was the unexpected death of Prof. Witold Tyloch in 1990. At that time, the Department of Ancient East Philology, Egyptology and Hebrew Studies was divided into three separate departments: the Department of the Ancient East, the Department of Egyptology and the Department of Hebrew Studies. I took over the management of the latter.<sup>89</sup> The scope of modern and biblical language classes was expanded. Yiddish and Aramaic were added to the study programme. The number of hours of Arabic classes was also increased and conducted by Anna Parzymies, Jolanta Kozłowska, Ryszard Piwiński, Agata Nalborczyk, George Yacoub, Georges Kass and others. It became practice to employ a native speaker of Hebrew as a teacher. Such teachers included Jael Mehl from Israel (1990/1991), Lavinia Davenport from Great Britain and Shoshana Ronen from Israel (1992/1993). Ronen<sup>90</sup> graduated with a degree in philosophy from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem in 1992. Meanwhile she was employed as a language teacher in the Hebrew Department. In 1994–1998, she was on a sabbatical preparing her dissertation with which she earned a PhD in philosophy from the University of Warsaw<sup>91</sup>, after which she returned to lecture at the Department.

A great contribution to development and maintaining a high level of education during the difficult times of the department in the 1990s was made by Hebrew studies graduates of the University of Warsaw Iwona Brzewska and Daniel Starzyński.

Students pursuing Hebrew studies participated in history classes conducted by Prof. Jerzy Tomaszewski and Prof. Andrzej Chojnowski. They learnt the arcane of the Yiddish language and culture from three great experts: Ewa Geller, Tadeusz Józef Michalski and Jakub Weitzner. It is worth mentioning some graduates of Hebrew

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change the subject of my thesis to *Traktat Miszny „Pesachim”*. *Wstęp, przekład, komentarz*.

88 More information on Hebrew studies in the 1980s and the 1990s can be found in Marcinkowski, “Zakład Hebraistyki,” 15–17.

89 I was the first Head of the Hebrew Department of the University of Warsaw from 1990 until 2001. I obtained further academic degrees: in 1993 – a doctor’s degree in the field of linguistics for my dissertation entitled *Pamiętniki reba Dowa z Bolechowa. Rękopis z Jews College London nr 31 – wstęp, edycja, przekład z języka hebrajskiego, komentarz*, submitted to the Council of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the University of Warsaw.

90 Ronen – Sobelman, *Samouczek języka hebrajskiego*.

91 Her Ph.D. thesis: *Nietzsche and Wittgenstein in Search of Secular Salvation*.

studies, who later joined the teaching staff: Małgorzata Sandowicz,<sup>92</sup> Anna Kuśmirek<sup>93</sup> and Paweł Zdun.<sup>94</sup> There were many others who made important contributions to the development of the Department of Hebrew Studies.

In the late 20th century, the scientific achievements of the Department include prolific publications, mainly those by Witold Tyloch<sup>95</sup> and to a lesser extent those by the undersigned. They were studies on the Dead Sea manuscripts, texts from Ugarit, Judaism, especially rabbinic Judaism, with its main work, Mishnah, as well as eighteenth-century Hebrew manuscripts written in Poland, Hebrew linguistics and issues related to contemporary Israel, in particular contemporary Hebrew literature.

Prof. Witold Tyloch kept in touch with the world's leading research centres in the field of Hebrew studies, particularly in Israel. After his death, this function was taken over by the undersigned, who was an active and tenured participant in numerous international Hebrew conferences, including the World Congresses of Hebrew Language and Culture. Moreover, I am a member on the editorial board of important scientific journals, e.g. *Revue Européenne des Études Hébraïques*, based in Paris. Thanks to this activity, the Polish Hebrew community gained recognition among specialists around the world, which was reflected in the fact that the Department of Hebrew Studies was entrusted with the organization of international conferences. The first was the Fourth World Congress of Hebrew Language and Culture, held in August 1980 in Warsaw, and attended by scientists from twelve European countries and from Israel. It was the first congress on the Hebrew language and culture in Central and Eastern Europe. Prof. Witold Tyloch also initiated the second conference titled "Polish and Jewish Society in 1863–1939," which took place in 1990. However, due to a serious illness followed by his death, the burden of organizing the conference fell on me. This conference was attended by scholars from France, Israel, the former Soviet Union and Poland.<sup>96</sup> Until the end of the twentieth century, the Department of

<sup>92</sup> MA thesis *Kodyfikacja prawa żydowskiego według Majmonidesa*, supervisor R. Marcinkowski.

<sup>93</sup> MA thesis „*Sefer Elijahu*” jako przykład żydowskiej literatury apokaliptycznej, supervisor R. Marcinkowski.

<sup>94</sup> MA thesis *Nomenklatura angelologiczna oraz terminologia dotycząca Boga w „Pieśniach Ofiary Szabatowej” z Qumran i Masady*, supervisor R. Marcinkowski.

<sup>95</sup> The main research area of Prof. Tyloch was Semitic linguistics, especially Hebrew and religious studies. He wrote, inter alia, Tyloch, *Gramatyka języka hebrajskiego* and many articles, e.g. Tyloch, “The Evidence of the Proto-lexicon,” 55–61. His works on Qumran are well-known: Tyloch, *Rękopisy z Qumran*; Tyloch, *Aspekty społeczne gminy z Qumran* (habilitation thesis). He also dealt with Ugarit (Ras Shamra), about which he wrote in Tyloch, *Odkrycia w Ugarit*. His biblical research included Tyloch, *Dzieje ksiąg Starego Testamentu*. In 1987, his book *Judaizm* was published as part of the series *Religie Świata* [Religions of the world], presenting in an accessible way the history and principles of the first of the three great monotheistic religions. On Prof. Tyloch's Hebrew publications, see Marcinkowski, “פרופ' ויטולד טי לוך ולימודי העברית באוניברסיטת ורשה,” 117–120; Marcinkowski, “Witold Tyloch a studia hebraistyczne,” 37–42.

<sup>96</sup> This momentous event was described by R. Marcinkowski, “Społeczeństwo polskie i żydowskie w latach 1863–1939,” 156–160; Marcinkowski, “Polacy i Żydzi między powstaniem styczniowym a wybuchem II wojny światowej,” 183–186; Marcinkowski “Stosunki polsko-żydowskie w latach 1863–1939,” 363–365.

Hebrew Studies of the University of Warsaw<sup>97</sup> was the only centre in Poland, which conducted MA programmes in Hebrew Studies.

### 18. The Mordechai Anielewicz Centre for the Study and Teaching of the History and Culture of the Jews in Poland

The Hebrew Studies at the University of Warsaw became a unit that supported other research and teaching centres in Poland, which taught the Hebrew language and culture as auxiliary subjects. In 1990, the Mordechai Anielewicz Centre for the Study and Teaching of the History and Culture of the Jews in Poland was established at the University of Warsaw, the Faculty of History, also becoming a place where courses of Hebrew were offered. Regina Gromacka was teaching Hebrew, mainly to history students, there for many years. The Centre employed graduates of Hebrew Studies, including Anna Michałowska-Mycielska.<sup>98</sup>

### 19. Hebrew as Research and Didactic Subject at Other Academic Centres in Poland

It would be impossible to list here all the scholars<sup>99</sup> who, even partly, did research into the Hebrew language till the end of the 20th century. Neither would it be possible to list all the places in Poland, where work related to the study or teaching of the Hebrew language, mainly biblical, was undertaken. The leading centres includes the Catholic University of Lublin and the Academy of Catholic Theology in Warsaw, now the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw. It is also worth mentioning the Christian Theological Academy, in particular its theologian and Hebraist Prof. Jan Szeruda (1889–1962).

<sup>97</sup> One of the graduates is Piotr Muchowski, who is now working at the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, where in 1993, he obtained a doctorate in linguistics for his dissertation *Zwój miedziany (3Q15)*. He also wrote *Rozmówki polsko-hebrajskie; Rękopisy znad Morza Martwego; Komentarze do rękopisów znad Morza Martwego*.

<sup>98</sup> In 1995, she wrote her MA thesis *Pinkas gminy żydowskiej w Boćkach*, under the supervision of R. Marcinkowski.

<sup>99</sup> In the late 20th century, many Polish scholars undertook research on Hebrew topics, e.g. Prof. Jerzy Woronczak (1923–2003) from the University of Wrocław, who supervised the doctoral dissertation entitled *Inskrypcje hebrajskie na Śląsku XIII–XVIII w.* [Hebrew Inscriptions in Silesia in the 13th–18th Centuries] by Marcin Wodziński in 1995. We should also mention Prof. Stanisław Frybys (1922–2013, the Righteous Among the Nations, honored by Yad Vashem) from the Faculty of Polish Studies of the University of Warsaw, and Ewa Geller from the Faculty of Modern Languages of the University of Warsaw.

It is certainly worth mentioning Prof. Andrzej Zaborski (1942–2014), a lecturer at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Faculty of Philology of the Jagiellonian University from 1967, who also taught biblical Hebrew.

By a resolution of the Senate of the Jagiellonian University, on October 1, 1986, the Inter-Faculty Department of Jewish History and Culture in Poland was established, which was then transformed into the Department of Jewish Studies at the Faculty of History of the Jagiellonian University. Kraków Jewish studies is thus the oldest academic unit dealing with Jewish research established in post-war Poland.

Judaic research indirectly related to Hebrew topics, in which Prof. Krzysztof Pilarczyk was involved, were also undertaken at the Institute of Religious Studies, Faculty of Philosophy of the Jagiellonian University. In addition, the Department of the Middle and Far East was established at the Jagiellonian University in 2000, and in 2009 it was transformed into an independent Institute of the Middle and Far East, Faculty of International and Political Studies of the Jagiellonian University.

## 20. The Polish Association of Jewish Studies

An important event in the field of research and teaching of Jewish languages and culture in Poland at the end of the 20th century was the conference titled “Żydzi i judaizm we współczesnych badaniach polskich” [Jews and Judaism in contemporary Polish research], which was held in Kraków on November 21–23, 1995.<sup>100</sup> It gathered Polish scholars representing the most important research centres dealing with Jewish culture: the Jewish Historical Institute in Warsaw, the Department of Hebrew Studies of the University of Warsaw, the Centre for Research and Teaching of Jewish History and Culture in Poland of the University of Warsaw and the Inter-Faculty Department of Jewish History and Culture in Poland of the Jagiellonian University. The Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences was a co-organizer. The opening lecture on Hebrew studies at the University of Warsaw was delivered by the undersigned as Head of the Department of Hebrew Studies of the University of Warsaw. The participants of the conference founded the Polish Association of Jewish Studies (Polskie Towarzystwo Studiów Żydowskich), which was officially registered in Kraków in 1996. Krzysztof Pilarczyk became its first president. The statutory goal of the Society was to consolidate the scholarly community dealing with the broadly understood history and culture of Jews, mainly in Poland, including the study and teaching of the Hebrew language. The second conference organized by the Polish Association of

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<sup>100</sup> Pilarczyk, *Żydzi i judaizm*.

Jewish Studies, having the same title as the first conference, was held in Kraków on November 24–26, 1998.<sup>101</sup>

## Conclusion

Hebrew studies in Poland have undergone a process of very intensive development and transformation over centuries, from the first lecturers of classical languages and translations of biblical books from their original languages in the 16th century, through the Jewish Enlightenment (Haskalah) and disputes about the shape of Hebrew in the late 18th century and the 19th century, to the emergence of numerous centres for Hebrew studies offering full-time Bachelor and Master's programmes, conducting interdisciplinary research, developing scholarly publications in the field and establishing organizations aiming to promote research on the history, culture and language of Jews.

Today Polish universities and research centres can boast a range of achievements, including the development of scholarly publications on Hebrew and Jewish studies, interdisciplinary research conducted in cooperation with scholarly institutions in Poland and abroad, offering blocks of specializing courses and organizing conferences that attract many prominent scholars from all over the world.

All this creates a good institutional basis for the development of Hebrew studies at Polish institutions of higher education. Hebrew and Jewish studies are represented at all the leading universities in Poland, attracting a growing number of Polish and international students. Moreover, the number of high quality articles published by Polish authors in the most prestigious Hebrew Studies journals in the world is increasing.

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