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WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY IN ST. LOUIS

Department of History

Dissertation Examination Committee:

Hillel Kieval, Chair

Matthew Erlin

Martin Jacobs

Christine Johnson

Corinna Treitel

CULTURE AND EXCHANGE:

THE JEWS OF KÖNIGSBERG, 1700-1820

by

Jill Anita Storm

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate School of Arts and Sciences
of Washington University in
partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree
of Doctor of Philosophy

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Introduction

On December 27, 1856, the Jewish community in Königsberg, East Prussia, celebrated the centennial of the consecration of the first official synagogue in the city. Joseph Levin Saalschütz (1801-1863), former “preacher and teacher” of the Königsberg Jewish community and current Hebrew lecturer at the city’s university, addressed the congregation. Saalschütz was the son of the former head rabbi of the Königsberg Jewish community and the first Jew to receive a Doctorate in Philosophy from the Albertus University in Königsberg.¹ A model of Jewish success and integration, Saalschütz was a proper choice to speak to the reform-minded Jewish congregation on such a memorable and historic day. He spoke with pride of the Jewish community’s accomplishments in the last century. Saalschütz voiced the optimism and sense of belonging in German society of those Jews present: “There is no Prussian who does not believe in God. There is no Prussian who is not loyal to his King and the law. There is no Prussian who does not love his Fatherland.”² Such confidence to declare Jews not just culturally German but politically Prussian could only have come after the Edict of 1812, which gave the Jews of Prussia partial citizenship, and after Jews served as soldiers for the first time during the Napoleonic Wars.

¹ “Preacher and teacher” was the title of a communal educational position that the Königsberg Jewish community created in 1820. For more on this, see Chapter Eight. For more on Saalschütz, see Manfred Komorowski, “Jüdische Studenten, Doktoren und Professoren der Königsberger Universität im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Brocke, M. Heitmann, and H. Lordick (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), p. 429. Monika Richarz, *Der Eintritt der Juden in die Akademischen Berufe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), p. 108.

² Joseph L. Saalschütz, *Das Jahrhundert eines Gotteshauses: in der Königsberger Synagoge, bei der Feier ihres Hundertjährigen Bestehens, am 30. Kislew 5617 (27. Dezember 1856)* (Königsberg: Rautenberg, 1857), p. 10.

Throughout its history, Königsberg served as both a commercial and intellectual bridge between Western and Eastern Europe. Merchants and travelers exchanged resources both material and abstract at the city's fairs and markets. Just as Königsberg was a transitional point between east and west for various goods and materials, for numerous Jewish students and intellectuals, Königsberg was also a stopping point between their home towns or cities in Eastern Europe and Western European capitals like Berlin. Salomon Maimon stayed in Königsberg for a time in the late 1770s before he settled in Berlin. Several prominent Jewish Enlighteners (*maskilim*) such as Isaac Euchel from Denmark and Breslau native Mendel Breslau lived in Königsberg for a longer period. Many important Prussian Jews also spent their formative years in Königsberg. Jewish writer Fanny Lewald (née Markus) was born in Königsberg in 1811, as was 1848 revolutionary Johann Jacoby in 1805.

This dissertation covers some of the key aspects of Jewish life in Königsberg in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. It begins at the age of the Court Jew and ends after the Prussian Emancipation Edict of 1812, tracing the Jewish community from its founding to the early stages of Jewish embourgeoisement and their cultural and political integration.³ An in-depth case study of one Jewish community allows the historian an opportunity to dig deeply into a specific context and thereby to reveal the texture of life in a certain place. Moreover, case studies of local Jewish communities are

³ Jonathan Israel puts the age of the Court Jew between 1650-1713. Werner Mosse divides the history of German Jewish emancipation into three stages: 1781-1815, 1815-1847, and 1848-1871. The scope of my work falls into the first stage which includes the peak of the *haskalah*, Napoleonic occupation and later defeat. See Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Portland: Littmann Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998), p. 101, Werner E. Mosse, "From "Schutzjuden" To "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens": The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. P. Birnbaum and I. Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 60.

crucial to the historiography of European Jewry as a whole.⁴ By illuminating a local environment and the ways in which Jews related to the state, the city and to each other, we can develop a more robust picture of European Jewish life.

My research incorporates newer trends in Jewish history, including the increasing focus among historians on the East Central European borderlands.⁵ The process of “remapping” European Jewish history began in the 1990s and has continued even into the present focus on the borderlands.⁶ The field of Jewish history has benefited from the breakdown of the traditional boundaries between east and west and between German Jew and Polish Jew. Königsberg does not entirely fit into current borderlands research, since East Prussia did not have the shifting borders of its Polish and Habsburg neighbors, nor was it a multiethnic or multinational region in which Germans had to share space with

⁴ In his work on the Jews of Breslau, Till van Rahden writes of his attempt to “mediate between macro- and micro-history, between the history of society and that of daily life.” Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), p. 16. In his portrait of Berlin, Steven Lowenstein prefers to use the term “collective biography” over communal history or micro-history. Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 7-9.

⁵ See for example, Tara Zahra, "Looking East: East Central European "Borderlands" in German History and Historiography," *History Compass* 3 (2005). Examples of borderlands research in Jewish history are Adam Teller and Magda Teter, "Introduction: Borders and Boundaries in the Historiography of the Jews in the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth," *Polin* 22 (2010): pp. 3-46. Moshe Rosman, "Jewish History across Borders," in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, ed. J. Cohen and M. Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library, 2009). Annamaria Orla-Bukowska, "Maintaining Borders, Crossing Borders : Social Relationships in the Shtetl," *Polin* 17 (2004). Nancy Sinkoff, *Out of the Shtetl : Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2004). Antony Polonsky, ed., *Focusing on Jews in the Polish Borderlands* (Portland: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001).

⁶ See, for instance, F. Malino and D. Sorkin, eds., *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe: 1750-1870* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1991). Steven Zipperstein, “Remapping Odessa, Rewriting Cultural History,” *Jewish Social Studies* 2, no. 2 (1996): pp. 21-36. Jael Silliman, “Crossing Borders, Maintaining Boundaries: the Life and Times of Farha, a Woman of the Baghdadi Jewish Diaspora (1870-1958),” *Journal of Indo-Judaic Studies* 1 (1998): pp. 57-79. Scholars are also applying the spatial terms of geography and mapping to cultural processes. Todd Pressner, who writes about mapping German-Jewish cultural interactions, argues that German-Jewish studies dovetails with postcolonial studies and its emphasis on mobility, migration and movement. Todd Pressner, “Remapping German-Jewish Studies: Benjamin, Cartography and Modernity,” *The German Quarterly* 82, no. 3 (2009): p. 298.

other groups en masse.⁷ Its history, however, is nonetheless informed by its geographic location between Poland and Lithuania. The carving up of the Poland-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the late eighteenth century certainly had its effect on bordering East Prussia as well. Moreover, borderlands refers not only to dividing lines between nations but also to the places where exchange and cross-cultural interactions occur.⁸

Königsberg, although a stable part of Prussia, was far enough east to challenge a normative narrative that divides Jewish or European history geographically.⁹ The city was a Prussian stronghold in Eastern Europe, not much farther from St. Petersburg than it was from Berlin. In fact, in many respects you can consider Königsberg to be more a part of Eastern Europe than Western Europe. In his discussion of the Eastern European *haskalah*, Israel Bartal writes that Königsberg was “much farther east than many communities in the Polish kingdom, so that one of the centers of the German *haskalah* actually sprang up deep inside Eastern Europe.”¹⁰ A study of the Jews of Königsberg not only fits into current borderlands research but also into the increasing focus in history and German studies on those occupying the margins, on those who were in large part excluded from German social and political society.¹¹ Discussing Königsberg, a city on

⁷ The Grand Duchy of Posen is an example of a Prussian province that closely fits the definition of a borderlands, since the population of the region was roughly 75% Polish and 25% German. For more on Posen as a borderland, see Elizabeth A. Drummond, "On the Borders of the Nation: Jews and the German-Polish National Conflict in Poznan, 1886-1914," *Nationalities Papers* 29, no. 3 (2001): pp. 459-75.

⁸ Teller and Teter: pp. 3-5.

⁹ Gershon David Hundert, "Re(De)Fining Modernity in Jewish History," in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, ed. J. Cohen and M. Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library, 2009), p. 142. Steven Lowenstein, who focuses on language and folk cultur, argues that there are transitional places in Central Europe that straddle both Eastern and Western Europe. Steven Lowenstein, "The Shifting Boundary between Eastern and Western Jewry," *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 1 (1997): pp. 60-61.

¹⁰ Israel Bartal, *The Jews of Eastern Europe, 1772-1881*, trans. C. Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2005), p. 93.

the margins of Prussia, from the perspective of a minority already on the outside of society provides double meaning to the term “margins.” East Prussia’s placement on the margins of Central Europe allows us to explore the degrees to which either geography or political affiliation determined identity. On the one hand, Königsberg was quintessentially Prussian. It was, after all, the home of the Teutonic Knights and a place of nostalgia for militaristic and nationalistic Germans of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In his *Origins of Prussianism*, Heinrich von Treitschke described the Teutonic Knights of old as “not only swashbuckling soldiers, but also thoughtful administrators; not only abstemious monks, but also venturesome merchants, and (still more remarkable) bold and far-seeing statesmen.”¹² East Prussians in many respects became the symbol of the ideal Germans.

On the other hand, however, other Prussians frequently saw Königsberg as a far-removed outpost, a non-contiguous part of Prussia. In terms of topography and climate, Königsberg did not resemble Brandenburg at all. In this dissertation, we will see the ways in which the city’s location so far east and its varying conditions influenced German views of Königsberg. The perceptions of both Jews and non-Jews living in Königsberg vacillated wildly between viewing their hometown as remote island in the middle of Eastern Europe and as an economically vibrant and culturally diverse port. How should a historian interpret these contradictions? It would be incorrect either to downplay these discrepancies or to attempt to reconcile them artificially. We should

¹¹ See, for example, N. Gregor, N. Roemer, and M. Roseman, eds., *German History from the Margins* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2006). S. Milner, ed., *At the Margins: Minority Groups in Premodern Italy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005). D. Lorenz and R. Posthofen, eds., *Transforming the Center, Eroding the Margins: Essays on Ethnic and Cultural Boundaries in German-Speaking Countries* (Columbia: Camden House, 1998).

¹² Heinrich von Treitschke, *Treitschke's Origins of Prussianism (the Teutonic Knights)*, trans. Eden Paul and Cedar Paul (New York: Howard Fertig, 1969), p. 20.

rather recognize the complex interplay of perception and reality and how both shape a city and thereby its residents' history in different ways. Moreover, the overall character of a city is variable and its dynamics constantly changing.

A study of the commercial and cultural exchange of the Jews of Königsberg also has broader implications for Diaspora studies. Diaspora communities and their far-reaching alliances led to a particular degree of cultural mingling which worked its way into all aspects of identity, including speech, values, and behavior.¹³ A discussion of Jewish mercantile exchange in the context of Königsberg can build on the work already done in the field of Jewish history on Sephardic trade networks. While not nearly as far-reaching geographically, Ashkenazic merchants in the Baltic region nonetheless shared similar patterns of mercantile exchange founded on widespread kinship networks.

At first observation, a study of the Jews of Königsberg, a Baltic port city, fits into the "port Jew" concept initiated by Lois Dubin and David Sorkin in the late 1990s. Sorkin suggests that the "port Jew" should be placed alongside the Court Jew and the *maskil*, a member of the Jewish Enlightenment, as an important social type.¹⁴ Dubin and Sorkin claim that for Jews in certain port cities who had long enjoyed tolerance and a higher level of integration, legal emancipation was not as decisive as it was for other Jewish communities. They also argue that local governments in port cities allowed the Jews more commercial latitude. Moreover, the local wealthy elite often overlooked their religious prejudices against Jews in order to conduct profitable business with Jewish

¹³ Iain Chambers, *Migrancy, Culture, Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1994), pp. 16-17.

¹⁴ D. Sorkin, "The Port Jew: Notes Toward a Social Type," *Journal of Jewish Studies* L, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 87-97. Sorkin outlined the shortcomings of earlier historical attempts to describe emancipation, most prominently Jacob Katz's primarily Germanocentric view of the emancipation process. David Sorkin, "Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation," in *Port Jews : Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950*, ed. David Cesarani (Portland: Frank Cass, 2002).

merchants. In the case of Trieste, Dubin demonstrates how Jews were concerned that legal emancipation emanating from Vienna might actually *lessen* the freedoms they enjoyed in the free Italian port on the Adriatic Sea.¹⁵

The idea put forth by Sorkin and Dubin that port cities were largely tolerant places or, as C.S. Monaco describes them, “comparatively benign” locales has its historical shortcomings. It is relatively easy to find examples of port cities where such open rapprochement did not occur, and even in those ports where tolerance was the rule, many times the Jews encountered renewed obstacles and restrictions.¹⁶ The diversity of the Jews’ experiences in port cities makes it difficult to generalize. Attempts to define Königsberg based on the port Jewish model ultimately fail, in large part because the model for Dubin and Sorkin’s “port Jews” are Sephardic Jews involved in Atlantic maritime trade. I sympathize with Sorkin’s concern that broadening the term “port Jew” to other contexts would “dilute the historical specificity of the social type of the ‘port Jew’.”¹⁷

The Jews of Königsberg lived in a port city, but they were not “port Jews” in the sense that Sorkin and Dubin suggest. Their location in a port city did not alter their relationship to the Prussian state, or at least not to the extent that Jewish historians have

¹⁵ Lois C. Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

¹⁶ See, for example, C.S. Monaco’s critique of the port Jew social type. He uses his research on the British Caribbean to challenge the notion of widespread tolerance in port cities. C.S. Monaco, “Port Jews or a People of the Diaspora? A Critique of the Port Jew Concept,” *Jewish Social Studies* 15, no. 2 (2009): p. 154. See also Adam Sutcliffe, “Jewish History in an Age of Atlanticism,” in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800*, ed. R. Kagan and P. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 22-24.

¹⁷ Sorkin, “Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation,” p. 31. Dubin appears to have a broader view of port Jewry and sees it as a useful tool for engaging in comparative Jewish history. Lois C. Dubin, “Researching Port Jews and Port Jewries: Trieste and Beyond,” in *Port Jews: Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950*, ed. David Cesarani (London: Frank Cass, 2002), pp. 47-58.

noticed in other locales. In Königsberg, oftentimes the local merchants were the most vehement voices against continued Jewish settlement and urged for stricter taxes and limitations on trade. The Jews of Königsberg also did not receive citizen rights any earlier than elsewhere in Prussia or any increased commercial opportunities. Moreover, as we will see, the city of Königsberg was a peculiar mix of the cosmopolitan and the provincial. It was a port city that was deeply traditional. Foreign merchants travelled in and out of the city and even settled in small numbers, but they were tolerated rather than welcomed.

Another example of how the Jews of Königsberg deviate from “port Jews” is in the area of the German Jewish Enlightenment (*haskalah*). Sorkin and Dubin both maintain that the *haskalah* emerged in locales other than port cities. Dubin writes that port cities did not “generate Haskalah because they did not need an explicit ideology of transformation in order to make the vernacular, secular studies or acculturation part of their everyday life.”¹⁸ Certain Jews in Königsberg, however, had an acute need for such intellectual renewal and sought it out eagerly. Königsberg became the center of the German Jewish *haskalah* second only to Berlin.

The availability of sources partially dictated the topics I chose to cover in the dissertation. A massive city-wide fire in 1811 destroyed the main synagogue in Königsberg and the entire Jewish communal archives from the eighteenth century.¹⁹

¹⁸ Dubin writes, “Haskalah was not generated in commercial societies or port cities. My analysis of Trieste supports [Sorkin’s] view. Though port Jews might well support Haskalah if it came their way, they did not create it.” Dubin, “Researching Port Jews and Port Jewries: Trieste and Beyond,” p. 54.

¹⁹ The 1811 fire was the largest and most destructive that the city of Königsberg had ever seen. It broke out in an oil and tar warehouse on June 14, 1811. 144 houses, 134 warehouses, the synagogue and the Georgs-Hospital burnt down. Damages reached 13 million Thaler. Fritz Gause, *Königsberg in Preussen: die Geschichte einer Europäischen Stadt* (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1968), p. 153. Hermann Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*

Therefore, most extant archival sources on the eighteenth century Jewish community in Königsberg come from the Prussian State Archives in Berlin-Dahlem.²⁰ Both I and any other historian who writes on Prussian Jewish history in the eighteenth century are indebted to the painstaking archival work of Selma Stern (1890-1981). In the 1920s and 1930s, she transcribed thousands of Prussian governmental files relating to the Jews.²¹ The Königsberg Jewish communal files from 1811-1938 are now housed in Jerusalem at the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. Unfortunately, they only cover the final nine years of this history. These shortcomings led me to focus on the relations between various members of the Jewish community and the royal and provincial governments. Edicts and royal correspondence tell us more about how the Jews of Königsberg related to the state than about their own internal lives and development.

In describing the parameters of one's research, it is often useful to explain to the reader what one is *not* doing. The following is not an intellectual history of *ha-Measef* and the German Jewish *haskalah*. I seek rather to provide those who come to this study with an interest in the *haskalah* with some much needed context about the city in which the journal was born and the lesser known individuals involved in its creation and distribution. This dissertation is also not a communal history in a traditional sense. The reader will perhaps notice the absence of Königsberg's rabbis and elders as significant actors in this history. One of the unfortunate consequences of the 1811 fire is that the

(Königsberg: 1903), p. 5. Fanny Lewald described the fire in her autobiography. Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: U. Helmer, 1988), pp. 17-19.

²⁰ The Municipal Archive of the City of Königsberg (*Magistratsarchiv der Stadt Königsberg*) was largely lost in 1945. The remainder of the provincial archive is now at the Secret Central Archives (*Geheimes Staatsarchiv – GStA*) in Berlin-Dahlem.

²¹ Selma Stern, *Der preussische Staat und die Juden*. 4 vols. in 8 (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962-1971). For more on Stern's archival research, see Tobias Schenk, "Der Preussische Weg der Judenemanzipation : zur Judenpolitik des "Aufgeklärten Absolutismus", " *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35, no. 3 (2008): pp. 451-56.

internal dialogue between the rabbis and the Jewish elders and their role in the life of the Jewish community of Königsberg remains largely unknown.

The dissertation is divided into two parts. Part One discusses the political and economic life of the Jews of Königsberg. The chapters in this section tell the story of the changing interactions of the Jews with various levels of the Prussian government. I describe the triangular relationship of the Jews, the Prussian crown, and local municipal and provincial leadership during the slow growth of the absolutist state in the eighteenth century. On a local history level, this is the classic story of the cultural and political integration of the Jews into a bureaucratic state. I detail the shift from communal to individual identity, from group governance to individual citizenship.

Both local and national political powers saw the Jews as a substantial source of revenue and often vied for Jewish taxes. While in certain instances the local authorities partnered with the Jews to petition the crown for reform, in most instances, municipal government was a hindrance to Jewish commercial and political interests. In the face of such resistance, the Jews of Königsberg chose to focus their efforts on establishing a secure relationship with Berlin. Popularized by Yosef Yerushalmi, the term “vertical alliance” addresses the longstanding perception among European Jews that the highest authority in any given land affords them the most security.²² In the case of East Prussia, time and again local city burghers sought to limit Jewish economic freedom. While not a perfect ally by any means, the crown proved to be the most reliable source of Jewish

²² Yerushalmi discusses this concept in his work on the sixteenth century Spanish Jewish historian Solomon Ibn Verga. In the case of Ibn Verga, his allegiance to the highest authorities in Portugal and Spain proved misguided. He writes, “Born of necessity, confirmed by history, the royal alliance flowered beyond its obvious mundane realities into a guiding myth which gripped many of the Hispano-Jewish elite down to the very eve of the Expulsion.” Y. Yerushalmi, *The Lisbon Massacre of 1506 and the Royal Image in the Shebet Yehudah*. (Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Annual Supplements, 1976), p. 39.

support. The Jews created a tactical alliance with the crown, while still utilizing local official in the municipal government when advantageous to their interests.²³

Chapter One provides an overview of Prussian legislation towards the Jews beginning with the Teutonic Knights and ending with the dominance of the Hohenzollerns. Until the late seventeenth century, the Jewish presence in Königsberg was temporary and, like elsewhere in Prussia, tied to the whims of the sovereign. The crown eventually granted more Jewish Letters of Protection (*Schutzbriefe*) and allowed the creation of a formal community in 1701, not only because they desired the increased tax revenue but also because they saw the pivotal role that Jews could play in local commerce and trade. I discuss how the roots of the Jewish community of Königsberg are largely Polish and how German Jewish and Polish Jewish merchants both held communal leadership positions.

One of the ways in which I explore the relationship of the Jews to the Prussia state and the local government in Königsberg is in Chapter Two. The *Aleinu* edict of 1703, which banned certain passages of the prayer, led the local magistrates in Königsberg to create the position of synagogue inspector. This person observed Jewish liturgy up close. The goal was to ensure the Jews of Königsberg were not uttering any blasphemies against Christ or the Church in either the *Aleinu* or the *Malshinim* prayers. The state's overall uneasiness and the perceived potential for deception led to strict regulation and, in the case of Königsberg, weekly synagogue surveillance. By tracing the position of synagogue inspector over the course of the eighteenth century until its cessation in 1778, we can see how the Jews of Königsberg related to the various echelons of government,

²³ For further discussion of Jewish political agency and the royal alliance, see Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 14-15. David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

including local and royal leadership. While the initial call for surveillance came from the sovereign, it was sustained in Königsberg and not elsewhere for so long because of politics within the university.

In the eighteenth century, the Prussian state sought to regulate Jewish religious life both publicly and privately. Chapter Three looks at the government's treatment of Jewish worship in private homes and the changing perceptions of such worship. Initially, the crown preferred Jewish worship to be as disparate and discrete as possible; yet, later on, the crown did an about face and changed the vocabulary of private synagogues from merely *Betstuben* (private synagogues) to *Winkelsynagogen* (corner synagogues). This shift in terminology signified the state's desire to vilify private worship. The changing needs of the state dictated whether or not they deemed Jewish worship acceptable, and the desirability of either public or private religious displays changed over time. The crown's shift in policy over the course of the eighteenth century signified gradual steps towards the eventual creation of a public and formalized Jewish community in Königsberg.

Chapter Four examines the commercial life of the Jews of Königsberg and the interactions between Jewish merchants and Prussian authorities. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, commercial exchange was the primary and sometimes the only time that Jews interacted with non-Jews. It was also the most important factor in how local authorities in Königsberg and the sovereign in Berlin responded to the Jewish community. The longstanding privileges of the guilds in East Prussia were obstacles to the growth of the Prussian bureaucratic state. Royal powers attempted to wrest control away from the provincial governments who backed local business interests. Oftentimes

the Jews were caught in the middle of this ongoing administrative power struggle. This chapter also explores further the influence of Polish Jews on the life of the community and the types of Polish Jews who came to Königsberg over the course of the eighteenth century.

Chapter Five discusses cross-cultural exchange between Jews and non-Jews in Königsberg. I use Königsberg as a means of examining the interplay between commerce and culture in European Jewish history.²⁴ Historians often treat intellectual and commercial transactions separately, but it is essential to break down any perceived boundaries between the cultural and economic worlds. Previous scholarship which separates the two interactions overlooks the fact that Jewish merchants and scholars inhabited the same religious and cultural orbit. In certain cases, Jews were both merchants and scholars. In Königsberg, the Friedländer family, who primarily made their fortunes in textiles and manufacturing, spearheaded not only political reform in the early nineteenth century but also internal Jewish cultural reform. Their commercial successes set the stage for the later *haskalah* movement in the city and the creation of the journal *ha-Measef*. The final part of this chapter explores the ways in which the Jews of Königsberg emulated and adopted German cultural ideals and the extent to which certain Jews were able to ingrate into wider German social spheres.

Part Two of the dissertation looks more closely at specific aspects of the cultural life of the Jews of Königsberg. Just as a discussion of economic exchange needs to take into account cultural movements, we must also not forget to do the reverse.²⁵ A

²⁴ This notion has been investigated before, most recently at an online exhibition entitled “Jews, Commerce and Culture,” at the University of Pennsylvania. <http://www.library.upenn.edu/exhibits/cajs/fellows09/>

discussion of cultural history should not be divorced from economic considerations. In Chapter Six, I discuss how contemporaries envisioned the city of Königsberg and its place in Prussia and wider Europe. The sheer number of negative impressions of Königsberg both from lifelong residents and from temporary inhabitants indicate the surprising extent to which a well-placed Baltic port developed an inferiority complex. The notion of Königsberg as a provincial city is apt but colored by the negative connotations of the term in the eyes of many of Königsberg's eighteenth century residents, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Historians have underplayed the importance of Königsberg in the development of the German *haskalah*, because of the perception of the city as being provincial or backwater. We must not forget that provincial cities can play a significant role in cultural transformations.

Chapter Seven discusses specifically the first years of the publication of *ha-Measef* in Königsberg, the centerpiece of Jewish intellectual achievement in Königsberg. One of the first journals in Hebrew, *ha-Measef* was a mixture of literature, religion, philosophy, and political musings.²⁶ Its editors sought to revive literary Hebrew and to educate their coreligionists on both Jewish and non-Jewish matters. Though the community of Jewish writers for *ha-Measef* was not geographically bound, since contributors came from all over Europe, the administrative center of the influential journal started in Königsberg. I discuss the pivotal role of the Friedländer family in

²⁵ David Throsby writes, "In the same way as economic discourse and the operation of economic systems function within a cultural context, so also is the reverse true. Cultural relationships and processes can also be seen to exist within an economic environment and can themselves be interpreted in economic terms." David Throsby, *Economics and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 10.

²⁶ Contrary to popular belief, *ha-Measef* was not the first Hebrew periodical. Rather, it was Mendelssohn's *Qohelet Musar* (Moral Ecclesiastes) from 1755. Moshe Pelli, "The Haskalah Begins in Germany with the Founding of the Hebrew Journal Hame'asef," in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096-1996*, ed. S. Gilman and J. Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 101-02.

Königsberg and how they provided the financing and practical support necessary to publish *ha-Measef*. Often compared to the Itzig family in Berlin, the Friedländers were a family of learned merchants, a new economic elite that crossed over to shape the intellectual life of the community. Without their financial backing, Issac Euchel, the mind behind the project, would not have had the necessary funds to bring it to fruition. I show how the reasons for the eventual move of *ha-Measef* from Königsberg to Berlin were mainly practical but also based on perceptions of Königsberg's cultural limitations.

Chapter Eight surveys the history of Jewish education in Königsberg. I analyze the reasons why Königsberg never developed a progressive Jewish primary school in the late eighteenth century along the lines of the Jewish Free School in Berlin. Local Jewish leadership did not heed Isaac Euchel's call in 1782 for such an institution. Despite the support of Euchel's employers, the wealthy Friedländer family, the conservative rabbinical leadership in Königsberg squashed the effort. The struggle between progressive members of the Jewish community and the rabbinical establishment continued into the 1820s. The eventual resignation of Jewish communal educator Isaac Ascher Francolm in 1826, under internal pressure from the community and from the Prussian government, meant that Königsberg continued without a formal system of progressive Jewish education similar to that of Breslau or Berlin.

Finally, Chapter Nine looks at the March Edict of 1812 and the role that Königsberg's Jews played in the years leading up to the Prussia declaration of partial citizenship. Not only did the Jews of Königsberg play a leadership role in the push towards Jewish emancipation, but the city itself was the site of some of the governmental negotiations leading up to the proclamation. In particular, the Provincial Head of East

Prussia Friedrich Leopold von Schroetter played a pivotal role in the creation of the Edict of 1812. I show how the “Schroetter Plan” from December 1808 provided a blueprint for the future edict.

Königsberg is now a place of German nostalgia and oftentimes remorse. Bombings in 1944 by the British Royal Air Force destroyed the vast majority of the city center. Under the Potsdam Agreement, the Soviet Union acquired East Prussia and its capital of Königsberg in the summer of 1945. A year later, they renamed the city Kaliningrad after the recently deceased Bolshevik revolutionary Mikhail Kalinin (1875-1946). The gradual expulsion of the remaining German residents occurred over the next three years. While slight traces of the world of German Königsberg remain, Soviet architecture and Russian repopulation have completely altered the city. Michael Wieck, a Holocaust survivor who returned to Kaliningrad in 1992, remarked in a letter, “Anyone who goes to Kaliningrad today shouldn’t expect to find Königsberg. [...] There is a building here or there that recalls the past, but these leftovers from Königsberg’s existence are like finding bones in a cemetery.”²⁷ In the case of the Jews, the notion of Königsberg as a lost world is particularly fitting and unmistakably tragic. In 1933, over three thousand Jews called Königsberg home. By 1942, only forty five Jewish families remained in the city.²⁸

The violent and systematic destruction of Jewish life in Germany casts a shadow on any history, even one that starts almost two hundred and fifty years earlier. Yet we

²⁷ Michael Wieck, *A Childhood under Hitler and Stalin: Memoirs of A "Certified Jew"*, trans. P. Milbouer (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2003), p. 250. .

²⁸ Most of those who remained in the city after 1942 were in mixed marriages. Yoram K. Jacoby, *Jüdisches Leben in Königsberg/Pr. im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1983), p. 141. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, ed. M. Berenbaum and F. Skolnik, vol. 12 (Detroit: Macmillan, 2007), p. 252.

should not let the tragedies to come unduly influence our narrative of the past. In 1856, Joseph Levin Saalschütz spoke with much pride of the last one hundred years of Jewish communal life in Königsberg and with great confidence in their future in the next century. He imagined how one hundred years later Königsberg's Jews would reflect on the memorial they placed in the courtyard of the synagogue: "When after one hundred years they celebrate again, may our offspring rejoice in our monument, in our legacy."²⁹ Despite the tragedy of the Holocaust, we should not consider Saalschütz's optimism for the future of the Jews of Königsberg misplaced. The history of the Jews of Königsberg was one of increasing wealth and gradual social and political integration. Close examination of this process exposes regular setbacks and oftentimes reversals but nonetheless points to a slow movement towards integration and citizenship.

In writing about the Jews of Königsberg, I hope to provide more insight into a seemingly lost and for many unknown world. I seek to show not only the significance of the Jews of Königsberg to their local environment but also to Central European Jewry as a whole. A history of the community in its early years brings into focus the ways in which Königsberg's Jews contributed to the development of the city in which they lived and to the wider religious community to which they belonged.

²⁹ Saalschütz, p. 12.

Chapter One The Founding of the Community

In a report to the Prussian crown from October 1707, Karl Friedrich Lau (1659-1724), the Fiscal Advocate of East Prussia in charge of tax collection in the province, wrote a report outlining to Frederick I the small group of Jews who had settled in Königsberg. He described in detail the occupations of the new community:

[There are] twenty six Jews in Königsberg at this time who are either here continuously or who sometimes travel here for business [...] Fourteen have settled down and reside in the Kneiphof and twelve in the royal [Schloss]freiheit. Counted among these Jews is a jeweler, a so called “adorner”, who works in clothing embellishments [...], one is a seal engraver, one a tailor. Four are sable dyers. Several earn their livelihood from trading and lay out old clothing and other items, including gold and silver jewelry [...]. The rest fulfill communal needs - Jewish servants and intermediaries, those who instruct Jewish children and those who acquire Jewish books, as well as the wine that Jews drink. There is also someone to slaughter [their meat] and to cook, as well as someone to sing and to conduct their services.¹

A governmental list from a year earlier of the male heads of households in Königsberg revealed the makeup of the Jewish community as half German and half Polish. Of the ten men listed, three are immediately recognized as being Polish, and it is likely that at least one or two of the others were as well.²

Unlike the modern Jewish community of Berlin, which was first composed of Viennese Jews who came to the capital in 1671, the roots of Königsberg’s Jewish community was a mixture of merchants from various parts of the German lands and from bordering Poland. The contrasting origins of Berlin and Königsberg’s Jewish

¹ “Bericht Karl Friedrich Lau, October 29, 1707,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, p. 468.

² The ten listed names are Salomon Jacob, Samuel Slumke, Urias Moseschowitz, Gotz Urias, Hirsch Urias, Marcus Simon, Marcus Moyses, Wolf Moyses, Levin Isaac, and Issak Selikowicz. “Verzeichnis der Königsberger Juden, June 30, 1706” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, p. 537.

communities were not only geographic; the two communities also had varying degrees of assets. All the Viennese Jews that Frederick William invited to Brandenburg in 1671 were wealthy. In contrast, the early members of the Königsberg Jewish community were a mixture of some prosperous Jews and some modest earners.

My stress of the Polish origins of the Königsberg Jewish community goes against the normative historical perception of Königsberg as being a new community established around court Jews. Many historians have grouped Königsberg with Berlin and other communities in which Court Factors played a prominent role.³ The marked difference between the origins of the Jewish communities in Berlin and Königsberg underscores the geographic placement of Königsberg on the borderlands of Eastern and Western Europe. The province's extensive trade with Poland, dating back to the fifteenth century, meant that there was a steady flow of Polish merchants, both Jewish and non-Jewish who made their way to the city. As we will see throughout the dissertation, this influenced not only the make-up of the Jewish community but also the character of the city as a whole.

Before delving into these larger issues, it is important to provide some historical background. This chapter outlines the early history of Königsberg and the events leading up to the formal founding of the Jewish community in 1701. I discuss the Teutonic Order's legacy in East Prussia and how eventual Polish rule in the province and the secularization of the Order enabled Jewish entry into Königsberg during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. For most of the seventeenth century, rulers had only granted Jews temporary visitation in Königsberg for commercial purposes. The decision of Frederick

³ See, for example, David Sorkin, "Port Jews and the Three Regions of Emancipation," in *Port Jews : Jewish Communities in Cosmopolitan Maritime Trading Centres, 1550-1950*, ed. David Cesarani (Portland: Frank Cass, 2002), p. 36.

William in 1671 to allow Jewish settlement in areas controlled by the Hohenzollerns made the crown more open to a permanent Jewish presence in East Prussia.

A Jewish community exists formally once it has a centralized place of worship, usually first in a private home, with a regular quorum. In addition, the community would need to secure a nearby place of group burial. In the case of Königsberg, these two requirements were met within a few years of each other in the early 1700s.

In 1701, Frederick I's decision to establish an official Jewish community in Königsberg with a cemetery and a sanctioned synagogue was both financially and bureaucratically motivated. By that point, the number of Jews residing in Königsberg or visiting the city often was high enough that the crown deemed it advantageous to make their presence official. This chapter also examines the fundamental legal importance of the Jewish *Schutzbrief* or Letter of Protection and how it defined relations between the Jews and the Prussian state during the eighteenth century. The limited granting of *Schutzbriefe* was a type of Jewish population control, since it was difficult to prosper without this document. By keeping track of the Jews of Königsberg and giving them state approval, the crown was better able to gather taxes and control not only Jewish commercial transactions but, as we will see in later chapters, the religious life of the community. Finally, I look at how the Jews of Königsberg responded to the state's attempts at control and those Jews who occupied early communal leadership positions.

Early History

The history of Königsberg began in 1255 when the Teutonic Knights built a fortress on the mouth of the River Pregel. The Teutonic Knights were the surviving

members of a German martial order decimated during the Third Crusade (1189-1191). They settled in Jerusalem in 1190 and became a strict monastic order in which all members vowed to remain destitute, chaste, and obedient to God. Those that committed themselves to the cause of the Order were called to the complete subjugation of self for the benefit of the whole.⁴ One part of their service was the active recruitment of non-Christians to salvation. This sense of divine calling made the monastic order into a political force. Their dedication to conquer new regions to Christianity changed the political landscape of the Baltic region of Northern Europe.⁵ The Teutonic Order's legacy in East Prussia was long lasting and eventually formed a part of the Germanic myth of racial supremacy and political domination. Nationalists like Heinrich von Treitschke saw in the Teutonic Knights the model for aggressive Germanization and centralization.⁶

A native Slavic tribe known as the Prussians lived in the southern Baltic Sea region the Knights had picked out for settlement. In 1226, the Polish Duke Conrad of Mazovia (c. 1187-1247) requested the assistance of the German Knights in subduing and Christianizing the pagan Prussians. The Duke had been fighting with the Old Prussians

⁴ Their full title was the Order of the Teutonic Knights of St. Mary's Hospital in Jerusalem (*Ordo domus Sancte Marie Theutonicorum Ierosolimitanorum*). William Urban, *The Teutonic Knights: A Military History* (Mechanicsburg: Stackpole Books, 2003), pp. 11-12. Harry Grant Plum, *The Teutonic Order and Its Secularization: A Study in the Protestant Revolt* (Iowa City: University of Iowa, 1906), pp. 1-2.

⁵ Plum, pp. 13-14. For more on the Teutonic Knights, see Marie-Luise Favreau, *Studien zur Frühgeschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Stuttgart: E. Klett, 1974). Uwe Siegler, *Kreuz und Schwert: die Geschichte des Deutschen Ordens* (Köln: Bohlau, 2003). Klaus-Eberhard Murawski, "Grundzüge der staatlichen Entwicklung in Ost- und Westpreussen," in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Heitmann M. Brocke, and H. Lordick (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), pp. 14-5.

⁶ For a discussion of Treitschke's nationalism, see Andreas Dorpalen, "Heinrich von Treitschke," *Journal of Contemporary History* 7, no. 3/4 (1972): p. 25. For more on Treitschke's view of the Jews, see Michael A. Meyer, "Heinrich Graetz and Heinrich von Treitschke: A Comparison of their Historical Images of the Modern Jew," *Modern Judaism* 6, no. 1 (1986).

since 1222 and desired the Order's help in subjugating them once and for all.⁷ In return, he guaranteed the Knights freedom from the Holy Roman Empire. In 1255, the Order founded a fortress and named it "The King's Mount" (*Königsberg*) in honor of the Bohemian King Ottokar II (1230-1278) who had provided funding for the project and armies for the crusade against the Prussians.⁸

Unlike other areas of the Baltic where resident knights and bishops shared local leadership, Königsberg and its environs were under the special control of the Grand Marshall of the Teutonic Order. This influenced the degree of local resistance to Jewish settlement. In 1309, only shortly after conquering the region and establishing their dominance, a ruling from Grand Master Siegfried von Feuchtwangen (d.1311) blocked Jewish settlement in East Prussia.⁹ He prohibited Jews, along with "sorcerers, magicians, and heathen priests (*Waideler*)" from stepping foot in East Prussia for any reason. Pragmatically, the ban on Jewish settlement largely stemmed from the Grand Master's desire to limit economic competition and to privilege German trade. But the grouping of Jews with sorcerers and magicians also revealed the Knights' longstanding unease with Jews and their religion, along with an overall distrust for the unknown.¹⁰

⁷ Conrad of Mazovia (in Polish Konrad Mazowiecki) had been Governor of Mazovia since 1202. His ultimate goal in calling in the Teutonic Knights was to gain control of Cracow. E.J. Feuchtwanger, *Prussia: Myth and Reality* (Chicago: H. Regnery, 1970), p. 17. Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 79. A. Vauchez and others, *Encyclopedia of the Middle Ages* (New York: Routledge, 2000), p. 355. Bruno Schumacher, *Geschichte Ost- und Westpreussens* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1957), pp. 30-31.

⁸ Plum, pp. 26-27. Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia to 1786* (New York Henry Holt and Company, 1937), pp. 31-33.

⁹Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1962), p. 6. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Detroit Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), p. 653.

The 1309 ruling corresponded to the beginning of a century of Teutonic domination and economic growth in the Baltic region. Now that the native population had either been subjugated or expelled, the Teutonic Order was able to shift its focus away from military operations and more towards commercial development.¹¹ After becoming a member of the Hanseatic League in 1340, Königsberg became an important Baltic port. Its location on one of the five major rivers emptying into the Baltic made it even more accessible to extensive trade and exchange. The Hanseatic League, a loose organization of German cities, largely controlled east-west trade in the region.¹² Despite the Grand Master's wish to privilege German merchants, Königsberg nonetheless developed a robust trade with non-German traders, including Jews. Polish Jews conducted business in the city despite official proclamations.¹³ This was in large part because Poland was one of the Teutonic Order's main trading partners.

The Order's defeat in the Thirteen Years War (1454-1466) against Poland and the Second Peace of Thorn brought East Prussia and the Grand Master himself under the vassalage of Poland. Even though the Teutonic Order had established a formal treaty with the Poles in 1243, by the fifteenth century the Poles regretted their decision to invite

¹⁰ Stern, p. 6. See also Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 1. Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), pp. 1-2.

¹¹ Plum, pp. 30-31. In 1261, the native Prussians organized a rebellion against the Christianizing Knights. It took the Order twenty more years and a significant number of new recruits to subdue the Prussians.

¹² Boleslaw Boczek, "Law and Politics in the Baltic Area: A Historical Perspective," in *The Baltic Sea: New Developments in National Policies and International Cooperation*, ed. R. Platzöder and P. Verlaan (The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1996), p. 40. David Gaimster, "A Parallel History: The Archaeology of Hanseatic Urban Culture in the Baltic c. 1200-1600" *World Archaeology* 37, no. 3 (2005): p. 412.

¹³ Richard Armstedt, *Geschichte der Königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Königsberg in Preussen* (Stuttgart: Hobbing und Büchle, 1899), p. 184.

the Germans into their region.¹⁴ The location of the Teutonic Order's domains had essentially blocked Polish access to the sea. In 1409, the Poles assembled an army of native peoples to fight against the Order, including the Lithuanians, Czechs, and even some Russians. The armies conducted regular raids on border cities and destroyed countless Germanic agricultural and commercial endeavors.¹⁵ After two centuries of rule in East Prussia, the Teutonic Order was rendered politically irrelevant. Despite their loss of governing control, the Order left a lasting legacy on East Prussia. Its desire for religious uniformity and distrust for outsiders like the Jews continued well into later Hohenzollern domination. Moreover, the Teutonic Knight's suppression of free trade created an atmosphere in which the East Prussian guilds were able to maintain strict control over local trade.

Under Polish rule, the small contingent of travelling Jews in East Prussia enjoyed more freedom than under strict Teutonic rule.¹⁶ Since the early Middle Ages, Poland had largely been a hospitable place for Jewish settlement. Their settlement there was less precarious than in Western and Central Europe, and the Jews of Poland had more political rights and economic privileges than their western coreligionists. This relative openness even made its way into popular Polish culture. A comic verse from the seventeenth century declared Poland a "paradise for Jews" (*rajem dla żydów*).¹⁷ Polish

¹⁴ Fay, pp. 35-37. Plum, p. 39. Jolowicz, pp. 2-3.

¹⁵ Plum, pp. 34-35. For more on the Teutonic Order in the fifteenth century and its disintegration, see Michael Burleigh, *Prussian Society and the German Order: An Aristocratic Corporation in Crisis, 1410-1466* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

¹⁶ Hermann Vogelstein, "Geschichte des israelitischen Vereins für Krankenpflege und Beerdigung zu Königsberg i. Pr., 1704-1904," in *Festschrift zum 200 jährigen Bestehen des israelitischen Vereins für Krankenpflege und Beerdigung Chewra Kaddischa zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Königsberg: Hartungsche Buchdruckerei, 1904), p. 1. Jolowicz, p. 2.

leaders' openness to Jewish settlement and trade in their own region translated into more concessions in East Prussia as well. Because of this, a stronger Jewish commercial presence in East Prussia developed over the course of the next century.

Not until the time of Albert I (1490-1568) and the transition of the Teutonic Order into a secular power did certain Jews receive permission to settle in Königsberg for an extended period. Albert I, who became the Grandmaster of the Teutonic Order in 1511, is best known in Königsberg history as the founder of the first printing press, library, and the university. Confident in his political relationship with both Brandenburg and Denmark, Albert I refused to take the usual oath of allegiance and vassalage to Poland. Eventually he secured the region for his descendants by making East Prussia into a hereditary duchy. In 1525, Albert I resigned from his position as Grand Master of the Teutonic Knights and converted to Protestantism. He then changed the name of the territory of East Prussia to Ducal Prussia (*Herzogtum Preussen*). The Treaty of Krakow from April 8, 1525, dictated that Ducal Prussia remained under Polish supervision.¹⁸

Albert I ended the supremacy of the Teutonic Order in the region and thereby their ban on Jewish entry. This made it possible for Jews to gain for the first time official entrance into East Prussia for commercial pursuits. Jewish merchants and traders could now legally enter the region for short periods of time. More Jews from Poland started to come to Königsberg in order to conduct trade on behalf of Polish magnates.¹⁹ As we will

¹⁷ Gershon David Hundert, "An Advantage to Peculiarity? The Case of the Polish Commonwealth " *AJS Review* 6, no. 21-38 (1981): p. 33.

¹⁸ Murawski, p. 19. Plum, pp. 42-49. Fay, pp. 16, 37-38.

¹⁹ For more on the relationship between Polish magnates and the Jews, see Murray Jay Rosman, *The Lords' Jews : Magnate-Jewish Relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth during the Eighteenth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990). Stern, p. 6. Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der

see in Chapter Four, wealthy Polish magnates often hired Jews to be their commercial representatives abroad.

In particular, Albert I allowed two Jewish doctors to live in Königsberg.²⁰

Despite official proclamations, rulers often allowed Jewish doctors into the German lands in the Middle Ages. Their success at their craft was a double edged sword. On the one hand, the scientific proficiency of Jews in medicine opened doors for settlement, but it also often branded them as magicians and sorcerers. The Grand Master's grouping of Jews with sorcerers in the 1309 ban most likely related to Christian opinions of Jewish doctors.²¹ The Duke first allowed Isaac May to settle in Königsberg in 1538. He invited May to Königsberg for a specific purpose. The wife of one of his attendants had become gravely ill, and the family was desperate for someone who could cure her. Initially Albert I was hesitant to allow a Jewish doctor into the city, for he suspected that all Jews, even doctors, were merchants eager to engage in all sorts of usurious trade.

Eventually, however, the Duke relented and wrote Isaac May in October 1538 urging him to come to Königsberg and care for the woman. Albert I praised May for his medical training and abilities, while at the same time reminding the doctor that this request for his assistance was highly unusual. The Duke also reminded May that usury (*Wucherei*) was strictly forbidden to him, as was any activity aside from healing the sick. After Albert's initial reservations about May, he proceeded to grant the Jewish doctor

Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 12 (1857): p. 441.

²⁰ Kessler, p. 1. Vogelstein, p. 2. Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), pp. 15-17. Manfred Lewandowski Papers, Leo Baeck Institute (LBI) AR 7027; AR 1923, Blatt 1.

²¹ Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 5 (1858): p. 165. Joshua Trachtenberg, *Jewish Magic and Superstition: A Study in Folk Religion* (New York: Behrman's Jewish Book House, 1939), pp. 1-10.

special favors for years to come.²² Isaac May's settlement in Königsberg motivated another Jewish doctor by the name of Michael Abraham to request admittance into the city in 1541. This time, without hesitation, the Duke granted Abraham permission to settle and even went a step further and allowed him the chance to become a citizen.²³

Throughout most of the early modern period, the Jewish presence in Königsberg can best be described as temporary. Aside from special cases such as the two Jewish doctors in the sixteenth century, Jews remained in the city only for a discrete period of time. That is not to say, however, that certain Polish Jews did not trade in the region, but their presence was oftentimes fleeting and limited by the cycles of trading and the annual fairs. In addition, the financial profits did not remain in Königsberg to enrich and support a local Jewish community.

Hohenzollern Rule

The creation of a permanent Jewish community in Königsberg did not occur until almost forty years after the political fates of East Prussia and Brandenburg first merged in the 1650s. Frederick William of the Hohenzollern dynasty gained control of Ducal Prussia in 1657. Three years later in 1660, Frederick William (1620-1688) managed to free himself from Polish supervision when Sweden and Poland signed the Peace of Oliva in Danzig.²⁴ The Brandenburg-Prussian state became a formidable force during the reign

²² Jolowicz, pp. 5-6. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 443-444. Richard Landau, *Geschichte der jüdischen Ärzte* (Berlin: S. Karger, 1895), p. 111. Robert Jütte, "Contacts at the Bedside: Jewish Physicians and Their Christian Patients," in *In and Out of the Ghetto*, eds. R. P. Hsia and H. Lehmann (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 137-150.

²³ Jolowicz, p. 8.

²⁴ Poland gave the Hohenzollerns full control over East Prussia in exchange for West Prussia. Dariusz Makilla, "Die Souveränitätspolitik des Grossen Kurfürsten und die politische Unabhängigkeit des

of Frederick William, often called the Great Elector, who built up Prussia's army to be one of the finest in Europe. With Sweden's defeat in the Northern War of the early eighteenth century (1700-1721), Russia and the Kingdom of Prussia became the key players in the southern Baltic region.

Settlement for Jews in areas controlled by the Hohenzollerns broadened in the seventeenth century. A certain number of Polish Jews had been living in Brandenburg since 1650, even though they were only allowed to stay for a seven year period. The rules for visiting East Prussia, however, were much more stringent, in large part because of the ongoing supremacy of regional guilds. Most Polish Jews were only allowed entry into Königsberg on a temporary basis for economic reasons. In a decree from February 12, 1664, Frederick William stated that traveling Jews were only allowed to stop in Königsberg for five days. If they needed more than five days to finish their business, they would have to re-apply with the *Oberburggraf* (Upper Count of the Castle), the local magistrate in charge of legal matters, and the local mayor of the specific city in greater Königsberg in which they were staying.²⁵ Each time a Jewish merchant requested a continuance, he or she had to pay the fees again. If the authorities found foreign merchants with stolen goods, the state would confiscate all of their merchandise. Routinely reminded of the "punishment to life and limb" (*Leib und Lebens Strafe*) that came with bringing any corrupted coins into the kingdom, Jews entering Prussia were well aware of how precarious their situation was.²⁶

Herzogtums Preussen nach 1657," in *Die Landesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Königsberger Königskrönung von 1701*, ed. Bernhart Jähniß (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), p. 13.

²⁵ Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 156, note 1. Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), pp. 65-76.

On rare occasions, the Prussian king did allow exceptions to certain Jews who wanted to have longer residence in East Prussia. In 1669, Frederick William granted the request of two Jews from Halberstadt, Jeremias Jakob and Meyer Samuel, the privilege to remain in East Prussia for a longer period than otherwise allowed. The two Jews maintained to the king that their need to remain in Königsberg was purely personal. The king allowed them longer residency in the province and even wrote that they would not have to pay personal fines for this privilege.²⁷ Such concessions were unusual and only granted to Jews with significant financial assets.

A new chapter in the history of the Jews in Prussia began in 1671 when Frederick William invited a select number of Viennese Jews entry into Brandenburg. For the first time since their expulsion from Brandenburg in 1573, the crown allowed fifty Jewish families to permanently reside in the kingdom.²⁸ Of the fifty families who came to Prussia, nine settled in Berlin. Along with permanent residence, Frederick William guaranteed the wealthy Viennese Jews who arrived in Prussia in 1671 a new and expanded degree of state protection and latitude in economic affairs. They could have their own retail stands and sell their wares at the annual fairs. They could also purchase or build a house.²⁹ The amount of privileges granted to the arriving Jews in 1671 was

²⁶ "Dekret, Königsberg, February 12, 1664," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1962), pp. 155-156.

²⁷ Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, p. 158.

²⁸ In response to an accusation of host desecration, Elector Joachim I (1484-1535) expelled the Jews of Berlin in 1510. At the prompting of the intercessor (*shtadtlan*) Josel of Rosheim, his son Joachim II (1505-1571) allowed the return of some Jews thirty years later. In 1573, however, they were expelled again by John George (1525-1598). Herbert Seeliger, "Origin and Growth of the Berlin Jewish Community," *Leo Baeck Yearbook III* (1958): pp. 159-160. Vogelstein, p. 2. Lionel Kochan, *Jews, Idols and Messiahs: The Challenge from History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), p. 44.

substantial, especially in light of later restrictions instituted on settlement and business in the eighteenth century.³⁰

For the fifty Jewish families from Vienna granted entry, the Great Elector abolished the degrading body tax (*Leibzoll*). Dating back as far as the fourteenth century, the body tax required Jews to pay to enter and leave a city or town. On one journey, a Jew could conceivably have to pay the tax several times. For instance, a Jew traveling from Silesia to the Leipzig fair would have had to pay the *Leibzoll* at least eight times.³¹ Not only was this constraint costly, it was frequently a humiliating process. Some wealthy Jews with connections were able to receive papers from the king that waived the fee, but even Moses Mendelssohn had to pay it upon his entry to Dresden in 1777.

Frederick William's invitation to the expelled Viennese Jews to come to Prussia was an attempt to improve the financial and trade prospects of his relatively provincial and insular domain. The Jews played a role in this pursuit, along with other exiled religious minorities. Such persecuted individuals were particularly desirous to rulers such as Frederick William, because they were politically vulnerable and more likely to settle permanently instead of migrating elsewhere for financial gain.³² In the case of

²⁹ Mylius, *Corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (CCM), Th. V, Abt. V, Cap. III, Nummer II, pp. 121-23. The 1671 edict is reprinted in Annegret Ehmman and others, eds., *Juden in Berlin, 1671-1945: Ein Lesebuch* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1988), pp. 15-16.

³⁰ In surveying Prussian legislation over a period of 100 years, Ismar Freund declared the Readmission Edict of 1671 to be the ruling that granted the Jews the most liberties and concessions. Ismar Freund, *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Gesetzes von 11. März 1812*, vol. 1 (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), pp. 20-21.

³¹ Kochan, pp. 42-44. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. XIII (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1971), p. 1588.

³² Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 71. Jacob Katz writes that, "Jews were the ideal economic partner because there was no fear that they would take a partisan stand in the struggle between the ruler and

Christian minorities such as the Huguenots, who arrived in Prussia beginning in the late seventeenth century, the sovereign placed little to no restrictions on the duration of settlement. With the Jews, however, the crown strictly regulated and confined their presence. While Frederick William invited both the Jews and the Huguenots for economic reasons, their treatment was different. Compared to the Jews, the Huguenots encountered very little discrimination.³³ For example, the registry of Prussian police orders compiled mostly by Johann Georg Krünitz (1728-1796) listed only fifteen orders or edicts directed at the Huguenots, whereas the Jews had two hundred and sixty nine in the course of three centuries.³⁴

The Readmission Edict of 1671 to Brandenburg opened the door wider for permanent Jewish settlement in Königsberg. Jews residing in or visiting Königsberg were first allowed to have a place of worship in 1680. Frederick William allowed the small cohort of Jews in Königsberg to open a prayer house (*Betstube*) on the Kehrwiedergasse in the Burgfreiheit, the area north of the castle that was under direct

his subjects." Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. B.D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 46.

³³ The Potsdam Edict of 1685 allowed 20,000 Huguenots to come to Prussia from France. Wilhelm Treue, *Wirtschafts- und Technik-Geschichte Preussens*, Historische Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 56 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 13-16. Robert Müller-Sternberg, *Deutsche Ostsiedlung - eine Bilanz für Europa* (Bielefeld: Verlag Ernst und Werner Giesecking, 1969), p. 47. Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Minderheiten in der preussischen Gesellschaft," in *Moderne Preussische Geschichte, 1648-1947*, ed. O. Büsch and W. Neugebauer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), pp. 489-91. Mordechai Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press 1996), p. 103. Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung*, p. 14. Freund, p. 9.

³⁴ The registry was from 1465 to 1806. Tobias Schenk, "Der preussische Weg der Judenemanzipation : zur Judenpolitik des "aufgeklärten Absolutismus", " *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35, no. 3 (2008): p. 453. For more on the positive treatment of Huguenots, see Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 68-71.

royal control. The Jews rented a small room in the Eulenburg House for their services.³⁵ The number of Jews in attendance fluctuated wildly based on the time of year. While only a few Jewish families lived there all year, during the yearly fair and other markets, the Jewish community of Königsberg swelled to several hundred.

The Founding of a Community

On January 18, 1701, Frederick III, elector of Brandenburg, crowned himself “King in Prussia” with much pomp and circumstance in Königsberg. That such a monumental event in the history of Prussia took place in their city was and remained a point of pride for the residents of the East Prussian capital for decades to come.³⁶ Celebrations continued for days, including lavish feasts and copious amounts of wine and spirits.³⁷ For the next week the new king, now known as Frederick I, remained in the city. On January 23rd, the Calvinist king dedicated the *Burkikirche*, the first Reformed church in Prussia.³⁸ In order to avoid the appearance of favoritism to his Calvinist co-brethren, the king also interacted with local Lutherans pastors and sought to bridge the gap between the two denominations. Perhaps the most successful of the king’s local

³⁵ The Eulenburg House was later named “the Deutschen.” Murawski, p. 21. Vogelstein, p. 2. Saalschütz, “Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg,” p. 449.

³⁶ Christopher Clark claims the coronation was most likely the most expensive event in Prussian history. Christopher Clark, *Iron kingdom: the Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), pp. 67-70. Gause, pp. 3-7. See also Bernhart Jähmig, ed., *Die Landesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Königsberger Königskrönung von 1701* (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004).

³⁷ Deborah Hertz writes of Frederick I’s coronation in January 1701 that, “Königsberg has probably never seen the like of that truly splendid event. Fir trees were hung with oranges and lemons, bonfires burned brightly, bells rang, cannons fired, fountains flowed with wine, oxen turned on spits, and thousands came to eat, to drink, to watch.” Deborah Hertz, “The Despised Queen of Berlin Jewry, or the Life and Times of Esther Liebmann,” in *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800*, ed. V. Mann and R. Cohen (New York: Prestel, 1996), p. 74.

³⁸ Schumacher, p. 197.

attempts at religious reconciliation was the founding of a royal orphanage in January 1701. It remained inter-denominational throughout its existence, housing Lutheran and Reformed children. It even had an attached chapel which was used for both types of services.³⁹

With his calculated public appearances, Frederick I declared a new age of religious toleration. This included the granting of the first Jewish cemetery in Königsberg two years later in 1703, along with the founding of a Jewish burial society (*Chevrah Kaddisha*) in 1704 to provide care for the dying and to prepare the dead for burial.⁴⁰ On October 25, 1703, Frederick I, at the behest of Berlin Court Jewess Esther Liebmann, granted the Jews permission to have a cemetery outside of Königsberg near Tragheim and the gunpowder factory (later Wrangelstrasse). In return, the Jews donated 100 Thaler to the royal orphanage in the city.⁴¹

Esther Liebmann chose to support the burgeoning community in Königsberg primarily because her son Isaac Liebmann and also one of her business associates, by the name of Marcus Ilten, resided in the city. Isaac Liebmann first came to Königsberg in 1698. A jeweler like his father Court Jew Jost Liebmann, Liebmann also served as cantor in the *Betstube*. Liebmann eventually moved back to Berlin after a few years. Marcus Ilten was originally a merchant from Minden. On December 9, 1704, he became the first

³⁹ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 37.

⁴⁰ Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), p. 630. For a general discussion of the goals of a Jewish burial society, see Katz, pp. 133-134. Vogelstein.

⁴¹ Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 30. Fritz Gause, *Königsberg in Preussen: die Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt* (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1968), p. 111. Ronny Kabus, *Juden in Ostpreussen* (Husum: Husum Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft 1998), p. 16. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 175.

person ever buried in the new Jewish cemetery.⁴² Previous to this, Jews who died while in Königsberg had to be transported over thirty miles to the Polish border in order to be buried.⁴³ In the king's concession allowing the Jews of Königsberg their own cemetery, he gave those Jews with *Schutzbriefe* the authority to deny burial to any foreign Jews.⁴⁴

At the beginning of Frederick I's reign, the state had a growing need for increased tax revenues to finance military endeavors. In Königsberg, the newly coronated Frederick I wished to add over a thousand new soldiers to the local regiment. One way in which he financed this enterprise was through increased Jewish taxation. The granting of more *Schutzbriefe* and an overall increase in the Jewish tax burden provided needed funds for military expenditures.⁴⁵

The official acceptance of Jews into Prussia was a quid pro quo, contractual arrangement. The king granted a degree of protection in exchange for protection money (*Schutzgeld*) and various taxes.⁴⁶ The *Schutzbrief* was the centerpiece of the relationship between a Jew and the Prussian state during the eighteenth century. This "writ of protection" set the parameters for an individual's economic pursuits, thereby defining in large part their role in society as a whole. Initially a special letter of protection granted to one specific Jew by a patron, the *Schutzbrief* or *Geleit* developed into a general letter that

⁴² Gerhard von Glinski, *Die Königsberger Kaufmannschaft des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: J.G. Herder, 1964). Vogelstein, pp. 4-12. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 175.

⁴³Jolowicz, p. 29. Vogelstein, p. 3.

⁴⁴ This clause would later lead to many conflicts within the community over which Jews were entitled to local burial. Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, p. 437. Vogelstein, pp. 10-11.

⁴⁵ Jolowicz, pp. 28-29. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 174.

⁴⁶ Ismar Freund, "Staat, Kirche und Judentum in Preussen," *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* (1911): p. 113.

applied to a group of Jews and could only be approved by the sovereign himself.⁴⁷

Control rested solely in the hands of the sovereign. A *Geleitbrief* was an inferior form of the *Schutzbrief*. It was a “letter of safe conduct” rather than a “letter of protection”. The crown granted *Geleitbriefe* more frequently, but they were not as desirable or permanent. The term *Geleit* was also a general term for a poll tax.

The *Schutzbrief* of the eighteenth century signified a power shift away from regional powers and towards the crown in Berlin. In possession of such a document, it was difficult for the local government in Königsberg to override a Jew’s protection. This does not, however, mean that Jewish settlement was entirely secure. Not based on territorial law, the *Schutzbrief* was royal privilege both individual and precarious. A Jew’s status was vulnerable to the oftentimes capricious whims of a king or protector. Upon the death of a ruler, the Jews of Prussia were most susceptible to dramatic reversals of fortune. Sometimes this benefited them, but most often royal death was a bleak reminder of how unstable and tenuous their legal status was. While protection from the sovereign was in some respects unstable, the Jews of Prussia knew it was far more than they could obtain from provincial leadership. This was especially the case in Königsberg where local authorities and businessmen abhorred the rights that Jews enjoyed via the *Schutzbrief*. On several occasions, the provincial estates (*Landesstände*) in East Prussia offered to pay double the amount of a Jew’s Protection Money in exchange for their expulsion.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Among Jews, *Schutzbrieife* were often known by the Hebrew term *ba'al kiyyum*. Henry Wassermann, "Jewish history as observed from a Prussian registrar's office," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 10 (1981): pp. 172-173. Breuer, p. 163.

⁴⁸ Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 170.

Schutzbriefe were the crown's ultimate attempt at controlling the number of Jews who settled in Prussia. By keeping the requirement for acceptance very high, the king kept the Jewish communities in his realm quite small.⁴⁹ The crown often called for the creation of a revised List of Protected Jews (*Schutzjuden-Tabelle*) in order to keep track of the number of tolerated Jews under his control. These especially came into play after the crowning of a new monarch. Each revision was an attempt to gain control of Prussia's growing Jewish population.⁵⁰

The granting of a *Schutzbrief* was contingent upon a Jew proving to the ruler that he had significant financial assets and that his presence in Prussia would be advantageous to the crown.⁵¹ The requirement not only applied to Jews but to all foreigners who sought privileges. For instance, a 1707 ruling declared that foreigners had to demonstrate a net worth of 15,000 Thaler in order to be considered for any form of royal letter.⁵² Jews desirous of a *Schutzbrief* used various tactics to try to convince the king of their worth. In July 1751, a Jew from Halberstadt named David Lewien Heilbron wrote to Frederick II to request that he be granted a Letter of Protection through his step-father, a *Schutzjude* in Frankfurt an der Oder. Heilbron highlighted the financial connections he had with Poles, Russians and other Jews as reason why Frederick II should grant his request.⁵³ To retain one's status, a Jew often had to pay a yearly fee. The Charter of

⁴⁹ Glinski, p. 170.

⁵⁰ Wassermann: p. 180. For examples of such *Schutzjuden-Tabelle*, see Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, pp. 526-537.

⁵¹ Steven Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 99.

⁵² Glinski, p. 154.

1671 set this at 8 Thaler a year.⁵⁴ The rights of a Protected Jew (*Schutzjude*) extended in part to his entire household, including servants. One could include either one or two sons on the *Schutzbrief*, but the first son had to prove he had at least 1,000 Thaler in assets. The second son had to demonstrate he had 2,000 Thaler or more in wealth. After 1730, *Schutzjuden* in Prussia could name either sons or daughters on their *Schutzbrief*.⁵⁵

The process of gaining a letter of protection to reside in a certain area of Prussia routinely took years. Jews often had to send two or more requests with the same plea. The letter specified where one could reside and in what type of housing. Oftentimes the crown forbade Jews from purchasing any form of property from a Christian. The underlying fear blocking the purchase of certain real estate was that Jews would encroach too much on established or prominent neighborhoods. Bendix Jeremias, one of the first leaders of the Königsberg Jewish community, paid 200 Thaler initially to the Royal Treasury and thereafter 20 Thaler annually for the right for him and his family to reside in the Burgfreiheit. His Letter of Protection also freed him from having to pay the body tax (*Leibzoll*).⁵⁶ Because the crown tailored *Schutzbriefe* to the individual and his desired location, they each had different concessions.

The king granted the first *Schutzbriefe* to Königsberg to Jews who worked in trades that were not regulated by guilds. Otherwise a Jew was designated by the king as a “*Freimeister auf der Schlossfreiheit*”, free master in the part of Königsberg under royal

⁵³ Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin-Dahlem (GStA), Preussischer Kulturbesitz (PK), Etats-Ministerium (EM), I Hauptabteilung (HA-I) Geheimer Rat Rep. 7 Nr. 106 i Fasz. 19.

⁵⁴ Breuer, pp. 136-137.

⁵⁵ Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 3 (1859): pp. 89-92.

⁵⁶ Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 6 (1858): p. 209.

control. The Schlossfreiheit, also called the Burgfreiheit, where the crown first gave Jews permission to settle was not a desirable location for a population involved in commerce, since it was far away from the actual port. But the need for royal protection took precedence over commercial success. The Jews later moved into other areas of the city, including the Kneiphof, the export and import center of the city, after the sovereign consolidated his power over local government.

In comparison to other principalities, provincial authorities in East Prussia were particularly resistant to attempts at centralization. The sovereign, who preferred to govern Jewish matters directly from Berlin, became frustrated with having to deal with the myriad of local authorities in Königsberg. Four different offices controlled local government in the city: those of the bailiff (*Landhofmeister*), the Upper Count of the Castle (*Oberburggraf*), the provost (*Kanzler*) and the Upper Marshal (*Obermarschall*).⁵⁷ Up until 1724, Königsberg was actually three cities, each with its own government. On June 13, 1724, Frederick William I unified the three cities into one city, officially called “The Royal Prussian Main and Residential City of Königsberg” (*die Königl. Haupt und Residenz-Stadt Königsberg*). Prior to unification, each of the three, independent cities within Königsberg had their own mayor. At the time of the unification, there were over 100 city officials in the three districts.⁵⁸

Administrative struggles within the state complicated the Jewish payment of fees and taxes in East Prussia. The longstanding rights of provincial authorities clashed with new bureaucratic officers appointed by Frederick I. Jewish special taxes from the

⁵⁷ Bernhart Jähniq, "Kanzlei, Registratur und Archiv unter dem ersten König in Preussen," in *Die Landesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Königsberger Königskrönung von 1701*, ed. Bernhart Jähniq (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), p. 75.

⁵⁸ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 77.

Schutzbrieife provided a desirable source of revenue that all parties both regional and royal wanted to claim. In 1688, shortly after the death of Frederick William, Frederick I reminded local authorities in Königsberg that the payments of Jews should not be deposited in the accounts of the *Oberburggraf* but rather in the Royal Treasury (*Schatulle*).⁵⁹ The distribution of Jewish taxes was just one of a many areas in which the two administrative bodies disagreed.

In order to better regulate Jewish settlement throughout Prussia, Frederick I created an official Jewish Commission for each region in 1708, which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three. These boards were charged with the task of making relations between the Jewish community and the state more efficient. By centralizing power into one local authority, which reported only to him, Frederick I hoped to further chip away at the authority of local government.⁶⁰

Once the Jewish community in Königsberg became official, the oppressive realities of state bureaucratic control and burdensome taxation motivated the community to decide on certain members who would represent them and plead on their behalf both locally and in Berlin.

Community Leadership

By 1710, the Königsberg Jewish community had its first official communal leader. Early on, Bendix Jeremias (d. 1719) established himself as the de facto head of the small Königsberg community. Bendix was originally from Halberstadt in Saxony.

⁵⁹ Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, p. 414. See also Krüger, pp. 7-8.

⁶⁰ Ismar Elbogen, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), p. 143. Hertz, p. 74.

His father, Jeremias Jakob, moved from Berlin to Halberstadt and later became the leader of the Saxon community. Bendix, who made his fortune as a jeweler, received a *Schutzbrief* and permission to settle in Königsberg in 1710.⁶¹ In her work on European Court Jewry, Selma Stern labels Bendix a *Hoffjude* (Court Jew), but he did not have the close relationship to the royal court that other Court Jews did. In primary documents, Bendix is more often than not labeled a “Protected Jew” and not a Court Jew.⁶²

The number of reports Bendix Jeremias sent to the king in the 1710s attest to his perception of himself as communal figurehead and representative of the Jewish community in Königsberg.⁶³ The crown appeared to agree with his opinion of his status in the community and gave Bendix control over Jewish taxes and tolls in Königsberg in 1712. He also requested of the crown that he be the official representative of the community in charge of other essential matters as well, including religious life and internal conflicts.⁶⁴ By this point, Königsberg already had their first official rabbi, Solomon Fürst (1666-c.1725). Appointed in 1707, Fürst came to Königsberg in 1701.⁶⁵ Despite his tenure, Bendix nonetheless desired to be the one the state contacted regarding religious matters.

⁶¹ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 11, n.7. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 209. Krüger, p. 32. Krüger goes so far as to call Jeremias the impetus behind the creation of the Jewish community in Königsberg, but his arrival in 1710 after the establishment of a Jewish cemetery and a burial society, belies this claim.

⁶² Selma Stern, *The Court Jew*, trans. Ralph Wieman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), p. 188.

⁶³ Stern transcribed several of the reports Bendix sent to the king. Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, pp. 482-486, 504-505, 511-512.

⁶⁴ Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung*, p. 98. Stern, *The Court Jew*, p. 217.

⁶⁵ Krüger, p. 91. For more on Fürst, see Chapter Five.

One such report that Bendix wrote to the crown was in October 1711 regarding the payment of additional taxes for weddings and circumcisions. Jews in other provinces were already paying such taxes, and the crown was contemplating a similar tax on the small Jewish community in East Prussia. Bendix urged Frederick I to reconsider, since the East Prussian Jewish community was not only small but also rather poor: “Here in Königsberg as in the country there are many families that have no permanent residence and are of small means.”⁶⁶ It is curious that Bendix would highlight the lack of resources of the Jewish community in Königsberg and the rest of East Prussia, knowing that Jewish settlement in Prussia was more often than not predicated on proof of wealth. The burden of taxation on such a small community must have been quite oppressive for him to approach the crown with the economic limitations of the Jews in Königsberg.

In October 1712, Bendix’s role as communal figurehead led him once more to contact the king. This time, he had to mitigate the consequences of one rather vocal conflict during the festival of Sukkot. At the conclusion of services, a loud and angry disagreement erupted between various attendees.⁶⁷ The dispute was particularly alarming to Bendix, because it was so loud that Gentiles passing by the synagogue could hear it from outside the building. Some reports even stated that it spilled out onto the street in front of the prayer house. On October 25, 1712, Bendix Jeremias wrote Frederick I regarding the incident. Bendix expressed an obligation to disclose this incident to the King, in light of his role as local tax manager.⁶⁸ Immediately after Bendix’s explanation

⁶⁶ “Bericht des Schutzjuden Bendix Jeremias, October 13, 1711,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, p. 504.

⁶⁷ Several historians have mentioned this particular dispute. Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 10. Ajzensztejn, p. 30. Saalschütz, “Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg,” p. 217.

to the king of the awkward affair reached his desk in Berlin, Frederick I responded to the relevant authorities in Königsberg.

The king sent his reply to the *Oberburggraf* in Königsberg. Literally translated as the “Upper Count of the Castle”, the *Oberburggraf* oversaw the castle and its legal matters. The synagogue in Königsberg was under his supervision. The crown appears to have been incensed by the “bickering” that they claimed led to a full-fledged “brawl” at the synagogue. They offered several potential punishments that the *Oberburggraf* could mete out to the Jews of Königsberg: loss of the castle’s protection, jail time, or heavy fines. Regardless, they called on Bendix Jeremias in the future to “diligently guard against such excesses.”⁶⁹

Bendix Jeremias’ role as mediator with local authorities and the crown in this particular conflict probably did not sit well with the Jewish community as a whole. Indeed, it is even possible that certain decisions he had made in the community were the actual cause of the raucous in October 1712. No source is explicit as to who was actually involved in the fight or what the actual reason for the clash was. Heymann Jolowicz (1816-1875), the first person to write a comprehensive history of the Jews of Königsberg, theorized that it was the burden of increasing state taxation and resentment among the community as to who was carrying the greatest financial burden.⁷⁰

The problem with a dominant leader in such a small Jewish community was that the Jews in charge had the tendency to rule despotically. In Königsberg, Bendix Jeremias

⁶⁸ “Bericht des Schutzjuden Bendix Jeremias, October 25, 1712,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, pp. 511-512.

⁶⁹ “Bericht an den Oberburggrafen, October 28, 1712,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, pp. 512-513.

⁷⁰ Jolowicz, p. 45.

appears to have ruled in such a manner, perceived by others in the community as ruthless and primarily out for his own financial self-interest. In charge of taxes, Bendix Jeremias was known to turn those Jews who did not pay the *Geleitgeld* (money for safe conduct) into local authorities.⁷¹ Moreover, the small Jewish community was not immune to the tensions that arise from class and regional divisions. Bendix was a German Jew in the upper echelon of influence and pedigree, whereas most of the community were modest merchants.

After the death of Bendix Jeremias in 1719, a Polish Jewish merchant named Samuel Slumke took over as the primary liaison of the Königsberg Jewish community with the crown. Yet, even before the death of Bendix, Slumke had been prominent in the life of the community. Slumke had actually been in Königsberg longer than Bendix. He first came to Königsberg from Poland in 1701 initially as a supplier of lace and ornate braiding to the Polish and Swedish courts.⁷²

In the first ten years of the community, Bendix Jeremias and Samuel Slumke were both dominant in the life of the community. In a governmental report from October 1707, Karl Friedrich Lau, the Fiscal Advocate in Königsberg presented Jeremias and Slumke as if they were both leaders of the local Jewish community.⁷³ This was in large part because they were the two wealthiest Jews in Königsberg. Although Bendix had control over Jewish tax collection, Slumke was not without his influence as well,

⁷¹ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 10. Krüger, p. 32.

⁷² In archival sources, Slumke is also spelled “Slomke” or “Slomcke”. Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung*, pp. 131-132.

⁷³ “Bericht Karl Friedrich Lau, October 29, 1707,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, pp. 468-469.

especially among Polish Jews in the city.⁷⁴ This goes against the claim of Hermann Vogelstein, Königsberg's head rabbi from 1897 to 1920, that even from the beginning the leadership in Königsberg was in the hands of German Jews, despite the fact that the majority of Jews in the city were from Poland.⁷⁵ Moreover, this early trend towards Polish leadership continued well into the late nineteenth century when Eastern European Jews in the city continued to have high social standing in the community.⁷⁶

⁷⁴ Slumke's contentious role in the community will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Three.

⁷⁵ Vogelstein, p. 10. Selma Stern does name Bendix Jeremias and Samuel Slumke both as the early leaders of the Königsberg Jewish community. Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Zweiter Teil/Die Zeit Friedrich Wilhelms I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1962), p. 127.

⁷⁶ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Assimilation and Community Reconsidered: The Jewish Community in Königsberg, 1871-1945," *Jewish Social Studies* 5, no. 3 (1999): pp. 106-107.

Chapter Two “A Watchful Eye”: Synagogue Surveillance

On August 20, 1777, Moses Mendelssohn, the well-known and respected Jewish philosopher from Berlin, departed Königsberg after spending several days in the East Prussian capital on the Baltic Sea. A local newspaper, the *Königsbergische Gelehrte und Politische Zeitung* described public sentiment towards the departed philosopher: “We had long revered him as a profound philosopher and as a man of good taste [...]. Now we admire in him [...] a good and noble heart capable of friendship and open to all gentle sentiments associated with it.”¹ Even during his short visit, Mendelssohn managed to impress many intellectual and political figures in the city. The elders of the small but influential Jewish community in Königsberg were already familiar with the man’s ability to make an impact. In the spring of 1777, they had chosen Mendelssohn to be their public intercessor in an ongoing clash between the community and Oriental Language Professor and current synagogue inspector, Georg David Kypke. Mendelssohn accepted the request and helped to end over seventy years of synagogue surveillance in the city.

From 1704 to 1778, an appointed theology professor from the Albertus University in Königsberg regularly spied on Jewish worship services to see if the Jews uttered anything derogatory against Christ or Christianity. This part-time position of synagogue inspector emerged out of a Prussian Edict from 1703, in which Frederick I had banned a certain passage of the *Aleinu* prayer recited at the end of daily services. The prayer begins with *Aleinu le-shabeah*, “it is incumbent upon us to praise.” Originally part of the

¹ "Abschiedsgruss an Moses Mendelssohn," *Königsbergische Gelehrte und Politische Zeitung* August 21 1777, p. 266. Translated in Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: a Biographical Study* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1973), p. 307. See also Heinz Knobloch, *Herr Moses in Berlin* (Berlin: Morgenbuch Verlag, 1993), p. 228.

Jewish New Year service, the use of *Aleynu* in the daily service dated back to medieval France and Germany.² The origins of the 1703 edict were part recent accusation and part longstanding superstition and misinformation. The edict called for all Prussian subjects to have “a watchful eye” to insure that the Jews were following this decree and not uttering slanderous words against Christ.³

In the East Prussian capital of Königsberg, this “watchful eye” became an organized and sought after responsibility. While also a problem for Jews in other Prussian cities, the practice of institutionalized surveillance came about quite early in Königsberg.⁴ This is especially true in light of the fact that significant Jewish settlement in the East Prussian capital did not even begin until 1700. The surveillance also lasted much longer than anywhere else, culminating in the Jewish community in Königsberg seeking the assistance of Moses Mendelssohn in the 1770s.⁵

An analysis of the almost eighty year history of synagogue surveillance in eighteenth century Königsberg reveals how the position of synagogue inspector was informed by both local Königsberg politics, particularly at the university, and far-reaching Prussian state policy regarding the Jews. While the crown initiated the practice

² See the appendix for a full English translation. Salo Baron suggests that it most likely began with Eleazar ben Judah of Worms in the late 12th century. See *A Social and Religious History of the Jews*, Vol. VII (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), pp. 75-76. See also Elliot R. Wolfson, "Hai Gaon's Letter and Commentary on 'Aleynu': Further Evidence of Moses de León's Pseudepigraphic Activity," *The Jewish Quarterly Review* LXXXI, no. 3-4 (1991): p. 381. Leon Scheinhaus, "Alenu Leschabeach," *Ost und West* 7 (1908): pp. 451-460. *Encyclopedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Detroit Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), pp. 608-610.

³ "Gedrucktes Exemplar des Ediktes des jüdischen Gebeth Alenu leschabbeach, betreffend de 1703 d.28 Aug. renovirt den 15. Januar 1716., 1716," Geheimes Staatsarchiv II (Berlin-Dahlem) General-Direktorium Abteilung 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4443, Berlin.

⁴ Steffen Dietzsch, *Immanuel Kant: eine Biographie* (Leipzig: Reclam Verlag, 2003), p. 185. Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Dritter Teil/Die Zeit Friederichs des Grossen. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), pp. 307-308.

⁵ Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), p. 33.

of surveillance, it was sustained locally in Königsberg by theology professors at the university. The history of the Königsberg synagogue inspector took place against the backdrop of a local intra-Christian rivalry between Orthodox Lutherans and the newly emerging Pietistic movement. Second only to Halle in Pietistic influence, the non-Pietist faculty at the Albertina fought against the sect's increasing power. This religious confrontation within Lutheranism and competition among the theology faculty at the university created a situation unique to Königsberg.⁶

The *Aleinu* Edict

In an edict dated August 28, 1703, Frederick I expressed the duty of the Prussian state to insure not only the temporal physical well-being of those within his realm but also their eternal spiritual health. Within the “mortal body” of each loyal Prussian subject was an “everlasting soul” that needed to be reconciled to God. Although ultimately the work and responsibility of “Christ’s heavenly kingdom”, the king and his government nonetheless saw themselves as playing an important role in the eternal drama of human salvation. As both the sovereign and the head of the state church, Frederick I felt duty bound to protect and grow the Church. When God placed Jews within his boundaries, he gained the extra responsibility of drawing God’s Chosen People back to the “community of faith” from which Christ the Messiah originally came.⁷ Frederick I’s attempts at converting the Jews was as a precursor to the later eighteenth century attempts

⁶ Most historians agree that the synagogue inspector in Königsberg was a unique phenomenon. See, for example, Stern, pp. 307-308. David Charles Smith, “Protestant Attitudes Toward Jewish Emancipation in Prussia” (Yale University 1971), pp. 18-19.

⁷ “Gedrucktes Exemplar des Ediktes des jüdischen Gebeth Aleinu”. The 1703 edict is also printed in Mylius, *Corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (CCM), Th. V, Abt. V, Cap. III, No. XV, pp. 141-46.

of Christian Wilhelm von Dohm and others to ameliorate the Jews in order to make them acceptable citizens. In this case the defect of the Jews was not their choice of occupation or their social status but rather their religious blindness.

The edict's overt message of conversion masked an underlying struggle on the part of the Prussian state between pious patience and zealous action. On the one hand, the state was concerned about the eternal destination of its subjects; yet ultimately Frederick I expressed that he had "to surrender his control of each human conscience to the Lord of all Lords." Forced conversion of a subject would negate the role of man's God-given conscience and suggest that one presumed to know more than the all-knowing God. Instead, Frederick I waited patiently and expectantly for the hour of God's choosing when he would lead the Jews to embrace the Christian faith.⁸

It was, however, the current responsibility of the state to guarantee the integrity of public speech and religious worship. This included the forced cessation of malice (*Bosheit*) on the part of any subject against Christ or the Church. According to a reputedly reliable source, such malice was occurring under the King's watch. This source, unnamed in the edict, claimed that "Jews of all ages were reciting abominable sacrileges against our Redeemer and Savior in their prayer that begins with *Aleinu le-shabeah*." The accuser specified that Jews recited these sacrileges (*Lästerungen*) both in

⁸ The edicts states that "[wir] wünschen wol hertzlich, dass [dieses] Volck [...] endlich von seiner Blindheit möchte befreyet, und mit Uns zu einer Gemeinschaft in dem Glauben an den aus ihnen selbst gebohrnen Messiam und Heyland der Welt gebracht werden: Weil aber das grosse Werck der Bekehrung zu dem geistlichen Reich Christi gehöret, und Unsere weltliche Macht keinen Platz darin findet, Wir auch die Herrschaft über die Gewissen der Menschen dem Herrn aller Herren einig überlassen, so müssen Wir Zeit und Stunde abwarten, welche der barmhertzige Gott, sie zu erleuchten, seinem allein gnädigen Willen vorbehalten hat, indessen sie mit Gedult ertragen, und die Mittel zu ihrer Bekehrung mit aller Liebe und Sanfftmuth anwenden lassen."

the synagogue and privately at home. To add insult to injury, while reciting the offensive words, the Jews were also taught to “spit and jump up from their place.”⁹

The unnamed source was Frantz Wentzel, a converted Jew from Küstrin on the Oder river. Wentzel wrote to the king in 1702 and accused the Jews of daily speaking blasphemies against Christ, particularly in the *Aleinu* prayer. According to him, the curses were no longer in any Jewish prayer book but were rather taught and learned by heart as a child. These and other sacrileges were “hammered into” (*eingebläuet*) the minds of every Jewish child.¹⁰ As a former Jew, he claimed to have first-hand knowledge of such indoctrination.

The contentious passage is in the first part of *Aleinu*: “for they prostrate themselves before vanity and emptiness and pray to a God that saves not.”¹¹ Pinpointing this particular passage in *Aleinu* was not new. As early as the fifteenth century, Christian scholars, primarily in Central Europe, had read this passage as a blatant attack on Christianity. In particular, some had interpreted “and emptiness” (*va-riq*) as a veiled reference to Christ, because in Hebraic numerology, *va-riq* and *yeshu* (Jesus) both add up

⁹ “Gedrucktes Exemplar des Ediktes des jüdischen Gebeth Alenu”.

¹⁰ Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin-Dahlem (GStA), Preussischer Kulturbesitz (PK), Etats-Ministerium (EM) D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 40, pp. 3-4. See also Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypke[s] Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: Aus archivalischen Akten* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1791), pp. 21-23.

¹¹ *She-hem mishtahavim le-hevel va-riq u-mitpalelim el el lo yoshi'a*. In the nineteenth century, many reformed siddurim significantly altered the passage. One substitution was “*asher sam helkenu le-yahed shmo, ve-goralenu le-hamlikh malkhuto*”. See Annette M. Böckler, *Jüdischer Gottesdienst: Wesen und Struktur* (Berlin: Jüdische Verlagsanstalt, 2002), pp. 84-85. Most contemporary Ashkenazic siddurim now omit this passage altogether. For example, the Birnbaum Siddur leaves the passage out. See Philip Birnbaum, ed., *Daily Prayer Book ha-Siddur ha-Shalem* (New York: Hebrew Publishing Company, 1995), pp. 413-414. One that does include the passage is the Modern Orthodox *Siddur Rinat Yisrael*. See Naphtali Wieder, *Hitgabshut nusah ha-tefilah be-mizrah uve-ma'arav: kovets ma'amarim* (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute), p. 101.

to three hundred and sixteen. To spit at the uttering of *va-riq* was therefore to spit at the name of Christ.

The actual origin of spitting at that precise moment in the *Aleinu* prayer might not have been so offensive. In Hebrew, *riq* is also related to “spittle.” This double linguistic meaning made its way into a colloquial Yiddish phrase, “He arrives at the point of spitting.” (“*Er kummt tsum oysshpayen.*”), referring to those who arrived so late to synagogue they only heard the concluding *Aleinu* prayer.¹² But was this linguistic similarity the actual origin of spitting during *Aleinu*, or was it created to explain the practice of spitting after the accusation first surfaced? That the Jews used to spit as a sign of distaste for idolatry is also probable. Naphtali Wieder suggests that this numerical link was not just manufactured by Christians. In his research, Wieder has come across marginalia in certain Central European *siddurim* that explicitly connect *va-riq* to *yeshu* (Jesus).¹³

Jewish converts to Christianity were notorious for accusing their former coreligionists of blasphemy or other sinister religious acts.¹⁴ It was, after all, a Jewish convert in the fourteenth century named Pesah Peter who first brought up the numerical link between “emptiness” (*va-riq*) and “Jesus” (*yeshu*) that became such a prominent part

¹² *Encyclopedia Judaica*, p. 609.

¹³ Naphtali Wieder, *Hitgabshut nusah ha-tefilah be-mizrah uve-ma'arav: kovets ma'amarim*, vol. 2 (Jerusalem: Ben-Zvi Institute, 1998), pp. 453-469. Special thanks to Hillel Kieval for drawing this to my attention.

¹⁴ Elisheva Carlebach, *Divided Souls: Converts from Judaism in Germany, 1500-1750* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), p. 123. See also Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 24. Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 5 (1858): pp. 167-168.

of the *Aleinu* accusation.¹⁵ More recently in 1695, two Jewish converts in Breslau (Silesia) accused the Jew Berl Maier of Kremsier of blaspheming Christianity. This eventually led to his arrest.¹⁶

Christian theologians and professors added fuel to the accusations of German Jewish converts. Their knowledge of Hebrew provided them with the ability to make a charge seem even more plausible. In his 1702 letter to Frederick I, Wentzel mentioned the work of Johannes Buxtorf, a respected Christian Hebraist from the seventeenth century who claimed that even after the removal of the offending passage from most Ashkenazic prayer books in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, Central European Jews continued to utter the passage in *Aleinu* from memory. In *Synagoga Judaica*, Buxtorf wrote,

In [recent] copies, instead of the words omitted, there is left an empty space about the length of one line, to this end, that the children of the Jews, and others who are ignorant, may be warned to enquire, what saying it is that is there omitted, which when they do, some relate the words unto them, or otherwise write them in the margent of the Book.¹⁷

Early accusations had indeed motivated Ashkenazi Jews to omit the passage from printed prayer books.¹⁸

Wentzel's disturbing report from 1702 led Frederick to conduct what he termed "a proper inquisition" into the matter.¹⁹ The authorities in Küstrin and other Prussian cities,

¹⁵ *Encyclopedia Judaica*, p. 609. For more on Christian interpretations of *Aleinu*, see Scheinhaus: pp. 451-454.

¹⁶ Bernhard Brillling, "The Struggle of the *Vaad Arba Arazot* for the Jewish Right of Religious Worship in Breslau in the 17th Century," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science* XI (1957): p. 174, note 54.

¹⁷ Johannes Buxtorf, *The Jewish Synagogue or an Historical Narration of the State of the Jewes*, trans. Mr. A. of Queens College Oxford (London: T. Roycroft 1657), p. 101.

¹⁸ Mordechai Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press 1996), pp. 158-159.

¹⁹ "Gedrucktes Exemplar des Ediktes des jüdischen Gebeth Alenu".

including Magdeburg, Königsberg and Halberstadt questioned local rabbis and Jewish elders about the veracity of the accusation. In Königsberg, the governmental board in charge of questioning Jews regarding *Aleinu* consisted of a local legal advisor (*Tribunalrath*), the Lutheran Court Chaplain (*Hofprediger*), the Fiscal Advocate, and several other civil servants. After a short inquiry, the committee concluded that the Jews were not referring to Christianity but rather to pagans.²⁰

Under the king's authority, any perceived perjury could cause a Jew to lose his letter of protection (*Schutzbrief*).²¹ Those Jews who were questioned claimed to have no knowledge of the existence of any anti-Christian meaning of the prayer. In defense of the prayer, Jewish leadership appealed to the historical meaning of the passage. They dated the origins of *Aleinu* to the time of Joshua long before the life of Jesus. The “vanity and emptiness” and “the god that saves not” were not veiled references to Jesus Christ but rather to the practices and deities of the ancient Amorites.²²

Those Jews interviewed by the Prussian government after the Wenzel accusation disavowed any knowledge of the custom of spitting during *Aleinu*. But evidence exists that it was a common practice. Simon Dubnov maintained that the “foul custom of spitting” was widespread in Central and Eastern Europe by the early eighteenth century.²³

²⁰ Moses Mendelssohn, Georg David Kypke, and Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypke Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: aus archivalischen Akten* (Königsberg: Hartungsche Buchhandlung, 1791), pp. 28-29.

²¹ See Frederick's correspondence from September 3, 1702, reprinted in *Ibid.*, pp. 27-28.

²² The scholarly consensus is that *Aleinu* does not date back to the time of Joshua but rather to Rav, a third century Babylonian rabbi. The use of the prayer in daily services dates back to 1300. See Herman Kieval, *The High Holy Days: A Commentary on the Prayerbook of Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur*, vol. I (New York: The Burning Bush Press, 1959), pp. 154-55. Ismar Elbogen, *Jewish Liturgy: A Comprehensive History*, trans. Raymond P. Scheindlin (Philadelphia: The Jewish Publication Society, 1993), p. 71.

²³ Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, vol. IV (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), p. 201.

Among Sephardic Jewry, however, it appears to have been quite unacceptable. In 1656, Menasseh ben Israel rejected the notion that any Jew would spit in such a manner: “[H]ow can it be thought, that in their synagogues [Jews] name [Christ] with scornful spitting? (far be it from us!)”²⁴

Wentzel was not the first Jewish convert to write to Frederick I regarding Jewish prayers, but he was the most effective.²⁵ Frederick later used parts of Wentzel’s letter verbatim in the edict. While Wentzel’s letter gave the final impetus for the creation of the *Aleinu* edict of 1703, the controversy surrounding a new polemical work by Heidelberg Professor Johann Andreas Eisenmenger (1654-1704) also played into Frederick’s decision. *Entdecktes Judenthum* (Judaism Unmasked), most famous for reintroducing the blood libel myth from the Middle Ages, drew on Eisenmenger’s extensive study of rabbinical literature earlier in his life under the tutelage of various Jews. A guiding principle of his critique of Judaism was that any derogatory statement or historical call to action against non-Jews found in ancient Jewish texts was transferred by present-day Jews to apply to Christians. The most egregious application of this principle was Eisenmenger’s suggestion that Jews were called by their own texts to desecrate Christian symbols or even to bring harm to their Christian neighbors.²⁶ In addition, Eisenmenger gave weight to the longstanding claim that, when reciting *Aleinu*,

²⁴ Menasseh ben Israel, *Vindiciae judaeorum* (London: R.D., 1656), p. 30.

²⁵ On December 22, 1702, another Jewish convert named Christian Kahtz wrote the Fiscal Advocate (*Advocatus Fiscii*) in Brandenburg regarding the purported sacrileges of the Jews. He claimed that the Jewish insults towards Christians were particularly widespread on Christmas. Kahtz also accused a Jewish in Berlin of hiding a copy of *Ma’aseh Tloi* (The Story of the Hanged), a subversive biography of Christ’s life. See Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung* (Tübingen: J.C.B.Mohr, 1962), p. 116. Eugen Wolbe, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin und in der Mark Brandenburg* (Berlin: Verlag Kedem, 1937), p. 135. Mendelsohn, Kypke, and Borowski, p. 20. Dubnov, pp. 200-201.

²⁶ Jacob Katz, *From Prejudice to Destruction: Anti-Semitism, 1700-1933* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1994), p. 19.

contemporary Jews viewed those who “prostrate themselves before vanity and emptiness and pray to a God that saves not” to mean Christians.

Entdecktes Judenthum reintroduced accusations with a long history and contributed to a growing atmosphere of mistrust of Jewish liturgy in German speaking lands. The divisive work had limited but nonetheless significant success. Its most important supporter was none other than Frederick I. First submitted for publication in Frankfurt am Main in 1699, the publisher rejected *Entdecktes Judenthum* after Emperor Leopold I intervened on behalf of the local Jewish community.²⁷ Against the wishes of the emperor, the Prussian king printed it a year later in Berlin. In order to avoid the emperor’s censor, the title page claimed that it was published in Königsberg, a city not in the Holy Roman Empire and therefore outside the emperor’s jurisdiction.²⁸ Frederick’s backing of the volume showed that even before Wentzel’s 1702 letter regarding *Aleinu*, the king had already demonstrated a willingness to believe certain claims against the Jews. Eisenmenger’s work eventually provided Frederick I moral and theological justification for censoring Jewish prayer.²⁹

Because of Frantz Wentzel, *Aleinu* in particular came to the forefront of royal attention. This ancient prayer of hope and expectation, located at the center of Jewish daily worship both public and private, became a century long preoccupation. In many

²⁷ Upon hearing the content of the book, the Jews of Frankfurt am Main, led by Court Jew Samuel Oppenheimer, waged an all out offensive against the publication of the work. Out of fear of the adverse effect of the book, they even offered Eisenmenger a substantial amount of money to suppress its publication. Eisenmenger was certainly not above a monetary bribe, but the offered amount was not high enough for him. See Dubnov, pp. 217-218. Breuer, p. 157.

²⁸ *Entdecktes Judenthum* was only officially published in Berlin in 1711. After 1711, it was not allowed to be published again until the 1750s. See Katz, p. 14. Hamilton H.H. Beck, "Neither Goshen nor Botany Bay: Hippel and the Debate on Improving The Civic Status of the Jews," *Lessing Yearbook XXVII* (1996): pp. 62-64.

²⁹ Dubnov, p. 218.

respects, royal fixation on *Aleinu* set the parameters for Jewish worship in eighteenth century Prussia. The government routinely rejected Jewish requests for new synagogues or for permission to conduct private worship in one's home, mainly because multiple locales of worship could not remain under the "watchful eye" of the inspector.

The *Aleinu* edict of 1703 called for the creation of a formal system of synagogue supervision throughout Prussia. In many cities and towns, the initial fervor and paranoia surrounding *Aleinu* died down within a few decades. Appointed inspectors passed away, and the local authorities sometimes never got around to hiring someone new.³⁰ In the East Prussian capital of Königsberg, however, this was not the case. From the beginning, local theologians and professors in Königsberg took the position of synagogue inspector very seriously.

Organized Surveillance

It took two months for a copy of the *Aleinu* edict to reach Königsberg. Attached was a letter from the king demanding that the edict be strictly followed throughout East Prussia.³¹ In April 1704, the local magistrates in Königsberg requested of the king that they be allowed to create an official position of synagogue inspector (*Inspector der Juden Synagoge*) in Königsberg. In order to guarantee that the Jews followed the *Aleinu* edict,

³⁰ Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 33. Elbogen, p. 72. Ludwig Borowski discusses how the vigilance of the Berlin synagogue inspector only lasted a short time in comparison to Königsberg. See Mendelssohn, Kypke, and Borowski, p. 37. C. Flumenbaum doubts that the *Aleinu* edict was ever even applied to Berlin. Claudia-Ann Flumenbaum, "From the Beginnings until 1789," in *Jewish in Berlin*, ed. A. Nachama, J. H. Schoeps, and H. Simon (Berlin: Henschel, 2002), p. 26.

³¹ GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 40, p. 7. For a discussion of how ordinances such as the *Aleinu* edict were promulgated and distributed, see Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 46-48.

they suggested the permanent presence of a Christian observer in the synagogue. They interpreted the particular manner in which the local Jews in Königsberg prayed as an attempt to avoid inspection. To the authorities in Königsberg, Jewish prayer was a “collective murmuring” that prevented a Christian visitor from determining whether or not they recited the forbidden passage in *Aleinu*.³²

The king granted the request for a permanent position in Königsberg. The inspector’s main responsibility was to ensure that Jews did not recite the incriminating portion of the *Aleinu* prayer. In order to guarantee this, Frederick I instructed Jews to abandon their practice of reciting this portion of the daily prayers silently and instead called on them to recite *Aleinu* “loudly and clearly” (*laut und deutlich*) so that the inspector could hear. While the Edict of 1703 only mentioned the proper recitation of *Aleinu*, several inspectors in the eighteenth century took it upon themselves to find other prayers and even Bible verses that the Jews of Königsberg were ostensibly reciting for ill.

Already in 1704, local magistrates in Königsberg went a step further and brought up another contentious Jewish prayer called the *Birkat ha-minim*, also known as the *Malshinim*.³³ *Aleinu* had received a lot of attention in the past few years. Historically, however, *Malshinim* had inspired as much Christian ire as *Aleinu*. *Malshinim*, Hebrew for informers or slanderers, was the shortened name given to Benediction 12 of the *Amidah*. This “blessing against the sectarians” (*birkat ha-minim*) calls upon God to invoke his anger against slanderers and evildoers. The passage that raised Christian eyebrows in the past was, “may the slanderers have no hope; may all wickedness perish instantly; may all

³² GSStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 47 pp. 1-3.

³³ Ibid.

their enemies be soon cut down.”³⁴ In the 1240 Paris disputation, Spanish convert Nicholas Donin had used *Malshinim* as proof that Jews daily defamed all types of authority, including the church and the sovereign. Johannes Pfefferkorn (1469-1523), another Jewish convert to Christianity, mentioned *Malshinim* specifically in his request to Emperor Maximilian to confiscate and destroy Hebrew books.³⁵

The authorities in Königsberg wanted to remind Frederick I that prayers other than *Aleinu* were dangerous as well. Their recommendation in 1704 to look at the *Malshinim* along with *Aleinu* created a precedent. In correspondence from Königsberg throughout the eighteenth century, inspectors usually mentioned the *Aleinu* and the *Malshinim* prayers together, even though the Edict of 1703 only referred to *Aleinu*. This revealed a degree of zealousness for the role of supervisor that was not seen elsewhere in Prussia at the time.

The first man appointed to be synagogue inspector in Königsberg was Friedrich Wilhelm Bock, a local Jewish convert to Christianity.³⁶ According to a governmental petition from May 1696, Bock had converted to Christianity in the 1680s. Because of his earnest desire to be of service to the church, the Prussian government in Berlin urged the rector of the Albertina in Königsberg to grant Bock regular support to continue his

³⁴ The *Amidah* is composed of nineteen benedictions or blessings. It is recited three times daily. The name *Amidah* refers to the fact that the prayer is recited while standing, usually facing Jerusalem. The *Amidah* is also called the *Shemoneh Esre*, referring to the original number of eighteen benedictions. Benediction 12 was added in the second century C.E. See Elbogen, pp. 24-31. Another version of the *Amidah* from the Cairo Genizah uses the term *notzrim* instead of *minim*. It is translated in Joseph Heinemann and Jacob Petuchowski, *Literature of the Synagogue* (New Jersey: Gorgias Press, 2006), pp. 33-36.

³⁵ Carlebach, p. 27.

³⁶ Dietzsch, p. 117.

studies.³⁷ By 1704, Bock had become a full-time lecturer at the university in the Hebrew language. Bock's linguistic skills, along with his firsthand knowledge of Jewish liturgy, made him a likely candidate for the position of synagogue inspector. The assumption was that a Jewish convert to Christianity could best detect potential Jewish deception. Even more so, many Jewish converts like Bock viewed themselves as a key tool in the eventual unity of Jews and Christians into one body of believers.³⁸ Indeed, the final goal of the synagogue inspector was not censure but rather eternal redemption. Frederick I and those he appointed to supervise the Jews viewed surveillance and reprimand of the negative aspects of Jewish liturgy as a necessary step to eventual Jewish conversion.

In 1704, Bock began to visit the synagogue on the Kehrwiedergasse in Königsberg weekly. For this service, he received one Thaler weekly and a yearly housing allowance of ten Thaler.³⁹ His presence there quickly produced local protest from the Jews of Königsberg. The king received numerous complaints from them about how Bock overstepped his position as inspector and was openly proselytizing. The protests from the Jews were loud enough for the king to dismiss Bock from his duties in 1705.⁴⁰

Frederick I and his government had learned a quick lesson. The relationship between Jewish convert and Jew was too charged and combative to use Jewish converts as inspectors. With the quick dismissal of Bock, the search began anew for an appropriate Christian to be a regular presence in the Jewish house of worship. The

³⁷ "Reskript der preussischen Regierung an Rektor und Senat der Universität Königsberg, May 7, 1696," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), pp. 415-416.

³⁸ For more on the motivations of Jewish converts, see Carlebach, pp. 47-66.

³⁹ Saalschütz: p. 178.

⁴⁰ Krüger, p. 33.

existence of both a Theology and an Oriental languages department at the university in Königsberg meant that other qualified men existed to fill the position. The desire of several of these men to hold the post would later cause tension within the Theology faculty over who would be appointed to be synagogue inspector.

In 1705, the king appointed as Bock's replacement Christian Walther (1655-1717), a professor of Oriental Languages at the Albertus University. In exchange for regular attendance at Jewish services, Walther would receive 100 Thaler per annum from the general fund (*Gemeindekasse*). Walther was born in Norkitten, a small town in East Prussia. He became a pastor in the Sackheim suburb of Königsberg in 1681 and a member of the Berlin Society of the Sciences in 1701. Very little is known about Walther's tenure as inspector. The lack of any formal complaints from either Walther or from the Jews of Königsberg against Walther's presence seem to suggest that it was a peaceful twelve years.⁴¹ According to Johann Bernhard Hahn (1685-1755), a future synagogue inspector, Christian Walther was chosen to be the Jewish inspector mainly because of his knowledge and deep love of Semitic languages.⁴²

During Walther's term, Frederick William I revised and reprinted the *Aleinu* edict with a dual translation into Yiddish on January 15, 1716. Crowned in 1713, Frederick William re-affirmed the importance of his father's edict. Thirteen years had done little to diminish royal suspicion of potential Jewish blasphemies. A year after the revision of the edict, Christian Walther died, and the position of synagogue inspector in Königsberg was available again. At his funeral, M. Christian Flottwell (1681-1727) described Walther's

⁴¹ Mendelssohn, Kypke, and Borowski, p. 38. Ludwig Ernst Borowski (1740-1831) was the first person to write a detailed history of the position of synagogue inspector in Königsberg.

⁴² GSStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 47, p. 12.

relationship to the Jews of Königsberg as harmonious and one of mutual respect: “He devoted so much time and energy to Oriental Languages. [...] So many Jews and rabbis from faraway places came here, so many sought his wise company and praised his impressive knowledge of rabbinic literature and the Talmud.”⁴³

After Walther’s death, many theology professors at the university expressed interest in securing the office. Such eagerness for the job was specific to Königsberg. In other Prussian cities, the office often remained vacant for years or even permanently after the death of an inspector. Desirous of taking Walther’s place as local inspector, Johann Bernhard Hahn wrote to the king in 1717 of the pressing need in Königsberg for the position to be re-filled. Hahn’s numerous letters to Frederick William I point to the degree of suspicion and distrust the Professor and future Rector of the Albertus University had for the local Jewish community. He called the Jews a blind and godless nation who, without the regular presence of an inspector, would probably commit “horrible slander”. In order to thwart the plans of the Königsberg Jews, Hahn offered himself up as the future inspector.⁴⁴ Hahn had just completed his dissertation on ancient Hebrew at the Albertina and received a new appointment as lecturer in Oriental Languages. The position of synagogue inspector was a way for Hahn to distinguish himself before his older colleagues at the university.

But Hahn was not the only one interested in the vacant position, nor was he the most prominent one considered. Heinrich Lysius (1670-1731), a well-known Pietist and professor of Theology at the Albertina since 1710, also wrote a letter in January to

⁴³ Adolf Rogge, "Schattenrisse aus dem kirchlichen Leben der Provinz Preussen," *Altpreussische Monatsschrift* 15 (1878): pp. 539-540.

⁴⁴ GSStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 47, p. 12.

Frederick William I recommending himself for the post. Originally Lysius came to Königsberg from Halle in 1702 to become the first director of the newly founded Pietist school, the *Friedrichs-Collegium*. Established with royal help, the *Friedrichs-Collegium* later became the first secondary school (*Gymnasium*) in East Prussia.⁴⁵ By 1716, the Pietistic school was quite successful and its former director well-known in the city. The school and its director's success were instrumental in the king's decision to appoint Lysius the new synagogue inspector over Johann Bernhard Hahn.

Heinrich Lysius had much to recommend himself to the sought after position. Born in Flensburg into a strict Lutheran family, Lysius learned Hebrew as a teenager from a former rabbi and acquaintance of his father.⁴⁶ Lysius later boasted of how his Hebrew was so fluent that as a young adult he was able to converse with the learned Jews in Flensburg and comprehend their liturgy and practices.⁴⁷ He built on this early base when in 1687 he went to Jena to study theology. During his later studies in Leipzig, he embraced Lutheran Pietism.⁴⁸

The conversion of the Jews was central to Pietistic theology. The movement's spiritual father, Philipp Jakob Spener (1635-1705), connected the ultimate future of Christianity with an eventual conversion of the Jews *en masse*. This wholesale conversion, however, could only occur through the faithful and gentle interaction of Christians with Jews. Spener discouraged formal disputations or polemics and instead

⁴⁵ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 37.

⁴⁶ Samuel Gottlieb Wald, *Über den ersten Director des Collegii Fridericiani D. Heinrich Lysius, eine Vorlesung in der Königl. Deutschen Gesellschaft* (Königsberg in Preussen: G.L. Hartung, 1792), p. 11.

⁴⁷ GSStA PK EM D Tit. 48 d 4 Nr. 47, p. 27.

⁴⁸ S. Wald, pp. 12-16.

urged fellow Christians to learn Hebrew and to acquaint themselves with Jewish practice.⁴⁹ His followers heeded his call and became professors of Oriental Languages at several universities, including the Albertina in Königsberg. Lysius was the first of several Pietists who would eventually be appointed synagogue inspector in the city.

Heinrich Lysius was not only the synagogue inspector in Königsberg; in July 1718, the crown also appointed him the first inspector of schools and churches in East Prussia and Lithuania. The creation of this position came a year after Frederick William I introduced compulsory schooling in Brandenburg-Prussia. While on a trip throughout the region early in his reign, the king disapproved of the level of education and knowledge of Christian doctrine in small towns and villages in the countryside. Frederick William I called upon Lysius to supervise classes and religious services and to suggest necessary reforms. The appointment of Lysius and other Lutheran Pietists to key governmental offices revealed the growing partnership between the new Pietist sect and the Prussian state during the first few decades of the eighteenth century. Pietism played a large role in the creation of the Prussian model of education. The vision of Pietist August Hermann Francke (1663-1727), a pastor and teacher from Halle, of personal spiritual renewal through increased religious education influenced Frederick's eventual enactment of compulsory education.⁵⁰ Pietism and its focus on "practical Christianity" rather than

⁴⁹ Christopher Clark, *The Politics of Conversion: Missionary Protestantism and the Jews in Prussia, 1728-1941* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 27. See also Karl Heinrich Rengstorf, "Die deutschen Pietisten und ihr Bild des Judentums," in *Begegnung von Deutschen und Juden in der Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, eds. J. Katz and K.H. Rengstorf (Tübingen: Niemeyer Verlag, 1994), pp. 1-16. Albert A. Breuer, *Geschichte der Juden in Preussen (1750-1820)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1991), pp. 50-52. Michael A. Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, vol. 1 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996), pp. 160-161.

⁵⁰ See F. Ernest Stoeffler, *German Pietism During the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1973), pp. 1-38.

dogma attracted the Reformed Frederick William, because it suggested a potential bridge between the Calvinist court and the staunchly Lutheran populace in Prussia.⁵¹

Lysius was much more controversial as the school and church inspector in East Prussia and Lithuania than he was as synagogue inspector in Königsberg. After observing the formulaic nature and lack of spiritual effect of many provincial sermons, Lysius pushed for German pastors in the Lithuanian countryside to learn the local language. This call was quickly abandoned after Lysius realized how difficult Lithuanian was for Germans to master. In an about-face, Lysius then urged for the Germanization of the Lithuanians, a highly unpopular request. In September 1721, after only three years, the king dismissed Lysius from his duties and replaced him with rival Johann Jacob Quandt.⁵²

As both synagogue inspector in Königsberg and church inspector in Lithuania, Lysius was a key figure in the larger Prussian state goal of control and surveillance of its subjects. Frederick William I (1713-1740) was notorious for planting spies within his own bureaucracy.⁵³ His son, Frederick II (1740-1786), created a whole system of formal supervision of most state institutions, including the university, schools, and churches. Throughout the kingdom, appointed inspectors regularly sat in on lectures and sermons,

⁵¹ Clark, p. 35.

⁵² See Fritz Terveen, *Gesamtstaat und Retablisement: Der Wiederaufbau des nördlichen Ostpreussen unter Friedrich Wilhelm I, 1714-1740*, ed. Walther Hubatsch, vol. 16 (Göttingen: "Musterschmidt" Wissenschaftlicher Verlag, 1954), pp. 83-92.

⁵³ Herman Weill, *Frederick the Great and Samuel von Cocceji: A Study in the Reform of the Prussian Judicial Administration, 1740-1755* (Madison: University of Wisconsin, 1961), p. 19. For a general discussion of the increase in surveillance in eighteenth century Europe, see Christopher Dandeker, *Surveillance, Power and Modernity: Bureaucracy and Discipline from 1700 to the Present Day* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1990). Dandeker links the development of bureaucracy and a culture of scrutiny to the development of modern capitalism. See also Raeff.

reporting back to the king their findings.⁵⁴ Thus, the creation of a synagogue inspector should not be viewed as unusual or a departure from Prussian royal policy as a whole.

In his role as synagogue inspector, Lysius does not appear to have caused much trouble for the Jews of Königsberg. The few times he lodged a complaint to the king, it was over the issue of private worship outside the synagogue, a contentious issue even among local Jews. In the case of Samuel Slumke, discussed further in Chapter Three, Lysius stood alongside the local Jewish elders and requested the immediate action of the king.⁵⁵ In this circumstance and others like it, he functioned more as a defender of the Jews than as an adversary.

Lysius had stronger and more combative forces to contend with in Königsberg than the city's small Jewish community, which at the start of his tenure in 1717 only numbered around 40 families.⁵⁶ Ever since his arrival in 1702, Lysius was a contentious figure in the East Prussian city. Both his personality and his Christian beliefs aroused controversy.⁵⁷ The eighteenth century conflict between Lutheran orthodoxy and the thriving Pietistic movement was particularly pronounced in Königsberg.⁵⁸ Lysius and

⁵⁴ Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 126-129.

⁵⁵ In late 1717, Lysius began a series of correspondence with the king about Samuel Slumke, a Polish Jew who had lived in Königsberg since at least 1706. Against the wishes of both the state and the local Jewish elders, Slumke had been conducting private services in his home in the suburbs (*Vorstadt*) for several years. See GStA PK HA-XX EM (D) Tit. 74a Nr. 165. See also Mendelssohn, Kypke, and Borowski, p. 39.

⁵⁶ Including children and servants, this was a little over 200 people. Only four Jews and their families actually had Letters of Protection (*Schutzbriefe*). The rest were *unvergleitet*, that is without the privileges of a *Schutzbrief*. See Krüger, pp. 122-124.

⁵⁷ Depending upon the historical literature, Lysius is either presented as an tireless advocate for Pietism and educational reform or as a relentless bureaucrat. See, for example, Fritz Gause, who described H. Lysius as fiery and hot-tempered. Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), p. 117. For a positive portrayal of the teacher, see Wald.

⁵⁸ Martin Lackner, "Das Collegium Fridericianum, eine pietistische Schulgründung in Königsberg," in *Die Landesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Königsberger Königskrönung von 1701*, ed. Bernhart Jähmig (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), p. 105. Stanislaw Salmonowicz, "Königsberg, Thorn und Danzig:

other Pietists in the city had close connections with the sect's leaders in Halle.

Nicknamed by its opponents as the "Halle epidemic" (*Hallesche Seuche*), Lutheran Pietism and its adherents quickly gained a monopoly on local leadership.⁵⁹

Lysius, later hired by the state to prevent the Jews from reciting "abominable sacrileges" (*abscheuliche Lästerungen*), was himself accused of such a crime by rival Christians in Königsberg. In April 1707, certain members of the community, including the mayor, wrote a formal complaint to the king regarding the director of the *Friedrichs-Collegium*. They accused Lysius of speaking such "abominable sacrileges" that were poisoning the minds of impressionable students at the royal school.⁶⁰

The future inspector continued to ruffle feathers as he rose in prominence and position. By the late 1710s, the local Pietists, headed by Lysius, had a stronghold over the theology faculty at the university and control over the placement of pastors throughout East Prussia. Public opinion of the Pietistic teacher was so divided that citizens supposedly founded pro-Lysius and anti-Lysius societies in the city.⁶¹ At the university, he also had numerous enemies. He was reputedly an enemy of the late Christian Walther and certainly was not a friend of fellow theology lecturer and Orthodox Lutheran Johann Bernhard Hahn.⁶²

Zur Geschichte Königsbergs als Zentrum der Aufklärung," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), pp. 13-14.

⁵⁹ This began as early as Frederick I's coronation in January 1701 when he declared Theodor Gehr's fledgling Pietist school a royal school. Kasimir Lawrynowicz, *Albertina: Zur Geschichte der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg in Preussen*, trans. Gerhild Luschnat (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), p. 155.

⁶⁰ Wald, p. 64.

⁶¹ Stoeffler, pp. 76-77. Wald, p. 64.

⁶² Wald, p. 27. Perhaps the most outspoken opponent of Pietism was Johann Jakob Quandt (1686-1772), a popular Lutheran preacher and professor at the university. Quandt even edited an Orthodox Lutheran

Still smarting from rejection, Hahn wrote several letters to the king in the early 1720s accusing Lysius of being derelict in his duties as synagogue inspector. In February 1725, Hahn reminded the king that the inspector must stay the length of the Jewish service. The underlying fear was that if he left for even a short time, the Jews would immediately yell out sacrileges. According to Hahn, Lysius did not stay for the duration. Lysius later claimed that Hahn had gone so far as to inquire of Jews at the local market whether or not he was attending services.⁶³ Hahn maintained that Lysius's other responsibilities as a preacher and the Lithuanian school inspector did not enable him to put the required time into ensuring that the Jews still followed the *Aleinu* edict. Hahn called for the king to dismiss Lysius and hire him in his place.⁶⁴

The feud continued up until Lysius's death in 1731. The controversial inspector's responses to the attacks of Hahn provide us with significant information about relations between him and the Jews of Königsberg. In several letters to the king, Lysius expressed a level of respect bordering on admiration for the Jews under his care. In an atmosphere of suspicion and accusation, of which Hahn was a representative example, Lysius was most likely a breath of fresh air for the local Jewish community. While the elders of the Jewish community desired to end Christian surveillance of their worship altogether, an inspector like Heinrich Lysius was preferred over more rancorous theologians at the university. Lysius certainly hoped for the conversion of the Jews of Königsberg. He saw his position as a God given opportunity to "work on Jewish souls." But he wrote to

hymnal in 1734 as a counter to his Pietistic rival Georg Rogall's successful songbook. See Lawrynowicz, p. 155.

⁶³ See GStA PK EM D Tit. 48 d 4 Nr. 47, p. 27.

⁶⁴ GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 47, pp. 21-23. After receiving no response from the king, Hahn wrote another letter in April 1727 in which he urged the king that he was better qualified for the position because he spoke better Hebrew and had more time to devote to the all-important task.

Frederick William of how he disagreed with the method of “antagonism and distrust” that he thought characterized relations between Jews and Christians.⁶⁵

Before his death in 1731, Heinrich Lysius secured the position of synagogue inspector for his son Johann Heinrich Lysius (1704-1745). In a letter to the king dated August 1727, Lysius stressed that, in addition to being highly qualified for the position, his son had significant interaction with Jews in Halle as a student and later in Königsberg as a professor.⁶⁶ The younger Lysius had been Professor of Oriental Languages at the Albertina since 1725. Johann H. Lysius held the post of inspector for fourteen years until his untimely death from illness in 1745. No formal complaints appear to have been lodged during his tenure.

After almost thirty years of perseverance, Hahn was finally appointed to be inspector in 1745. Around the same time, Hahn also became rector of the Albertus University.⁶⁷ During his incumbency, Frederick II issued a General-Patent in April 1750 which would set the parameters of Jewish economic and religious life for the next sixty years. In addition to limiting Jewish trade and residence, the king revisited *Aleinu* and the ongoing relevance of the Edicts from 1703 and 1716. Although no actual grievance had been filed in Königsberg or elsewhere since the edict was first promulgated, the king declared the privilege of continued public worship as contingent upon following the

⁶⁵ GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 47, p. 27.

⁶⁶ GStA PK EM D Tit. 48 d 4 Nr. 47, pp. 41-43.

⁶⁷ Dietzsch, p. 50.

ruling. Prussian Jews were once again threatened with the penalty of potential expulsion if they recited the forbidden passages in *Aleinu* and *Malshinim*.⁶⁸

From the death of Christian Walther up until Hahn's appointment, we can see how the competitive atmosphere of the Oriental Languages department at the university influenced the popularity of the position. The annual remuneration of 100 Thaler should also not be discounted as a reason why so many professors desired the job, since Prussian university professors of the eighteenth century were often paid very little.⁶⁹ Ultimately, however, their motivations rested elsewhere. For Pietists like Lysius, the position was a way to have regular and potentially profitable spiritual interaction with local Jews. But his opponents in the community questioned how the Pietist, himself a man accused of sacrilege, could adequately judge the actions of the Jews. For Hahn and other Lutherans who felt that the "Halle epidemic" was taking over the theology department and thereby the education of their youth, the position was another way to assert their local religious authority.

Up until this point, any controversy surrounding the office was not over whether the position in Königsberg should still be filled, but rather what type of Christian should be chosen for such an important task. Local leadership continued to view the position as a necessary tool in order to keep the local Jews in check. One must, however, keep in

⁶⁸ Reprinted in Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 94-95. The General-Patent was particularly concerned with the issue of private worship. See Chapter Three.

⁶⁹ Joachim Knoll and Horst Siebert, *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Politician and Educationist* (Bad Godesberg: Inter Nationes, 1967), p. 32. David Sorkin writes that the professors in Königsberg "enjoyed the lucrative sinecure." David Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), p. 102. To my knowledge, the inspector was not a paid position in any other city or town. In a May 1722 letter to the king, preacher Gottfried Albrecht Pauli (1685-1745), co-inspector in the East Prussia countryside along with Johann Arnold Pauli (1682-1741), requested remuneration for his efforts. He cited the example of Königsberg and how it would only be fair for the king to pay other synagogue inspectors a comparable salary. See GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 40, pp. 31-33. See also Krüger, p. 33.

mind that such treatment was not unusual. Having an appointed official to spy on a religious service, while undesirable for those surveyed, was not an anomaly but rather part and parcel of Prussian state policy in the eighteenth century.⁷⁰ The surveillance of Jewish prayer served the larger state goal of ultimate order and political-social control. From the perspective of the modern European state, religious devotion and proper behavior in worship were the means by which the state created an organized and useful polity.⁷¹

The paid position of synagogue inspector in Königsberg did eventually end in 1778. But it did not end quietly. A heated confrontation between the last inspector and the Jews of Königsberg precipitated its eventual termination.

Kypke vs. Mendelssohn

By the 1760s, the Jews of Königsberg were certainly used to having a looming and sometimes antagonistic presence regularly in the synagogue. Relations, however, between the Jewish community and the synagogue inspector reached an all time low during the tenure of Georg David Kypke (1724-1779). Appointed inspector in 1755, Kypke had been a professor of Oriental languages since 1746. Originally from Pomerania, G.D. Kypke first came to Königsberg as a youth to study at the Friedrichs Collegium where he became a friend of Immanuel Kant. The future philosopher even

⁷⁰ See Reinhold A. Dorwart, *The Prussian Welfare State Before 1740* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1971). Dorwart argues that the German term *Polizeistaat* in the context of eighteenth century process is best translated as “welfare state.”

⁷¹ Raeff, pp. 34-35.

lived in the house of Kypke's uncle for a short time as a teenager.⁷² At the Albertina, G.D. Kypke was known for his deftness with foreign languages. Years later, Gottlieb Schlegel (1739-1810) described a lecture of Kypke's he attended in which the professor demonstrated his expertise in both ancient Hebrew and in English.⁷³

One year after the king appointed Kypke synagogue inspector, the Seven Year's War broke out. In 1758, the Russian army occupied East Prussia and remained until 1762. The Russian presence was felt in the German city both economically and culturally. One requirement of the occupiers was that the East Prussians honor the Russian throne by celebrating all thirteen official Russian holidays. The costly celebrations often included fireworks, dances, and formal dinners.⁷⁴ When Czarina Elizabeth died on Christmas Day 1761, occupied Königsberg also mourned her passing. The Jews had their own memorial service for Elisabeth in January 1762. Kypke took issue with the Jew's decision to read Psalm 49, a reflection on death as man's common fate, no matter his degree of wealth or success in life. Kypke later claimed that the Jews' fervent recitation of verses thirteen and fifteen indicated their disrespect for higher authorities.⁷⁵ According to the inspector, the disrespect of the Jews for authority did not

⁷² G.D. Kypke was the nephew of Johann David Kypke (1692-1758), Professor of Philosophy at the Albertina. See Dietzsch, pp. 31-32. See also Kurt Joachim Grau, ed., *Kant - Anekdoten* (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1924), p. 9.

⁷³ Werner Stark, "Hinweise zu Kants Kollegen vor 1770," in *Studien zur Entwicklung preussischer Universitäten*, ed. R. Brandt and W. Euler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), pp. 119-120.

⁷⁴ Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), pp. 284-285. Lawrynowicz, p. 147.

⁷⁵ Psalm 49: 13-16: "Man does not abide in honor; he is like the beasts that perish. Such is the fate of those who are self-confident, the end of those pleased with their own talk. Sheeplike they head for Sheol, with Death over them at daybreak, and their form shall waste away in Sheol till its nobility be gone. But God will redeem my life from the clutches of Sheol." *The Jewish Study Bible*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), p. 1337. Based on Luther's translation of verse 13, one could potentially interpret the man as someone currently in power (*ein Mensch in seiner Herrlichkeit*) who will one day fall from grandeur.

stop with the memorial service to the late Russian Czarina. In 1770, in a celebration of the birth of Frederick William II, the Jews chose to read Psalm 17. This prayer of David is a call of deliverance from his enemies. For the Jews, Kypke believed the words had a double historical and contemporary meaning. David's wish to destroy his ancient enemy became a Prussian Jew's wish to be free of Frederick II's rule.⁷⁶

In 1777, Kypke's anger at such perceived disrespect and a growing hostility between himself and the Jews escalated into an all-out war of insults. Kypke initiated a formal dispute with the Jews of Königsberg in an April 1777 letter to Frederick II. In addition to his anger about the supposed Jewish use of scripture to insult present-day authorities, Kypke was also upset about the negative treatment he thought he was receiving in the synagogue. This even included the type of seating available to him. For over twenty years, Kypke claimed he had a comfortable seat assigned to him, from where he could survey the entire synagogue with ease. Suddenly, one week the Jewish elders took this chair away entirely. Now he was forced to seek whatever form of seating, however narrow or unpleasant, was available elsewhere. Kypke's discomfort reached a climax around the time of Easter one year when he claimed he was given a chair with a broken back. To him, this was a deliberate act on the part of the Jews to sabotage his authority and to hinder his ability to properly attend to his duties.⁷⁷

Providing a broken chair around the most important of Christian holidays was rife with theological insult for someone open to that interpretation. While Kypke certainly read too much into the timing of the incident, one should not discount the possibility that the Jews might have intentionally given him a damaged seat. In a September 1777 letter

⁷⁶ GStA PK EM d Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 206, pp. 1-3.

⁷⁷ GStA PK EM d Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 206, pp.3-8.

to the king regarding Kypke, the elders of the Königsberg Jewish community did not mince words about their negative opinion of the inspector. They described Kypke accusations against them as the hateful and selfish concoctions of a small-minded man.⁷⁸

While the Jews of Königsberg had ceased to spit or jump up during *Aleinu*, in his April letter to the king, Kypke claimed he was still unable to tell if they were reciting the offensive passage, since they continued to disobey the ruling to recite the prayer “loudly and clearly”. In addition to insuring the proper application of the *Aleinu* edict, Kypke stressed that the Jews in Königsberg needed additional surveillance, especially in light of the Frederick II’s regular absence from the city. His implication was that the Jews’ knowledge of the king’s presence in Königsberg functioned as a form of supervision. The letter was in part an explanation to Frederick of why the inspector in Königsberg needed to supervise more than just the reciting of *Aleinu*. From Kypke’s perspective, the potential for Jewish deception was almost limitless. Any scripture could be twisted in their hearts to become an insult against Christianity.

The inspector’s letter of complaint led to an immediate state inquiry.⁷⁹ The Jews of Königsberg certainly did not remain silent about these new and broadened accusations. Their first mode of attack was to remind Kypke of the Edict of 1703 and the original parameters of the inspector’s influence. The Edict exclusively banned only the disputed passage in the *Aleinu* prayer. They also accepted the later inclusion in royal correspondence of Benediction 12 of the *Amidah*. Under this restraint, Kypke’s objection

⁷⁸ GStA PK HA-I Rep. 7, Nr. 106 I Fasz 41.

⁷⁹ This eventual report was entitled “Commissorialischer Recess zu Denunciations Sachen des Professor Kypke Denuncianten wider die hiesige Juden Gemeinde Denunciaten.” GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 206, pp. 21-71.

to the manner in which the Jews recited Psalms 49 and 17 overstepped the boundaries of the Edict.

Kypke's suspicion of the Jewish recitation of scripture caused much concern among the elders of the community. If even mutually revered scripture was suspect, what could the Jews recite or pray without fear of reprisal? The main fear was that the prejudices of one man would affect the fortunes of an entire community. The unbounded scrutiny of a combative and frustrated inspector could have long-term consequences for a minority seeking to prove their abiding loyalty to the king and his kingdom.⁸⁰

Recognizing their precarious situation, the Jewish communal elders sought the help of Berlin philosopher Moses Mendelssohn (1729-1786) in the spring of 1777. The Jewish intellectual was a worthy advocate to have in an escalating and potentially volatile conflict. Nicknamed by his intellectual contemporaries "the Socrates of Berlin", Mendelssohn successfully straddled the religious and secular worlds of Enlightenment Berlin.⁸¹

Mendelssohn came to visit Königsberg twice in the summer of 1777. Historians most often pinpoint Kant as the reason for Mendelssohn's visit to the East Prussian capital. Indeed, the interactions between the Jewish philosopher and the German academic feature prominently in historical memory. But Mendelssohn also used these visits to consult with the communal elders of the Jewish community about the ongoing dispute with Kypke. While in Königsberg, Mendelssohn stayed at the home of the late

⁸⁰ GStA PK EM (D) Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 206, pp. 98-109.

⁸¹ David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 54. See also Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans, and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996), p. 22.

Joachim Moses Friedländer.⁸² He also met with two local and influential nobles, the Count von Keyserling and the Chancellor von Korff, to discuss what a local paper obliquely referred to as “a special reason.”⁸³ Many of the newspaper’s readers would suspect that this “special reason” was the ongoing conflict between the local Jewish community and Professor Kypke.

A few months later, Mendelssohn responded with a written defense (*Gutachten*) of *Aleinu*, in which he dismissed Georg David Kypke’s accusations as unhistorical and slanderous.⁸⁴ The defense primarily focused on the prayer’s authorship and its theological legitimacy. While unsure of dating *Aleinu* all the way back to the time of Joshua like Rabbi Menasseh ben Israel had done in *Vindiciae Judaearum* (1656), Mendelssohn assured his readers that the prayer was certainly pre-Christian, most likely from the Second Temple period. Contrary to Christian suspicion, *Aleinu* was not an underhanded attack on Christianity but rather an age-old prayer directed at pagan rituals. Mendelssohn explained that the use of *va-riq* (emptiness) was a Biblical reference to Isaiah 30, verse 7: “For the help of Egypt shall be vain and empty (*va-riq*).”⁸⁵ Could Isaiah have possibly meant to insult a religion that did not yet exist?

The sacred immutability of Jewish prayer called for Jews in the present to pray the same words as their ancestors. According to Mendelssohn, even Jews in Muslim lands prayed *Aleinu* in the exact same manner as those Jews living under Prussian rule.

⁸² Altmann, pp. 305-307. Manthey, p. 632. Joachim Moses died a year earlier in 1776, but his home at Brotbänkengasse 25 was still in the family. Krüger, p. 51.

⁸³ "Abschiedsgruss an Moses Mendelssohn," p. 266. Translated in Altmann, p. 307.

⁸⁴ Moses Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, vol. 10.1 (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1985), pp. 307-310.

⁸⁵ *The Jewish Study Bible*, p. 842.

What interest would Jews outside of Christian dominance have in defaming Christ? On the one hand, Mendelssohn appealed to the importance of continuity in Jewish tradition; yet on the other, he avoided the mention of rabbinical literature, instead preferring to highlight the Bible. One reason for this was to highlight the commonalities between Jews and Christians rather than the differences. Later on in the defense, Mendelssohn went so far as to say the Christian and Jewish God were one in the same: “Christians [worship] the same King of kings we adore, the Holy One, blessed by He.”⁸⁶ Mendelssohn’s focus on the Bible here mirrors the unease of later *maskilim* with referencing rabbinical works, especially the Talmud. Biblical texts had universal meaning, whereas rabbinical works served to highlight the particular beliefs of the Jews.⁸⁷

As a respected philosopher and Jewish scholar, Mendelssohn’s backing held weight, so much so that Kypke’s initial response to Frederick II in July 1777 was to reject the Jewish philosopher’s authorship of the piece. Kypke claimed that the piece was not up to the writing level of Moses Mendelssohn. How could such a learned man produce something so riddled with grammatical mistakes? Kypke claimed a local Jew in Königsberg had written the defense and tried to pass it off as Mendelssohn to bolster its credibility.⁸⁸ The claim of false authorship, however, does not hold water. One of Kypke’s examples of supposed poor grammar is relatively minor and open to

⁸⁶ Mendelssohn, *Gesammelte Schriften*, p. 307. Translated in Moses Mendelssohn, *Moses Mendelssohn: Selections from His Writings*, trans. Eva Jospe (New York: The Viking Press, 1975). This type of universalism was a common maskilic trope. See Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans, and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture*, pp. 20-21.

⁸⁷ Mordechai Eliav, *Jüdische Erziehung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Emanzipation*, trans. M. Strobel (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), p. 211.

⁸⁸ GSStA EM (D) Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 206, pp. 79-94. Printed in Mendelssohn, Kypke, and Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypke Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: aus archivalischen Akten*, pp. 67-86.

interpretation. In the passage which declares that Jews and Christians worship the same God, Mendelssohn used the phrase “den Heiligen, gelobt say er” (the Holy One, Blessed be He). Kypke, perhaps unaware of how common this phrase is in Hebrew, thought the German was flawed and should have instead been “den heiligen Gott” (Holy God).

The conflict between the Jews of Königsberg and G.D. Kypke continued for the next year. By this point it became evident that the Jews not only wanted Kypke out of the synagogue; they were also committed to ending the part-time position altogether. Not only was it intrusive to have a Christian observer weekly attend Jewish worship, it was an indication to the Jews of the underlying distrust that the Prussia state had for Jewish tradition. On April 12, 1778, the Jewish elders of the Königsberg community wrote a letter to the king requesting that he abolish the position. They described the office as outdated and unfitting of an enlightened monarch. Disregarded since the early eighteenth century in other Prussian cities, the time was past due for the king to end synagogue surveillance in Königsberg. They even offered to auction off Kypke’s seat in the synagogue and donate the proceeds to the Albertus University. The Jews guessed that the auction would fetch around 400 Thaler – four times Kypke’s yearly salary for his work as synagogue inspector.⁸⁹

The decision of whether or not to terminate the paid office rested partially in the hands of Karl Abraham Freiherr von Zedlitz (1731-1793), Prussian Minister of Justice and Education since 1770.⁹⁰ The influential cabinet member had a relatively close

⁸⁹ GStA PK HA-I Rep. 7, Nr. 106 I Fasz 41. See also Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), pp. 135-138.

⁹⁰ Several letters from the spring of 1778 regarding the issue were addressed to von Zedlitz. See GStA PK HA-I Rep. 7, Nr. 106 I Fasz 41. For more on von Zedlitz’s role as Minister of Education, see Werner Euler, “Kants Beitrag zur Schul- und Universitätsreform im ausgehenden 18. Jahrhundert,” in *Studien zur*

relationship with Moses Mendelssohn.⁹¹ He routinely asked Mendelssohn for advice regarding new appointments to educational positions in the kingdom. Shortly before Mendelssohn's visit to Königsberg, von Zedlitz had requested that he find a suitable individual in Königsberg to become a Professor of Philosophy at the university in Halle.⁹² In light of their regular rapprochement on other matters, it is likely that Mendelssohn spoke with the minister about Kypke and his ongoing conflict with the Königsberg Jewish community upon his return to Berlin in September of 1777.

The conflict was finally settled with a royal decree in July 1778. In exchange for Kypke's dismissal, Frederick II accepted the Jews' offer of 400 Thaler for the auction of the inspector's chair. The king also granted Kypke the full yearly salary of 100 Thaler for 1778. His final duty as synagogue inspector was for Kypke to administer an oath to the cantor in the synagogue, in which he promised to uphold the Edict of 1703.⁹³ The desired outcome of this tense and public confrontation revealed to the Jews of Königsberg what they already knew, namely that they had a powerful ally in Moses Mendelssohn. Without the philosopher's support, both in his written defense and in his

Entwicklung preussischer Universitäten, ed. R.Brandt and W.Euler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), pp. 214-220.

⁹¹ In the summer of 1777, Mendelssohn and Zedlitz were also in discussion regarding the creation of the Jewish Free School in Berlin, which opened its doors for the first time in 1778. Britta L. Behm, "Moses Mendelssohns Beziehungen zur Berliner jüdischen Freischule zwischen 1778 und 1786," in *Jüdische Erziehung und aufklärerische Schulreform*, ed. B. Behm, U. Lohmann, and I. Lohmann (Münster: Waxmann, 2002), pp. 112-116.

⁹² Georg Friedrich Meier (1718-1777), Professor of Philosophy in Halle, had recently passed away. While in Königsberg, Mendelssohn asked Immanuel Kant to suggest a replacement. Among the prospects was the philosopher Christian Jacob Kraus (1753-1807). Kraus described the incident and his impression of Mendelssohn in a letter from the summer of 1777. See Bertha Badt-Strauss, ed., *Moses Mendelssohn: der Mensch und das Werk* (Berlin: Welt-Verlag, 1929), pp. 151-152. Von Zedlitz later pled for Kant himself to take the chair, but the aged professor refused to leave the quiet of Königsberg. See Altmann, pp. 422-423. See also J.H.W. Stuckenberg, *The Life of Immanuel Kant* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1882), pp. 90-91.

⁹³ Mendelssohn, Kypke, and Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypke Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: aus archivalischen Akten*, p. 105. See also Smith, pp. 18-19. Kypke died unexpectedly a year later in May 1779 at the age of fifty five.

relationship with von Zedlitz, it is doubtful that the end of the position would have been so swift.

Mendelssohn's intervention in the synagogue inspector dispute in Königsberg was one instance among many in which the Berlin Jew used his moral weight as a respected public figure to defend the interests of his coreligionists.⁹⁴ In 1777, the same year that he defended the Königsberg Jewish community, Mendelssohn also reached out on behalf of the Jewish community in Dresden. After many attempts to curb Jewish settlement in their city, the local government in Dresden issued an order of expulsion for hundreds of Jews. Mendelssohn responded to this by writing the Baron von Ferber, a friend of his in Dresden who happened to be the head of the city's Chamber of Commerce. Through this influential contact, Mendelssohn managed to have the order of expulsion rescinded.⁹⁵

As a public figure and intercessor, Mendelssohn emulated traditional Jewish leadership roles. His status as Jewish spokesman in Königsberg and Dresden in some ways mirrored the traditional role of a Jewish *shdatlan* (intercessor) like Josel of Rosheim (c.1478-1554), who on multiple occasions kept the Jews of Alsace and elsewhere in Western Jewry from being expelled.⁹⁶ *Shdatlanut*, political intercession by one individual with non-Jewish authorities, was a common political tactic in the Middle Ages when Jews were under the authority of a local ruler. Josel of Rosheim was a

⁹⁴ Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 20.

⁹⁵ Dubnov, p. 223. Shmuel Feiner, "Mendelssohn and "Mendelssohn's Disciples": A Reexamination," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* XL (1995): p. 155. Altmann, pp. 427-430.

⁹⁶ Meyer, ed., *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, p. 61. See also Selma Stern, *Josel of Rosheim, Commander of Jewry in the Holy Roman Empire of the German Nation*, trans. G. Hirschler (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1965). For a general description of the role of a *shtadlan*, see Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. B.D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 71-72. Sorkin compares Mendelssohn's role as intercessor to that of his forefather Moses Benjamin Wulff, a Court Jew and founder of the Jewish community in Dessau. Sorkin, *Moses Mendelssohn and the Religious Enlightenment*, p. 95.

departure from the local *shdatlan*, since he interceded in conflicts with Jewish communities all over Central Europe.⁹⁷

Despite the antagonism between the Jews of Königsberg and the synagogue inspectors and the Jews' discontent with their intrusive presence in public worship, the inspectors and the Jews were not always at odds. Throughout the century, there are instances in which the Jews of Königsberg used the inspector as an advocate when approaching the king with a request. On many occasions Heinrich Lysius supported the Jews of Königsberg in letters to the king. Even Kypke supported Israel Moses Friedländer (1694-1773) in 1756 when he wrote to the king about having a Hebrew printing press in the city.⁹⁸ When they were in agreement, the Jews used local leadership to their advantage. Ultimate authority in Prussia rested with the sovereign, but it is clear that local governmental figures were not without their use and influence.

From the seventy five year history of the synagogue inspector in Königsberg, we can see how the position was mainly sustained by local competition for the office among the faculty at the Albertina. The reason for the persistent interest in the part-time post largely rested in the local intra-Christian conflict between Orthodox Lutherans and the Halle Pietists. While the Pietist desire to increase their influence or, in the case of the Orthodox Lutherans, to halt the advance of the rival sect was certainly instrumental, we must not dismiss the long history of the inspector in Königsberg as merely a Christian power struggle. Georg David Kypke's letters to Frederick II captured a widespread assumption in Königsberg that Jews needed constant surveillance. If the inspector or the

⁹⁷ Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 19-21, 100-101.

⁹⁸ For more on this, see Chapter Seven. GStA II Gen Dir. Abt. 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4479, pp. 16-21.

government turned their back for a second, the Jews might spit spitefully or jump around inappropriately. Worse yet was what could go on in their hearts and the potential double meaning that their words could have. Despite the presence of someone in the synagogue, however knowledgeable of Jewish tradition that person might have been, the deep suspicion surrounding Jewish liturgy could not ultimately be allayed.

The end of official inspections in 1778 also did not signify the end of state suspicion or uneasiness regarding Jewish worship. As we will see in the next chapter, the debate over private synagogues in the homes of certain Jews in Königsberg continued well into the nineteenth century.

Chapter Three Corner Synagogues and State Control

In June 1809, author and publisher Friedrich Nicolai wrote in the *Neue Berlinische Monatschrift* (New Berlin Monthly) that “the Jews live among us, and we hardly know anything about them.”¹ If such ignorance of Jewish life were possible in the early nineteenth century, imagine how much more so this was the case almost one hundred and forty years earlier when Frederick William (the Great Elector) first invited fifty Jewish families expelled from Vienna to come and settle in Brandenburg. As we saw in the previous chapter, misinformation among Christians about the content of Jewish liturgy and prayer was widespread in Early Modern Europe. This created a degree of mistrust that influenced state policy on Jewish worship for centuries.

After Frederick William invited a select number of Viennese Jews to Brandenburg in 1671, the state perspective on Jewish ceremonies and worship was that they were permissible as long as they remained orderly and, most of all, quiet enough not to disturb Christian citizens unhappy with the permanent presence of Jews in their cities. As long as Jewish liturgical practice did not give offence to local Christians or in any way blaspheme Christ or the Church, the Jews of Brandenburg were free to assemble in as many or as few groups of coreligionists as they wished. At this early juncture, the state deemed private worship in Jewish homes as the best way to guarantee public satisfaction. Yet eighty years later, royal dislike for private worship was so pronounced that the Prussian Charter of 1750 declared such small gatherings a danger to public welfare.

¹ Friedrich Nicolai, "Jüdische Talmudisten in Berlin," *Neue Berlinische Monatschrift* (1809): p. 352. Reprinted in Ingrid Lohmann, ed., *Chevrat Chinuch Nearim: Die jüdische Freischule in Berlin (1778-1825)*, vol. 1 (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), p. 573.

Most scholars have interpreted this about face in Prussian royal policy, from only allowing synagogues in private homes beginning in 1671 to outright forbidding them in the eighteenth century, as a deliberate attempt to curb intra-Jewish religious conflict and competition.² Power struggles within the Prussian Jewish community had become more and more heated during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As the number of Jewish families in Brandenburg and elsewhere in Prussia increased, the state was confronted with an upsurge in internal Jewish competition for communal power and authority. Some of the disagreements resulted in legal action. The state had an interest in subduing such infighting, which cost the government time and money to resolve. Creating an official place where Jews gathered, studied, and worshipped, seemed to be the best way to solve the problem.

Analysis of the private synagogue debate in Königsberg, however, suggests a second reason for the banning of private worship. The proliferation of services taking place in individual houses in the East Prussian city became too much for the organized system of synagogue surveillance to handle. If Königsberg, known for its avid enforcement of the *Aleinu* edict, could not ensure Jewish obedience, how could the king be assured that any city could? The example of Jewish worship in Königsberg reveals the extent to which royal suspicion surrounding the *Aleinu* and *Malshinim* prayers, first officially articulated in 1703, made religious services in a single, state-sanctioned synagogue more desirable than disparate private meetings. Initially, Frederick William I

² See, for example, Jorg H. Fehrs, "Zwischen Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus: Die Preussische Judengesetzgebung im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," in *Antijudaismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit: Aspekte der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland und Mecklenburg*, ed. Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur in Mecklenburg und Vorpommern (Schwerin: Turo Print GmbH, 1998), p. 40. See also Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 35.

called upon various synagogue inspectors to scrutinize prayer in “corner schools” in Königsberg. He eventually realized, however, that observing the actions of a disparate network of meetings was too daunting a task for one person.

Even though private synagogues were first formed by privileged Jews in accordance with the wishes of the state, the Prussian state eventually them surreptitious and dangerous. Inconspicuous worship, first ordered by the Prussian state, was used by that same state as evidence of covert Jewish behavior. The crown’s increasing desire to subdue private synagogues over the course of the eighteenth century points to its growing self-confidence and consolidation of power. The Hohenzollerns were initially concerned about appeasing local municipal governments, but they eventually gained enough of a power foothold to assert their own agenda of making religious devotion public and open. Moreover, the Prussian state’s desire to shift Jewish worship away from individual gatherings to unified, collective worship in one synagogue paralleled the gradual administrative shift in eighteenth century Prussia from seeing Jews as individuals to defining them more as a corporate body.

For those familiar with the history of the Jews in nineteenth century, the Prussian crown’s shift away from viewing the Jews as individual subjects in favor of viewing them as a collective seems counterintuitive, since the modern state embraced individuals over cooperatives. The eventual European model of individual citizenship and the corresponding end of corporatism was still decades in the future. Prior to this, the Prussian crown saw how advantageous communal responsibility and taxation could be. It enabled them to gather additional revenue, as they forced the local Jewish community to pay any Jews’ delinquent taxes. Individuals within the Jewish community had

responsibilities to the whole. Aside from contributing to their tax burden, this included taking an active role in corporate Jewish leadership and religious worship.

The Prussian government's altered perspective on the Jewish community as a collective made it more practical to have the Jews worship and congregate in one central synagogue. But it would be remiss to just consider practical reasons for public policy. Ideological and theological concerns were also part of the motivation behind the Prussian state officially banning private worship in the Charter of 1750. Ultimately, the shifts in policy towards Jewish worship in the eighteenth century were piecemeal steps towards the eventual formal recognition of the Jewish community in Prussia. The permission to build prominent synagogues in Prussian cities came about after many decades of state resistance. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the construction of actual synagogues made the local Jewish community permanent and visible to non-Jews in a way that they had not been previously.

State Policy in 1671

Frederick William was initially unconcerned with private Jewish worship, or at least accepted it as the best option for the time being. He considered the newly arrived Jews to be a valuable economic asset; yet he knew the likely resistance their settlement would elicit, particularly from the burghers. While he looked forward to the future business and profit that the wealthy Jews expelled from Vienna by Emperor Leopold I would bring to his kingdom, the various municipal authorities feared the impact that the presence of Jews in their cities would have on their economic endeavors and on trades controlled by guilds. Indeed, Frederick William intended just such a challenge to the

traditional order and saw Jews as effective tools against the longstanding supremacy of the estate system and local privilege.³ But he also understood the need for political compromise. The king's decision to limit Jewish worship to private quarters was partially a concession intended to appease the provincial estates.⁴ Already aware of the economic competition that the Jews would pose, the king did not want to add insult to injury by allowing the Viennese Jews to worship openly.

Frederick William was correct in assuming that local governing authorities would be unhappy with Jewish re-entry in 1671. It did not even take a year for the king to begin to receive petitions from various quarters calling for the renewed expulsion of the Jews. In late 1672, the provincial estates (*Landstände*) jointly wrote to the king of how the newly arrived Jews would lead to the destruction of local trade.⁵ They called on the king to remember the many reasons why the Jews had been expelled from Brandenburg by Elector Joachim II one hundred years earlier in 1573.⁶

Accepting fifty Jewish families into the kingdom, however wealthy those Jews may have been, was a controversial decision not only from an economic standpoint but

³ Wilhelm Treue, *Wirtschafts- und Technik-Geschichte Preussens*, vol. 56, *Historische Kommission zu Berlin* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), p. 21. For background on the relationship between the Hohenzollerns and the East Prussian estates, see Horst Wischhöfer, *Die Ostpreussischen Stände im Letzten Jahrzehnt vor dem Regierungsantritt des Grossen Kurfürsten* (Göttingen: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1958), pp. 185-209. Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia to 1786* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1937), pp. 66-73.

⁴ Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 13.

⁵ "Eingabe der Landstände an den Grossen Kurfürsten, November or December 1672," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), pp. 28-30. See also Lionel Kochan, *Jews, Idols and Messiahs: The Challenge from History* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd., 1990), p. 43.

⁶ Elector Joachim I expelled the Jews of Berlin in 1510 after he executed over thirty Jews accused of the ritual murder of a Christian boy. Thirty years later Joachim allowed the return of some Jews at the urging of Josel of Rosheim. Then in 1573 they were expelled again two years after the Court Jew Yom Tov ben Yehuda Ha-Cohen (Lippold) was accused of having something to do with the Elector's death. Lippold was executed and the entire Berlin Jewish community expelled. Herbert Seeliger, "Origin and Growth of the Berlin Jewish Community," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* III (1958): pp. 159-60.

also from a religious one. While the sovereign privileged economic potential over religious affiliation, the large majority of his Protestant subjects surely did not. How would they react to a public display of Jewish ritual, so unknown and therefore suspect to most? The Prussian king had already witnessed a disturbing example of a potential response in the city of Halberstadt in 1669.

The city of Halberstadt in Saxony had long been a significant place of Jewish settlement and commerce. The Saxon king had given the Jews permission to build their first synagogue in the early seventeenth century, decades before Prussia gained the city in the Peace of Westphalia (1648). Throughout the late seventeenth century and most of the eighteenth century, the city on the Holtemme River had the largest Jewish population in all of Prussia, numbering almost one thousand in 1728, more than three times the size of the Jewish community in Königsberg.⁷ As elsewhere in the German lands, the success of the Jews of Halberstadt stemmed more from royal concessions than it did from local citizen support of their settlement. In the summer of 1656, city authorities protested to Berlin the building of “accursed synagogues” where Jews were able to convene and “blaspheme daily our Messiah, Jesus Christ.”⁸ Popular dislike for Jewish worship was so strong in Halberstadt that a mob of musketeers and manual laborers took matters into their own hands and razed the synagogue in Halberstadt in March of 1669.⁹

⁷ Mordechai Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press 1996), p. 129. H.B. Auerbach, "Die Geschichte der Alten Chewroth (Wohltätigen Vereine) Innerhalb der jüdischen Gemeinde in Halberstadt," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden* 6, no. 1 (1969): pp. 19-20.

⁸ "Reskript an die Halberstädtische Regierung, July 10, 1656," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr 1962), p. 95. Also quoted in Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, vol. IV (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), p. 179.

⁹ Stern, p. 20.

The incident in Halberstadt was an early indicator to Frederick William of the potential for public violence. To avoid any future confrontations, home gatherings were the only form of religious worship that Frederick William allowed the fifty Jewish families he invited from Vienna. This ban on public synagogue worship was so important to Frederick William that he even integrated the prohibition into the title of the ruling: "An Edict Regarding the Admission of Fifty Families of Protected Jews, Who, However, Cannot Have a Synagogue."¹⁰ The edict declared that these newly granted Protected Jews (*Schutz-Juden*) were not allowed to have a synagogue but were free "to come together in their houses in order to conduct their prayers and ceremonies."¹¹ The Jews had to receive written permission from the crown to worship privately. Later on, under Frederick I, Jews also had to pay a fee for the privilege.¹² Such a fee was standard procedure for religious minorities. Around the same time, the Mennonites in Königsberg paid 200 Thaler for the privilege of holding their own services in private houses.¹³

The insistence on home worship sent the message to the Prussian Jewish community that they should remain small and quiet. Jews might be free to assemble privately, but within the home they still had to be mindful of the volume of their worship, both numerically and in terms of decibel level. The confines of a private residence

¹⁰ "Edikt wegen Aufgenommenen 50 Familien Schutz-Juden, Jedoch Dass Sie keine Synagogen Halten, May 21, 1671," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1962), pp. 13-16. See also Mylius, *Corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (CCM), Th. V, Abt. V, Cap. III, No. II, pp. 121-26.

¹¹ Ibid. Translated in Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), pp. 75-79. For a general discussion of the 1671 Edict see Moritz Stern, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Berlin*, vol. 2 (Berlin: Verlag Hausfreund, 1930), pp. 131-49.

¹² Eugen Wolbe, *Geschichte der Juden in Berlin und in der Mark Brandenburg* (Berlin: Verlag Kedem, 1937). Berlin Jews Abraham Riess and Benedikt Veit had to pay 100 Thaler yearly for the right to have a private synagogue.

¹³ Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Minderheiten in der Preussischen Gesellschaft," in *Moderne Preussische Geschichte, 1648-1947*, ed. O. Büsch and W. Neugebauer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1981), p. 500.

limited the size of a congregation. Moreover, Frederick William dictated that home services could not take place in the front window of a house where Christians could observe or hear the proceedings, but rather in a back room far away from Christian ears.¹⁴

Frederick William's ban on public worship corresponded to policies elsewhere in Central Europe in the late seventeenth century where other rulers also had the desire to keep Jewish worship hidden. In Hesse-Darmstadt, the parameters of Jewish worship were even stricter than those specified by Frederick William in the Edict of 1671. On August 21, 1695, Count Ernst Ludwig declared that those Jews under his protection were only allowed to have religious services in private houses, nowhere near the vicinity of churches, schools and courthouses. He instructed them to pray quietly "behind closed doors [...] without loud clamor or shouting." In addition, Ernst Ludwig forbade them from blowing the Shofar outdoors or conducting other rituals indoors within view of a window. The Count even limited the number of guests who could attend a Jewish wedding to fifteen.¹⁵

Habsburg policy on Jewish worship in Vienna was similar to that of Prussia, but the prohibition of public worship lasted much longer. In the seventeenth century, the Jews of Vienna had two synagogues, but after their expulsion in 1670 and piecemeal re-entry into the capital, the parameters of worship remained strict. The "Jews' Decree" of 1754 went so far as to forbid any form of communal worship, whether public or private. After this, Jews did not receive the right to worship anywhere other than in private homes

¹⁴ Breuer, p. 138. See also Reinhold A. Dorwart, *The Prussian Welfare State before 1740* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 123.

¹⁵ "Verwilligungsbrief Landgraf Ernst Ludwigs über die Zulassung von jüdischen Gebetsräumen, August 21, 1695," in *Judenverordnungen in Hessen-Darmstadt*, ed. Friedrich Battenberg (Wiesbaden: Kommission für die Geschichte der Juden in Hessen, 1987), pp. 92-93.

in Vienna until 1811.¹⁶ Such a blanket prohibition might have been to avoid the creation of a formal Jewish community in Vienna, which would have given the Jews there more rights and privileges.

In Silesia's capital city of Breslau, under Austrian rule until 1742, the emperor strictly forbade Jews from worshiping anywhere other than in private. In the late seventeenth century, a conflict erupted between Breslau's Jewish community and the city's Municipal Court. Local Christian merchants claimed that the Jews of Breslau had directly disobeyed the ban on synagogue worship and were unfairly allowed "to go about their blasphemous, supposedly religious, worship undisturbed."¹⁷ Threatened with the economic repercussions of enforcing a ban on synagogue worship, the municipal authorities in Breslau created a distinction between worship in individual homes and in a formal synagogue. One aspect of this difference was space; a gathering in a private home had to remain small, perhaps under fifty people. A public synagogue implied a larger, more public gathering.¹⁸

While the Prussian Edict of 1671 recognized the new Jews as a collective, it gave them no infrastructure to sustain themselves as a cohesive group.¹⁹ Disparate gatherings throughout Berlin, Königsberg, and other Prussian cities made it difficult for local Jews to organize a community or to have one, elective body of leadership. As we will see below, this led to many internal problems within the small Jewish community of Prussia.

¹⁶ Heinz Moshe Graupe, *The Rise of Modern Judaism: An Intellectual History of German Jewry, 1650-1942*, trans. John Robinson (Huntington: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), p. 88.

¹⁷ Quoted in Bernhard Brillung, "The Struggle of the *Vaad Arba Arazot* for the Jewish Right of Religious Worship in Breslau in the 17th Century," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science* XI (1957): p. 167.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*: pp. 167-71.

¹⁹ Kochan, p. 46.

In addition, a loosely connected group of Jewish families later became a problem for a state eager to institute collective Jewish taxation and fines.

Up until his death in 1688, the Great Elector maintained the ban on public worship in Prussia. His son Frederick I, however, chose to end the prohibition. During his reign (1688-1713), services in Jewish homes, now labeled *Winkelsynagogen*, came under harsh governmental scrutiny. What was once a preferred form of worship became suspect in the eyes of the state. Growing in confidence and control, the Prussian state desired better control over its subjects, and one way to gain this was to more closely monitor religious life and expression.

Private Worship Reinterpreted

Before the 1710s, Prussian officials did not tend to refer to private synagogues as *Winkelsynagogen*, i.e. “back alley” synagogues. The term would have perhaps been spatially appropriate, since the sovereign insisted that his Jewish subjects worship away from the street.²⁰ But the expression did not come into use until the reign of Frederick I (1688-1713). It was only after Frederick I ceased to support the practice that documents regularly used the term *Winkelsynagogen* to designate worship in individual homes. By branding private worship “back alley”, it eventually took on the connotation of being hidden or surreptitious.

In German, *Winkel* is primarily a geometric term denoting an angle or a corner; it can, however, also refer to an alleyway or a narrow location. Because of this, the term *Winkel* began in the Early Modern period to be associated with a myriad of undesirable people or things. In the sixteenth century, Martin Luther used the term *Winkelprediger* to

²⁰ Another translation of *Winkelsynagogen* could be “off-the-street synagogue.” See Breuer, p. 158.

mean “false preachers”. In state terminology, *Winkel* more often than not referred to aspects of social and economic life unsanctioned by the state. A *Winkeldruckerei* was an unlicensed printer, a *Winkelmesse* an unregistered trade fair, a *Winkelloge* an unofficial Masonic lodge, etc. During this time, *Winkel* was also the converse of “public” (*öffentlich*). This explains why the term *Winkelsynagogen* was used interchangeably with private synagogues (*Privatsynagogen*).²¹ But the term implied more than just “private”. The Prussian state wanted to ban synagogues in Jewish homes by the early eighteenth century, because it viewed them as clandestine and, therefore, potentially dangerous.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, *Winkel* also became a term attached to Jewish religious education. Prussian cabinet ministers referred to the traditional Jewish *hadarim* (s. *heder*) as *Winkelschulen*.²² As with private synagogues, the use of *Winkel* to denote Jewish schools communicated the degree of state disapproval for educational instruction not under its direct control. A Jewish commission report from September 14, 1714, referred to the existence in Berlin of several Jewish *Winkelschulen*. These religious institutions were undesirable to the Prussian state for many of the same reasons private synagogues were. Aside from the ongoing need to survey Jewish worship and education in order to prevent potential sacrilege, the more practical concern expressed in the Jewish commission report was the unwanted increase in the Jewish population of

²¹ Jacob Grimm and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch von Jacob Grimm und Wilhelm Grimm*, vol. XIV (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1960), pp. 342-82. Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939*, trans. L. Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970), p. 23.

²² Steven Lowenstein, *The Mechanics of Change: Essays in the Social History of German Jewry* (Atlanta: Scholar's Press, 1992), p. 12. See also Steven Lowenstein, "Governmental Jewish Policies in Early Nineteenth Century Germany and Russia: A Comparison," *Jewish Social Studies* XLVI, no. 3-4 (1984): p. 307. In the late 19th century, German Enlighteners (*maskilim*) adopted Prussian state terminology and also referred to *hederim* as *Winkelschulen*. They shared the state's dislike for traditional Jewish education, although for very different reasons. See Julius H. Schoeps, "*Du Doppelgänger, Du Bleicher Geselle...*": *Deutsch-jüdische Erfahrungen im Spiegel Dreier Jahrhunderte, 1700-2000* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 2004), p. 182. Mordechai Eliav, *Jüdische Erziehung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Emanzipation*, trans. M. Strobel (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), p. 183.

Prussia.²³ In this instance, *Winkel* implied a lack of state supervision of communal growth.

The term “corner school” had been in usage in German for centuries and referred to any school not sanctioned by the state. Governmental officials did not mince words about their view of the impact of *Winkelschulen* on the youth of Prussia. In 1768, a report to Frederick II wrote that “without method, without discipline, and without supervision [*Winkelschulen* are] undeniably a source of depravity in our children.”²⁴ Another report dated September 17, 1801 from a schoolmaster in Gardelegen (Altmark) wrote that corner schools promoted “disorganization, rebellion, and destruction.”²⁵ The reasons for creating such schools were numerous, perhaps the most common being to educate those who normally would not qualify to attend established schools. This oftentimes included girls, poorer boys, and religious minorities. The number of bans the Prussian state instituted on corner schools throughout the eighteenth century reveal how numerous and widespread they were.²⁶ In seventeenth century Brunswick, almost forty *Winkelschulen* provided instruction both to girls and poorer boys who could not afford the elite Latin schools in the city.²⁷ In Moers (Fürstentum) in the 1790s, children who worked in the silk factories during the day attended a *Winkelschule* at night for two

²³ "Bericht der Judenkommission, September 14, 1713," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr (Paul Siebeck), 1962), pp. 3-4.

²⁴ Quoted in Karl A. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society: The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria, 1750-1900* (New York: Berg, 1989), pp. 12-13.

²⁵ Printed in Wolfgang Neugebauer, ed., *Schule und Absolutismus in Preussen: Akten zur Preussischen Elementarschulwesen bis 1806* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), p. 599.

²⁶ James Van Horn Melton, *Absolutism and the Eighteenth-Century Origins of Compulsory Schooling in Prussia and Austria* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 11.

²⁷ Christopher R. Friedrichs, "Whose House of Learning? Some Thoughts on German Schools in Post-Reformation Germany," *History of Education Quarterly* 22, no. 3 (1982): pp. 372-73.

hours.²⁸ In Königsberg, the Friedrichs-Collegium, the city's most revered school, was initially a *Winkelschule* until Frederick I declared it a "royal school" in 1701. At the time of the Collegium's official founding, around two hundred *Winkelschulen* existed in Königsberg alone.²⁹

Prussian governmental documents regarding the Jews tended to use the term *Winkelschulen* to refer both to private synagogues and to *hadarim*. One explanation for this dual meaning is linguistic, the other historical. In Yiddish, *shul* means both synagogue and school. This most likely led administrators to collapse the meaning of the two. Moreover, historically Jewish schools and synagogues were connected to each other.

The increased use of the term *Winkel* to refer to Jewish schools and synagogues explains how the Prussian state managed to vilify private synagogues. But *why* did the Prussian state decide to openly discredit a practice that it had originally encouraged? One major reason was because of how home worship was beginning to splinter the Jewish community. As the number of private synagogues in Prussia grew in the late seventeenth century, so too did the degree of competition between Jews in certain cities for power and influence over the community. The growing sense of individual ownership of Jewish communal life led to many volatile clashes.

The most well-known example of infighting in eighteenth century Prussia between rival Jews over the issue of private worship was in Berlin between Jost and

²⁸ "Aus deinem Bericht der Regierung Moers, October 6, 1791," in *Schule und Absolutismus in Preussen*, ed. Wolfgang Neugebauer (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1992), p. 462.

²⁹ Martin Lackner, "Das Collegium Fridericianum, eine Pietistische Schulgründung in Königsberg," in *Die Landesgeschichtliche Bedeutung der Königsberger Königskronung von 1701*, ed. Bernhart Jähmig (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2004), pp. 106-07. Dorwart, p. 191. I do not have enough information about the number of *Winkelschulen* in other Prussian cities to know if this was a normal amount of unsanctioned schools or unusually high.

Esther Liebmann and their economic rival, Marcus Magnus. Liebmann was a Court Jew from Göttingen who made his fortune selling jewels to Frederick William. He settled in Berlin in 1676, where his position with the king enabled him in many respects to dictate which Jews received permission to settle in the city.³⁰ In the 1680s, Liebmann received permission to start his own private synagogue. When Marcus Magnus (d. 1736), a Court Jew to the Crown Prince and future king of Prussia, Frederick William I, arrived in Berlin in the late 1690s, he first attended Liebmann's private synagogue in the city. Shortly thereafter, however, open hostility between Liebmann and Magnus motivated Magnus to seek permission to start his own private worship service.³¹

Competition for religious control of the Berlin Jewish community only increased when a ruling from January 5, 1694, declared that only two private synagogues were to be allowed in the city.³² Even after Liebmann's death in 1701, his widow Esther continued to have a tight grip on the Berlin Jewish community. In an attempt to curb the power of Esther, Magnus and other Berlin Jewish leaders spearheaded an effort to have an official synagogue built in Berlin. Initially Magnus' request was supported by the Prussian government, but Esther used her political and financial clout with Frederick I to

³⁰ Jost Liebmann's power was so great that he managed to have Moses Benjamin Wulff, Court Jew to Emperor Leopold and his family kicked out of Berlin for a time in the 1680s. See Deborah Hertz, "The Despised Queen of Berlin Jewry, or the Life and Times of Esther Liebmann," in *From Court Jews to the Rothschilds: Art, Patronage, and Power, 1600-1800*, ed. V. Mann and R. Cohen (New York: Prestel, 1996), p. 73.

³¹ One Sabbath Jost Liebmann went so far as to use the Torah reading as a way to insult Magnus. He read the passage from Exodus 17 about Amalek, the sworn Biblical enemy of the Israelites, in such a way as to imply that Magnus was a type of Amalek. While those Jews in attendance found it amusing, Magnus certainly did not. He sued Liebmann shortly thereafter. Wolbe, pp. 122-23.

³² Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 185.

get the king to reconsider the request. Her influence with Frederick I was so great that it was rumored that she was allowed entry into his quarters whenever she wished.³³

Even though the foundation had already been laid, Esther's royal clout halted the building of the new synagogue until the death of Frederick I in 1713 and Frederick William I's subsequent demotion of Esther Liebmann.³⁴ As a supplier of luxury goods to the crown, Esther was unable to make the same financial inroads with King Frederick William I, who was known for his frugality. The new king eventually charged Esther with defrauding the court and money laundering. She died within a year of the king's death. This tragic and all too common story brings into focus the degree to which the fortunes of European Jews both individually and collectively were tied to the whims of a sovereign.

Internal Jewish disputes such as the protracted one between the Liebmanns and Magnus were an annoyance to local and state authorities who often had to intercede in the clashes. A decree from January 24, 1700, described the proliferation of synagogues in Brandenburg as leading to "all sorts of confusion and fraud (*Unterschleife*)."³⁵ But such disagreements were more than just a nagging aggravation to state authorities; they were also counter to the modern absolutist state's larger goal of proper decorum and societal

³³ Selma Stern, *The Court Jew*, trans. Ralph Wieman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), pp. 53-55. Deborah Hertz describes Esther Liebmann as the "femme fatale of the Court Jews' world." Hertz, p. 77.

³⁴ Stern, *The Court Jew*, pp. 184-85.

³⁵ "Verordnung wegen derer Juden in Residenzien, January 24, 1700," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 214.

order. A quarrelling Jewish community was an embarrassment and a danger to the state's ultimate goal of worship, namely to provide a well-organized and submissive polity.³⁶

The Prussian state also kept a close eye on churches and their leadership. During the reign of Frederick II, preachers in East Prussia were subject to the regular inspection of appointed superintendents, who monitored the content of their sermons to be sure they were theologically in line with state expectations.³⁷ The Lutheran church in East Prussia was divided into over a dozen parishes, each of which had their own inspector. The ultimate authority was the Archpriest (*Erzpriester*), who yearly inspected a parish's congregational life and their parochial schools.³⁸

More reasons than just Jewish infighting led the state to prefer the Jews to congregate in one location. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, the Prussian crown demonstrated an rising interest in documenting the daily lives of its subjects. The growing and increasingly organized system of the Prussian bureaucratic state made it possible for the affairs of its citizens, and especially religious minorities, to be more closely watched. The creation of a formal Jewish commission (*Judenkommission*) in 1708 to supervise Jewish economic and political affairs reflected the Prussian state's desire to keep better tabs on its growing Jewish population.³⁹

³⁶ Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 59-61.

³⁷ Hartwig Notbohm, *Das Evangelische Kirchen- und Schulwesen in Ostpreussen während der Regierung Friedrich des Grossen*, vol. 5, *Studien zur Geschichte Preussens* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1959), p. 25.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 115-16.

³⁹ Ismar Elbogen, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), p. 143. See also Breuer, pp. 145-46.

On April 28, 1708, the crown created a Jewish commission responsible for the three cities of Königsberg.⁴⁰ It was comprised of, among others, the Fiscal Advocate (*Advocatus fisci*) Karl Friedrich Lau and the mayors of the three cities, Altstadt, Löbenicht, and Kneiphof.⁴¹ The Prussian government gave the local commission a list of seventy one questions that they should seek to answer regarding the status of Jewish residence and trade in Königsberg. Most of the questions related to the size of every Jewish family and whether or not the head of each household had the proper papers.⁴²

The Jewish Commission was an early example of how the Prussian state attempted to simplify relations between itself and various bodies.⁴³ By the middle of the eighteenth century, some sort of governmental commission oversaw practically every significant group or organization. In 1742, Frederick II created a University Commission; in 1750, a Lutheran Superior Consistory.⁴⁴ The Jewish Commission usually worked with an appointed (and often self-appointed) leader or leaders of a local Jewish community. But the state also had to be realistic about the degree of surveillance

⁴⁰ An earlier commission had been created in East Prussia in 1697, primarily to mitigate a dispute in Memel with Dutch Jew Moses Jacobson de Jonge. For more on de Jonge, see Stern, *The Court Jew*, pp. 140-42. F.L. Carsten, "The Court Jews: A Prelude to Emancipation," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* III (1958): p. 145-46. Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und Judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 1.

⁴¹ Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Zweiter Teil/ Die Zeit Friedrich Wilhelms I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 93.

⁴² Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, pp. 474-81. The commission dealt with disputes and cases that were less than 100 Thaler. Above that amount, cases were sent to a higher court. Reinhold A. Dorwart, *The Administrative Reforms of Frederick William I of Prussia* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953), p. 61.

⁴³ Deborah Hertz writes that the Jewish commission was intended to "streamline the chaotic regulations governing the Jewish community." Hertz, p. 74.

⁴⁴ For more information about other forms of religious and educational surveillance in eighteenth century Prussia, see Hubert C. Johnson, *Frederick the Great and His Officials* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1975), pp. 124-30.

it could maintain. It was relatively easy for the crown's officials to keep track of the number of private synagogues in Prussia when the whole kingdom only had fifty Jewish families, but as the Jewish population grew, so too did the number of private worship houses. A centralized place of worship was necessary in order to achieve the desired amount of supervision.⁴⁵

In addition, the state's movement away from private worship to a centralized place of Jewish worship reflected a broader shift throughout the course of the eighteenth century away from viewing Jews individually to a collective definition. One concrete application of this was the collective tax system instituted in 1728 under Frederick William I. In April of that year, the king decided that Jewish taxes should not be paid individually but rather communally. This controversial move made the whole Jewish community collectively responsible for each other. The sum was set at 15,000 Thaler yearly, and each Jewish community in Prussia was assigned a percentage that they had to pay each year.⁴⁶

In light of the political trajectory of the modern state, such a decision to view Jews again as a collective was unexpected. In some respects, this decision to make taxation collective was a move backwards into pre-modern Jewish life. Yet, the crown's decision to re-appropriate older forms of Jewish communal organization can also be viewed as strategic and forward-thinking. In addition to simplifying the process of tax collection, it was way to force the Jewish community to internally regulate Jewish

⁴⁵ Kochan, p. 47.

⁴⁶ Albert A. Breuer, *Geschichte der Juden in Preussen (1750-1820)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1991), p. 47. Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), p. 23.

settlement into Prussia.⁴⁷ Wealthy Jews were more likely to discourage the settlement of poorer Jews, since they would be unable to contribute much to the communal tax burden.

Winkelsynagogen in Königsberg

Governmental documents from Königsberg and elsewhere suggest that the origins of the Prussian state's decision to vilify private worship and frame it as clandestine rather than just private was in part due to the crown's increasing distrust of Jewish prayer. As we saw in the previous Chapter, the Prussian state's suspicion, publicly declared in the *Aleinu* edict of 1703, declared one passage of the *Aleinu* prayer blasphemous and forbade all Prussian Jews from reciting it. The *Aleinu* ruling of 1716 underscored the solidarity of Frederick William I with his father Frederick I. The newly crowned king stressed the ongoing concern of the Prussian state that a Jew in the kingdom would utter "neither in synagogue nor in his house" the forbidden words of the prayer.⁴⁸ In multiple places in the edict, Frederick William mentioned the various locales both public and private where Jews conducted daily prayer. While he called on "a certain overseer" to regularly visit and observe the prayers of the Jews in their synagogues, the king realized the challenge of regulating prayer in private homes.

In the *Aleinu* edicts of 1703 and 1716, both Prussian kings asserted their royal authority with as much firmness as they could in a situation over which they had very little control. Private moments of prayer and devotion, especially when conducted in

⁴⁷ Ismar Freund, "Staat, Kirche und Judentum in Preussen," *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* (1911): p. 115.

⁴⁸ "Gedrucktes Exemplar des Ediktes des jüdischen Gebeth Alenu Leschabbeach, betreffend De 1703 D.28 Aug. Renovirt den 15. Januar 1716.," in *Geheimes Staatsarchiv II (Berlin-Dahlem) General-Direktorium Abteilung 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4443* (Berlin: 1716).

individual homes, were difficult to regulate. Frederick I and his son believed that in all probability the state would eventually uncover religious blasphemy or Jewish deception. The edict warned that, “if one or more Jew at home or elsewhere is tempted to go against our grave law and utter the suspicious words in prayer [...], as soon as [the deception] is discovered, so will they without delay be fully punished.”⁴⁹ The amount of time, however, that it would take for the king or his government to expose Jewish disobedience of the *Aleinu* edict in private worship was unknown. Even in Königsberg, where the Christian leaders submitted most fervently to Frederick I’s call to closely watch their local Jews, it was impossible to keep track of a whole community’s recitation of daily prayers.

Recognizing the state’s inability to monitor the *Aleinu* prayer behind closed doors, the king called on the Jews in his realm worshipping in private synagogues to practice self-censorship. One aspect of this was the call to recite the prayer “loudly and clearly”, and therefore in a matter contrary to traditional practice. Knowing that not all deception would be uncovered, Frederick I contented himself that any Jew who recited the blasphemous words and was never caught or who uttered them silently in his heart would eventually be held accountable by “Christ Jesus, our Father and Redeemer who would rescue his own honor at the proper time.”⁵⁰

Already by 1716, the original conditions of Jewish re-admission to Brandenburg under Frederick William, which allowed the invited Jews to conduct worship in private homes, had become an inherited burden. Now that the Prussian state had changed its mind about private Jewish worship, it was left with the challenge of shutting down the

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Ibid.

disparate network of private synagogues that had developed in the thirty plus years since they encouraged the practice.

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the debate over the issue unfolded differently in Königsberg than it did in Berlin. Both Prussian cities had fights erupt over the matter of private worship and the desire to gain the upper hand in the local community. In Berlin, the Liebmanns wished to maintain the practice of private worship in order to consolidate their power. Having a *Betstube* in their home gave the Liebmanns a central role in the community that was both financial and social. Hosting one's own services was a way to keep financial partners close.

In Königsberg, the most prominent members of the community banded together to stop certain Polish Jews from having their own worship in the suburbs of the city. It became a conflict between old and new Jewish settlers and between German and Polish Jewish interests. The first documented conflict over private worship in Königsberg began in 1716, shortly after the release of the revised *Aleinu* edict in January of that year. In that year, it first came to the king's attention that Samuel Slumke was purportedly conducting worship in his home in the Kneiphof.

As we saw in Chapter One, Slumke was a profitable trader and manufacturer of clothing ornamentations. A letter from Charlottenburg, dated April 21, 1706 and signed by Eberhard Danckelmann (1643-1722), Frederick I's close associate, granted Slumke the exclusive right to open a braid manufactory (*Litzenfabrik*) in Königsberg. The king gave Slumke permission to affix a sign above his manufactory, indicating it as the sole shop allowed in the city. This privilege, valid for five years at the yearly cost of twelve Thaler, gave Slumke a monopoly over the braid and lace making industry in Königsberg.

Slumke's exclusive privilege caused an immediate response from the button making guild (*Knopfmacherzunft*) in Königsberg and from the local border seamsters (*Posamentierer*), both of which claimed that Slumke's concession interfered with their commercial pursuits.⁵¹

Not only did Slumke's exclusive privilege anger Christian merchants, it also led to clashes with his coreligionists. In 1711, another Jewish braid maker from Poland named Nissen Marcowicz, later described in a Prussian governmental report as a "braid maker of little means," moved to Königsberg with his wife, four children, and three servants.⁵² In December 1711, Marcowicz wrote to Frederick I, urging him not to renew the 1706 concession which gave Slumke the sole right to open a braid manufactory in Königsberg. He maintained to the king that Königsberg was too large a city to only have one braid maker. Moreover, a monopoly was liable to lead to corruption; without competition, Slumke could set whatever prices he wished.⁵³ Marcowicz's letter had the desired effect; on March 1, 1712, Frederick I granted Marcowicz a concession to also be a braid maker in Königsberg.⁵⁴

In 1716, three years after Frederick I's death, Marcowicz revisited his complaint against Slumke with the new king, Frederick William I. This time, however, his grievance appeared to be with Slumke's private synagogue in the Kneiphof quarter of Königsberg. In a letter to the king from July 1716, Marcowicz insisted that Slumke's

⁵¹ Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten*, pp. 460-62.

⁵² Krüger, p. 122.

⁵³ Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin-Dahlem (GStA), Preussischer Kulturbesitz (PK), Hauptabteilung (HA) XX, Etats-Ministerium (EM) D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 100, pp. 1-3.

⁵⁴ Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Erste Abteilung: Darstellung*, p. 132.

primary motivation for conducting worship in his home was to gain a stronger foothold in the braid and lace making industry. Jewish merchants trading on behalf of the Polish nobility traveled regularly to the city and needed a place to pray and worship on the Sabbath. According to Marcowicz, Slumke used this religious requirement to his commercial advantage. Marcowicz's suggestion that Slumke was conducting business on the Sabbath would have gotten Frederick William I's attention. Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, the Prussian state became increasingly interested in compartmentalizing and micromanaging the lives of its subjects. As early as 1720s, the crown had already split leadership in the local community in Königsberg into two positions. On April 7, 1722, Berlin ordered that the provincial government in East Prussia recognize two separate religious and political leaders. Frederick William I decided to put himself in charge of appointing both the local rabbi and the chief elders of the community.⁵⁵

Not only did the crown wish to keep religious worship pure and free from worldly pursuits, but such entanglement made it more difficult to supervise and regulate activity.⁵⁶ The enmeshment of Jewish religious life and their commercial transactions would have been something that the king would have desired to change. Furthermore, Marcowicz maintained that Slumke's private synagogue was not only an obstacle to his own economic well-being but also a financial detriment to the whole community.⁵⁷ When Polish Jews did not attend services in the established synagogue, the whole Königsberg Jewish community was denied their financial support. Despite Marcowicz's

⁵⁵ Stern, *The Court Jew*, p. 219. Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," p. 253.

⁵⁶ Raeff, pp. 60-61.

⁵⁷ GSStA PK HA-XX EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 100, pp. 1-3.

apparent concern for the wider interests of the whole Königsberg Jewish community, his real concern appears to have been his own financial losses. After bemoaning the harm Slumke was doing to the whole community by worshipping away from the established house of worship, Marcowicz made a telling request. If the king decided not to follow his suggestion of banning Slumke's synagogue and fining him, would he be willing to grant Marcowicz the same right to have a private synagogue?⁵⁸

The conflict between Marcowicz and Slumke over private synagogue worship was more a battle of competing Polish artisans than it was a true religious dispute. Both braid makers wished to gain the upper hand with fellow Polish Jews traveling to Königsberg on behalf of wealthy Polish landlords. Moreover, having one's own private synagogue was a sign of social status. Aside from the potential economic benefits home worship gave Slumke, it established him as an important figurehead within the community. In the same manner, Marcowicz wished to improve his own commercial and social reputation.

The Polish Jew Nissen Marcowicz was not the only individual in Königsberg who took issue with Slumke's home synagogue. In a letter dated December 17, 1717, Heinrich Lysius, the new synagogue inspector, wrote to Frederick William I regarding his growing concern about private Jewish worship in Königsberg. Although Slumke was certainly not the only Jew in Königsberg who had a *Winkelsynagoge*, Lysius singled him out to Frederick William I. While Marcowicz thought Slumke had a service at his house for economic gain, Lysius interpreted Slumke's home synagogue as a way for the Polish Jewish merchant to bypass his authority as synagogue inspector. Away from the weekly surveillance of the royally appointed inspector, Lysius wrote, Slumke could continue to

⁵⁸ Ibid.

utter the banned passage in the *Aleinu* prayer without fear of punishment. Lysius sought the king's guidance in how to handle the affair and underscored his disapproval of Slumke.⁵⁹ Only in his first year of service to the king as synagogue inspector, Heinrich Lysius most likely feared being blamed for the defiant worship of Samuel Slumke. Frederick William I had already dismissed one synagogue inspector in Königsberg in its fifteen year existence.⁶⁰ He did not want to be another casualty of the controversial office.

The king did not appear to hold the synagogue inspector accountable for the ongoing presence of *Winkelsynagogen* in Königsberg. Instead, Frederick William sought Lysius's assistance and called on him to attend a worship service at Slumke's residence in the Kneiphof. On October 17, 1718, Heinrich Lysius responded to the king's request with a report about Samuel Slumke. He apologized for the lapse of time between the king's initial request and the actual report. According to Lysius, Slumke resorted to all kinds of tactics to delay the inspection of his prayer service, even going so far as to travel to Moscow for a few months.⁶¹

Heinrich Lysius described Slumke's home as ordinary, not overly large for the area. The room in which worship took place had a cabinet for the Torah scroll. After recounting some of the physical details of the space, Lysius proceeded to request clarification from the king regarding the difference between public worship and private prayer. Slumke's royal privilege granted him the right to pray privately in his home

⁵⁹ GStA PK HA-XX EM D Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 100, p. 6.

⁶⁰ As discussed in Chapter Two, Friedrich Wilhelm Bock, a local Jewish convert to Christianity, was the first synagogue inspector appointed by Frederick William in 1704. He only served in the position for a year before he was dismissed.

⁶¹ GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d4 Nr. 100, p. 11.

“according to Jewish ceremony.” After observing prayer in his home, Lysius was unclear as to whether or not Slumke was actually violating the terms of his royal privilege. Was his prayers a type of communal worship bound by the requirement to have a quorum (*minyan*) of at least ten adult males, or was it just an informal gathering of Jews in private? Lysius deferred to the king as to interpret the actual nature of the gathering.⁶² In April 1719, the king did just that and declared the prayer occurring in Slumke’s home to be in violation of his privilege. Since the prayer included more than just his children and domestic servants, Frederick William I deemed it to be an actual synagogue in his private home.⁶³

Lysius’s son Johann Heinrich Lysius also addressed the issue of private synagogues in Königsberg in a letter to Frederick II from April 21, 1741. As the current synagogue inspector in Königsberg, Lysius petitioned Frederick II to take a stricter approach towards the suppression of Jewish private worship. Like his father, J.H. Lysius was concerned with the potential for outright Jewish defiance of the Aleinu Edicts of 1703 and 1716. The inspector stressed his inability to be in more than one place at one time on the Sabbath. He also underscored the number of foreign Jews who came to Königsberg during the fairs and took part in private worship. Particularly these foreign Jews of unknown character were risky to leave unattended, since they could, “under the pretext of a religious service” conduct private meetings with the potential for “disorder and destruction” (*Zerrüttung*).⁶⁴

⁶² GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 100, pp. 12-13. H. Krüger refers to this document. See Krüger, p. 35.

⁶³ Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypkes Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: Aus Archivalischen Akten* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1791), pp. 40-42.

⁶⁴ “Eingabe von Johann Heinrich Lysius, April 21, 1741,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), vol. 2.2, p. 976.

The wish to stop private synagogues in Königsberg was one goal that the Jewish communal elders and the Christian synagogue inspector in Königsberg had in common. Private worship not only undermined the efficacy and reach of the synagogue inspector, it also challenged the authority of the communal elders. J.H. Lysius further warned the king and his cabinet of the ongoing barrage of letters that the War and Domains office in charge of Jewish affairs would have to field from Jewish elders unhappy with the decrease in communal contributions.

The Jewish elders in Königsberg and the synagogue inspector were not the only ones concerned with the proliferation of *Winkelsynagogen* in the city. Local magistrates also addressed the problem in a governmental report to Frederick II from March 17, 1742.⁶⁵ They suggested that, in light of the ongoing number of “corner schools”, the Jews of Königsberg should be given permission to build a larger synagogue at their own expense. The heated conflict between Samuel Slumke and Nissen Markowicz in the 1710s, which led to lengthy and expensive judicial action, was not something that the local authorities wanted to happen again. The report reiterated how future conflicts between Jews should not be resolved by the municipal government but by Jewish courts at their own expense.⁶⁶

Despite the desire of the Königsberg War and Domains Boards’ for private worship to end altogether, the king continued to receive pleas from Jews in Königsberg for permission to conduct private worship. The king often received requests to conduct private worship from Jews in Prussia who were unable to attend synagogue regularly due to poor health. In December 1740, the Protected Jew Michael Marcus requested that he

⁶⁵ GStA PK HA-I Geheimer Rat Rep. 7 Nr. 106 i Fasz. 19, no pg. #s.

⁶⁶ Ibid.

be allowed to have a private house of prayer in his Königsberg home. His “bodily constitution” was not good enough for him to make the daily journey to public services.⁶⁷ Marcus’ status as a Protected Jew (*Schutzjude*) was significant, because it gave him the courage to approach the king with his special request.

Frederick II received another plea in September 1749 from Michael Moses Goldschmid, a Protected Jew from Königsberg. Goldschmid wrote that his longstanding poor health did not allow him to even sit in a chair, let alone make his way to the synagogue. Goldschmid requested that he be allowed to have a quorum of men at his residence for the upcoming Jewish New Year Celebration and the eight days surrounding the Day of Atonement.⁶⁸ Frederick II’s immediate reaction was to have a royal official write to Georg David Kypke, the synagogue inspector in Königsberg. He instructed Kypke to visit Goldschmid’s house on the Jewish New Year and verify that Goldschmid was not reciting any of the forbidden passages.⁶⁹

While poor health was one reason for the ongoing presence of “corner synagogues” in Königsberg, another significant factor was the large number of Eastern European Jews who traveled to the city for the yearly market and for other commercial fairs. These traveling merchants could not always be accommodated in the main synagogue. The sheer number of them at certain times of the year made that impossible. In 1728, two hundred and seventy Jews came to Königsberg during the week of the yearly market (*Jahrmarkt*).⁷⁰ This more than doubled the size of the community. The

⁶⁷ GStA PK HA-I Geheimer Rat Rep. 7 Nr. 106 i Fasz. 19

⁶⁸ GStA PK EM D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 186.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

majority of these merchant Jews were from Poland-Lithuania. The limited size of the synagogue and the desire on the part of Eastern European Jews to conduct worship separately were both contributing factors. The two largest and most contentions private synagogues in Königsberg in the 1740s were those of two Polish Jews in Königsberg: Jacob Urias, a mead seller (*Meth-Schenker*), and Jacob Szajowitz, a wine and wool merchant. Both had continued to conduct services in their home, despite multiple state calls to cease the practice.⁷¹

In April 1747, the Jewish community of Königsberg petitioned the king for permission to set up an additional synagogue. The reason provided was primarily financial. Because so many foreign Jews were assembling in private homes for worship, the communal elders claimed that the community was unable to gather enough donations in the collection plate (*Klingebeutel*) each week to provide for the poor and sick Jews in their midst. They asked the king to allow them to have a synagogue nearer to the city center, so that those Jews would not be kept from worship due to poor weather.⁷² It took three months for the king to respond. At the suggestion of the local chamber of the General Directory, the king rejected the request for a second synagogue in Königsberg. Johann Bernhard Hahn, the synagogue inspector at the time, also expressed his distaste for private synagogues and urged the king to grant the Jews permission to build a larger synagogue.⁷³

⁷⁰ Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), p. 98.

⁷¹ Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), pp. 87-89.

⁷² "Eingabe der Ältesten und der Gesamten Judenschaft von Königsberg, April 20, 1747," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), pp. 1002-03.

Communal elders Joachim Moses Friedländer and Michael Marcus again used the influx of increasing numbers of foreign merchants into Königsberg as a reason to petition the king in June 1752 for permission to build a larger synagogue in the island suburb of Kneiphof. According to them, merchant Jews from Lithuania, Poland, White Russia, Livonia, and elsewhere in Eastern Europe came regularly to Königsberg. Instead of attending the formal synagogue, many of them opted to worship in the private houses of their Jewish business partners. The elders of the community called on Frederick II to shut down these private worship services in the interest of the larger Jewish community.⁷⁴ Their pleas continued for the next few years. In 1754, two Jews by the names of Moses Levi and Samuel Salomon petitioned the king to allow the construction of a larger synagogue. They desired a structure that would hold three hundred and fifty male congregants. This was more than enough to accommodate the thirty eight Jewish households in Königsberg and a steady stream of visiting Jewish merchants. The only time of year that the proposed synagogue would not house all Jews in the city was during the annual fair. At that time, they would still need to conduct multiple services.⁷⁵

The number of foreign Jewish merchants arriving in the city weekly had steadily increased over the first half of the eighteenth century. In 1751, over one thousand Polish Jews came to conduct trade in Königsberg during the course of the year.⁷⁶ The elders of the Jewish community in Königsberg were so concerned with the worship choices of

⁷³ Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Dritter Teil/ Die Zeit Friedrichs des Grossen. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), pp. 1003-04, note 1.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 1032.

⁷⁵ "Eingabe von Moses Levi and Samuel Salomon, April 24, 1754," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen, J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), vol. 3.2, p. 1034.

⁷⁶ Gause, p. 98.

traveling merchants, because they were potential financial contributors to the community. In the same way that official synagogues had seats paid for by members, Jews with private synagogues financed them by renting out spaces to worshipers.⁷⁷ A foreign Jew who regularly came to Königsberg on business would donate money for the privilege of worshipping in a private home.

The Charter of 1750 also motivated the Jewish leadership in Königsberg to finally petition the king for permission to commence the building of a larger synagogue in Königsberg. Frederick II was so concerned with the proliferation of *Winkelsynagogen* in Prussia that he devoted a whole section in the Charter of 1750 to condemning them. He called for his Jewish subjects to cease the practice immediately.⁷⁸ In the Charter, the king reported that Prussian Jews were still conducting unauthorized meetings in their houses, “gatherings and private prayer-meetings, which brought together Jews both young and old.”⁷⁹ The Charter underscored that these meetings “[ran] counter to our previous decrees and the public welfare.” *Winkelsynagogen*, the king maintained, were not only detrimental to the state; it was “objectionable to the [Jewish] community also.”⁸⁰

⁷⁷ Carsten Wilke, “Jüdische Kultur vor der Aufklärung,” in *Jüdisches Leben und jüdische Kultur in Deutschland*, ed. H. Erler and E.L. Ehrlich (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 2000), p. 59.

⁷⁸ One revision that the Charter made was a further distinction between categories of “Protected Jews.” Now Jews were divided into “Regular Protected Jews” and “Special Protected Jews”. Despite the connotation in English of these terms, “Regular Protected Jews” had more privileges than “Special Protected Jews”, since their protection extended to one offspring. The protected status of “Special Protected Jews” was non-transferable. The Charter of 1750 is reprinted in its entirety in Ismar Freund, *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Gesetzes Vom 11. März 1812*, vol. 2 (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), pp. 22-60. For a partial English translation of the Charter, see Marcus, pp. 75-97.

⁷⁹ “Revidirtes General-Privilegium und Reglement, April 17, 1750,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), p. 51.

⁸⁰ Marcus, p. 95.

Of particular interest to the king was the ongoing existence of unauthorized private synagogues in Berlin where an official synagogue had already existed since 1714. The king permitted two private prayer meetings in Spandau Street and in Jews' Street; otherwise Jews had to meet at the official synagogue in Berlin. In the Charter, Frederick II allowed for certain concessions, such as private worship for some Jews in Berlin and elsewhere during the coldest months of the year. Under the guidance of one or two Jewish leaders, the king permitted "old and sickly Jews" and children under the age of twelve to hold private worship from September to Easter. In order for Christian neighbors to not be "inconvenienced by too much clamor", the Jews were instructed, as they were in 1671, to conduct their worship and prayer in rooms not adjacent to the street. In all kinds of weather, he required all able-bodied Jews to seek spiritual nourishment at the public synagogue. Throughout the spring and summer, all Jews, even children and the elderly, would have to make their way to the official synagogue. Anyone who broke this ruling was ordered to pay ten Thalers.⁸¹

The Charter of 1750 formally resolved the debate over public synagogues vs. private *Betstuben* and defined what constituted proper and improper worship. Present in the Charter is a growing attention on the part of the Prussia state to institutionalized surveillance. At the end of the 1750 Charter it says that the War and Domains Office of each province "shall watch Jews very carefully."⁸² As we saw in the last chapter, this watchfulness had been a factor in Königsberg since 1704 when the first synagogue inspector began attending Jewish services.

⁸¹ "Revidirtes General-Privilegium und Reglement, April 17, 1750," p. 52.

⁸² Marcus, pp. 96-97, "Revidirtes General-Privilegium und Reglement, April 17, 1750," pp. 54-55.

The Charter of 1750's strict condemnation of *Winkelsynagogen* gave the elders of the Königsberg Jewish community hope that Frederick II might take harsher measures to shut them down. In pressing for the creation of one public synagogue in Königsberg, the communal elders had both Jewish law (*halakhah*) and custom (*minhag*) on their side. Unified prayer had traditionally been seen as the preferred means of worship. To splinter a community into smaller units of worship not only undermined the cohesiveness of the whole but violated traditional rules of the *kehillah* (community) as well. Services in *Winkelsynagogen* could be a threat to the long term health of the community.⁸³

Of course those Jews in Königsberg who continued to worship in their homes together did not see themselves as undermining Jewish law or the viability of the community. When at all possible, they adhered to the requirement to have a *minyan* (ten or more adult males) at their private services. Jacob Adam, a *yeshivah* student in Berlin in the early 1800s, wrote of how certain private synagogues would even pay *yeshivah* students twelve Groschen monthly to come to their services and fulfill the *minyan*.⁸⁴ Moreover, the size or location of a place of Jewish worship did not always determine whether it would be defined by the Prussian state as private or public. As we saw above, Esther Liebmann, the powerful widow of Court Jew Jost Liebmann, almost managed to have the worship service taking place in her home to be declared the official synagogue in Berlin. Rather, the defining characteristic of what was considered public and private was the king's wishes, which were often arbitrary.

⁸³ Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. B.D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), pp. 133-50. Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618-1780," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 71.

⁸⁴ Jacob Adam, *Zeit zur Abreise: Lebensbericht eines jüdischen Händlers aus der Emanzipationszeit* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1993), p. 34.

The state's struggle to shut down private synagogues in Brandenburg and East Prussia continued well after the Charter of 1750 and the creation of larger, more public synagogues. In 1774, twenty two private synagogues still existed in Berlin.⁸⁵ In the early stages of religious reform in the nineteenth century, private worship was used as a way to bypass traditional religious authority. For instance, in the 1810s Jacob Herz Beer created a small synagogue in his Berlin home for services to be conducted in the German language. It was, however, short lived. Frederick William III quickly had it closed by the police.⁸⁶ The king supposedly found out about the service while perusing a newspaper in Berlin which advertised the service. Frederick William III had inherited his forefathers' distrust of private worship. In a later decree from December 9, 1815, he called for the closing of all private synagogues in Berlin.⁸⁷

⁸⁵ Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," p. 173. See also Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 64.

⁸⁶ Michael A. Meyer, "The Religious Reform Controversy in the Berlin Jewish Community, 1814-1823," *Leo Baeck Yearbook XXIV* (1979): p. 142.

⁸⁷ Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, pp. 137-38. Lowenstein writes of how this further complicated relations between the reformed and the orthodox, because they had to share the synagogue.

Chapter Four Jewish Commercial Life

In January 1746, the Jewish elders in Königsberg wrote to the crown on behalf of their entire community. This letter was one of many petitions that Frederick II would receive over the next few years from the Jews of Königsberg regarding the oppressive economic conditions under which they claimed to live. They declared that “no other state-sanctioned Jewish community has been subjected to so many objections and obstructions to their commercial transactions as the Jews of Königsberg have.”¹ Four months later in May 1746, a petition, purportedly from the entire mercantile community in Königsberg, also reached the desk of Frederick II. According to them, the Jews of Königsberg were in an enviable position:

Nowhere else in your Royal Highness’ lands and provinces do the Protected and other Jews have such a golden opportunity to damage the commercial prospects of merchants [...] as they do in the Royal Residential city of Königsberg. And nowhere is a merchant truly put more ill at ease by the Jews on a day to day basis [as in our city].²

The large discrepancy between the perceptions of the Jews of Königsberg and the Christian merchants in the city in 1746 underscores how divided and oftentimes cantankerous commercial life in the city was. Such competition and one-sidedness was certainly not unusual in eighteenth century Prussia. Foreign merchants all over Prussia encountered stiff resistance from Germans to conducting profitable business. Yet despite the ordinariness of such disputes, we can nonetheless see certain ways in which the financial situation in Königsberg was particular.

¹ “Eingabe des Ältesten der Königsberger Judenschaft für die ganze Gemeinde, January 7, 1746,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 2.2, p. 993.

² “Eingabe der sämtlichen Kaufmannschaft Königsbergs, May 22, 1746,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 2.2, p. 998.

With 450 lakes and 717 miles of navigable routes, East Prussia was well situated to become a transportation hub.³ At the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe, Königsberg was an important entrepôt for trade and commercial exchange that the Prussian crown wished to make even more profitable. Since the Middle Ages, the Baltic sea was a key transportation hub and its ports places of extensive commercial activity and exchange.⁴ Because of its position on the Baltic Sea and the river Pregel, for centuries Königsberg served as an important transfer point for goods and materials in the Southern Baltic region. It is a highly navigable river with two significant branches that converge in Königsberg. These branches unite and then divide again to create an island in the center of the city. This tract of land called the Kneiphof became the locus of the city's trade.⁵

Four hundred miles from Berlin and a little over five hundred miles to St. Petersburg, Königsberg straddled east-west sea routes. In the 17th century, it was a vital distribution point of luxury goods to nearby Polish landlords. The city served as the nexus for transferring textiles and various luxury goods from England and Holland to the Polish nobility. The merchants of Königsberg were also responsible during this time for transporting most of Poland's exports to England. Up until the 1870s, Königsberg, along

³Eric Christiansen, *The Northern Crusades: The Baltic and the Catholic Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1980), p. 9. Bruno Schumacher, *Geschichte Ost- und Westpreussens* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1957), p. 42. James Westfall Thompson, "Early Trade Relations between the Germans and the Slavs," *The Journal of Political Economy* 30, no. 4 (1922): p. 546. Stanislaw Srokowski, *East Prussia* (Poznan: Rolnicza Drukarnia i Ksiegarnia Nakladowa, 1934), p. 9.

⁴ Christiansen, p. 9.

⁵ Southwest of Königsberg, the two channels empty into a fresh lagoon (*Frisches Haff*). Udo Arnold, "Königsberg als Wirtschaftsstandort im Mittelalter. Ein Überblick," in *Preussische Landesgeschichte*, ed. M. Glauert U. Arnold, and J. Sarnowsky (Marburg: N.G. Elwert Verlag, 2001), p. 333. Fritz Gause, *Königsberg in Preussen: die Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt* (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1968), pp. 16-17. For an eighteenth century description of Königsberg, see Anton Friedrich Büsching, *A New System of Geography* (London: 1762), p. 529.

with Danzig and Riga, facilitated the transfer of most grain from Russia.⁶ The salt trade was also important in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as Königsberg functioned as a middle point between the movement of salt quarried on the French Atlantic coast to Lithuania and Russia. Königsberg exported agricultural goods from its Polish hinterland to both England and Scandinavia.⁷

The Jews were instrumental in making Königsberg into a key commercial center in the eighteenth century.⁸ While Königsberg was a valuable port even before the arrival of Jewish merchants, the crown in Berlin recognized the ways in which such a multi-lingual and mobile minority as the Jews could bring even more wealth and trading opportunities to the port city. Polish Jews in particular became the life blood of Jewish trade and commerce in Königsberg and played a pivotal role in the financial successes of the local community. They served as mediators and translators for wealthy Polish magnates, who preferred to use foreigners to conduct their business abroad.⁹

This chapter provides a survey of the economic relationship of the Jews in Königsberg both to the local authorities and to the sovereign. I argue that local

⁶ Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Portland: Littmann Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998), p. 24. Jan Wilder, *The Economic Decline of East Prussia* (Danzig: Zakłady Graficzne, 1937), pp 5-6. Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), p. 90.

⁷ Gerhard von Glinski, *Die Königsberger Kaufmannschaft des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: J.G. Herder, 1964), p. 145. Howard Caygill, *A Kant Dictionary* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), p. 12. E. Van Cleef, "East Baltic Ports and Boundaries with Special Reference to Königsberg," *Geographical Review* 35, no. 2 (1945): p. 266.

⁸ Selma Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," *Jewish Social Studies* XI, no. 2 (1949): p. 138. Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 6 (1858): p. 205.

⁹ Moshe Rosman, "Jewish History across Borders," in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, ed. J. Cohen and M. Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library, 2009), p. 25. Ludwig von Baczko, *Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung Königsbergs*, 2nd ed. (Königsberg: Goebbels & Unzer, 1804), p. 240. Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 12 (1857): p. 441.

Königsberg leadership more often than not sought to limit and repress Jewish commercial success throughout the eighteenth century. In particular, the powerful mercantile and craft guilds in Königsberg managed to block Jews from entering many lucrative trades. Most local governmental authorities backed the oftentimes exorbitant taxes and restrictions that the Jews had to endure. This was in large part because the municipal government and the local guilds were intertwined. Unlike other port cities where the Jews could engage in a wide variety of trades, the Jews of Königsberg were limited greatly by the estates and guilds.¹⁰

The crown in Berlin had a less consistent position on Jewish commerce and Jewish settlement within its realm. On the one hand, the Prussian kings of the eighteenth century abhorred the perceived onslaught of Polish Jewish peddlars and *Betteljuden* into their territories. Yet, they also relied on commercial trade with Poland and Russian, who often used Jewish merchants to conduct their business. Ultimately, concessions from the Prussian crown allowed for the growth of the Jewish community in Königsberg. In addition to being a substantial source of government tax revenue, the Jews were a tool used to undermine the power of the local Königsberg guilds. In this respect, the decision of the Jews to align themselves closely with the Prussian crown proved advantageous.

In addition, I discuss further the different types of Polish Jews who came to Königsberg and the impact that they had not only on the make-up of the community but also on Prussian policies towards the Jews as a whole. Lastly, I outline some of the

¹⁰ Lois Dubin writes about Trieste and how the Habsburgs managed to create an entirely new administrative structure in which the Jews could conduct commerce without the interference of guilds. Lois C. Dubin, *The Port Jews of Habsburg Trieste: Absolutist Politics and Enlightenment Culture* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), pp. 200-201. Steven Zipperstein writes of how the local government in Odessa freed the Jews of Odessa from many restrictions in the Pale in order to further the city's trade. Steve Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986).

business relationships that Jews in Königsberg had with Christian merchants over the course of the eighteenth century.

Town vs. Crown

Guilds in East Prussia had a long and entrenched history. They had emerged in the Middle Ages out of a complex system of market privileges and exclusive rights.¹¹

The limitations the guilds placed on Jewish trade and production forced them to pursue new commercial opportunities, including the sale of wool and various Dutch exports.¹²

Jews also engaged in the trade of cotton, silk and china, because they were new Prussian enterprises not under the longstanding leadership of the guilds.¹³

In Königsberg, the particularly strong guild system suppressed Jewish mercantile activity for centuries, limiting them to only certain trades not regulated by exclusive guilds. The relative profitability of the Jews, largely on account of their wide trade networks with other Jews in far-reaching locales, led the successive sovereigns in Prussia to expand Jewish accessibility to trade against the wishes of the guilds. But the crown had to weigh its own personal, financial objectives with the desires of the local German burghers, who wished to continue to curtail Jewish trade.

¹¹ For more on guilds, see Sheilagh Ogilvie, "Guilds, Efficiency, and Social Capital: Evidence from German Proto-Industry," *The Economic History Review* 57, no. 2 (2004). Clara E. Núñez and Stephan R. Epstein, *Guilds, Economy and Society* (Sevilla: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 1998). Avner Greif, Paul Milgrom, and Barry R. Weingast, "Coordination, Commitment, and Enforcement: The Case of the Merchant Guild," *Journal of Political Economy* 102, no. 4 (1994). For a discussion of guilds in the Prussian context, see Gustav von Schmoller, *The Mercantile System and Its Historical Significance: Illustrated Chiefly from Prussian History* (New York: Macmillan, 1895).

¹² Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Population Shifts and Occupational Structure," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 66.

¹³ H.H. Ben-Sasson, ed., *A History of the Jewish People* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1976), p. 738.

Conflict between the Jews and the Königsberg guilds dates back to the sixteenth century and the reign of Albert I. Despite the economic asset that Polish merchant Jews were to the region, an advantage that Albert I recognized, the municipal government's increasingly vocal complaints about the Jewish presence in Königsberg led him to allow harsher restrictions against the Jews in East Prussia. The regional authorities in Königsberg, in cooperation with the guilds, convened a legislative assembly (*Landtag*) in 1566 to draft a new State Constitution (*Landesverfassung*). The constitution declared that "Jews [currently] in the principality (*Fürstentum*) are not allowed, and therefore must evacuate the region within four weeks." The ruling goes on to insist that no previous concession letter or stamp will supersede this expulsion.¹⁴ Albert I was personally not supportive of this expulsion, but it was one of the many concessions that he made to the very powerful East Prussian guilds in the later years of his reign.

This struggle between the crown and Königsberg's regional authorities over the presence of Jews in East Prussia would continue well into the eighteenth century. The East Prussian guilds and estates not only sought to block Jewish entry into Königsberg but also settlement of other foreigners or anyone who they saw as a financial threat. This included not only religious minorities such as the Jews but also women, who were often barred from guild membership.¹⁵ English and Scottish merchants had a stormy relationship with the local guilds since the mid-seventeenth century. At a Diet that was held from 1661 to 1663, the guilds strongly opposed the entry of British traders into the

¹⁴ Extract from the constitution printed in Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Erster Teil/ Die Zeit des Grossen Kurfürsten und Friedrichs I. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), p. 148. Saalschütz transcribes it in full. Joseph L. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judentums* 5 (1858): pp. 166-167. Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 445.

¹⁵ Ogilvie: p. 312. For more on the Scottish in Königsberg, see Th. A. Fischer, *The Scots in Germany* (Edinburgh: Otto Schulze & Co. , 1902).

region. Such public pronouncements, however, did not stop the British from economically thriving in Königsberg.¹⁶ In the 1660s, the citizenry of Königsberg lobbied for the payment of head money (*Kopfgeld*) for each foreign merchant who came to the city. Similar to the Jewish body tax (*Leibzoll*), head money extracted additional taxes from foreigners. Unlike the Jews, however, British merchants coming to Königsberg often either evaded or flatly refused to pay such a thing. Foreign merchants like the British who had a home country to which they could return felt confident in ways that the Jews did not. They also were not discriminated against as much as the Jews, since a select number of British merchants were even able to join the local merchant guilds. In the Kneiphof between 1600 and 1750, over thirty Scottish names are on the merchant guild registry.¹⁷

Being shut out from guild membership was not only an economic hindrance but also a social impediment for the Jews of Königsberg. In seventeenth and eighteenth century life in Central Europe, guilds were as much religious and social organizations as they were trade groups concerned with maintaining quality and quantity control of their products. They controlled social and cultural life in Prussian towns, sometimes even down to who one was allowed to marry.¹⁸ Leaders of the guilds in East Prussia were also

¹⁶ Sidney Bradshaw Fay, *The Rise of Brandenburg-Prussia to 1786* (New York Henry Holt and Company, 1937), pp. 69-70. The Diet was conducted under Otto von Schwerin and the primary instigator was Hieronymus Roth.

¹⁷ Glinski, pp. 144-146. Mack Walter writes, "Religious exiles were especially welcome [in Prussia] for purposes of colonization and economic development because, unlike more casual wanderers who followed subsidies and other economic advantages, they ordinarily could not go back home when they were disabused of their hopes or had spent their benefits." Mack Walker, *The Salzburg Transaction: Expulsion and Redemption in Eighteenth-Century Germany* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992), p. 71.

¹⁸ Salo W. Baron, "Civil Versus Political Emancipation," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*, ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1979), p. 35. Antony Black, *Guild & State: European Political Thought from the Twelfth Century to the Present* (New Brunswick: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 2003), pp. 123-124.

firmly entrenched in government and local politics, using various methods including bribery and aggressive lobbying to consolidate their power. Without a connection to a certain guild, one would have found it very difficult to have any political clout in Königsberg.¹⁹ It was not a coincidence that the involvement of Jews in local politics did not develop in Königsberg until after the Trade Ordinance of 1811, which abolished guilds in Prussian cities.²⁰

Local politics and tradition dictated the rules and regulations concerning how merchants traded and exchanged goods and services. The overarching goal was to nurture local economic and social interests and to limit the profits of outsiders.²¹ This was most often achieved by levying heavier taxes and restricting foreigners' access to the city to only certain times of year. In Königsberg, oftentimes Polish and Lithuanian merchants were taxed twice to enter the city. First they had to pay an entry tax to the border of East Prussia. Once in Königsberg, they had to pay another tax to the mayor of whichever district of the city they entered. Many Jews wrote to the crown in the early eighteenth century to complain about such instances of double taxation. They threatened to take their valuable business to one of Königsberg's rival cities like Riga or Danzig.²² Such a threat of collective removal of Jewish mercantile exchange would have had a real impact on Königsberg's financial future.

¹⁹ Ogilvie writes of the political campaigns and downright bribery in which guilds in Württemberg engaged during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Ogilvie: pp. 327-329. Marion W. Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 76, no. 1 (1986): p. 105. Greif, Milgrom, and Weingast: p. 755.

²⁰ William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles, and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), p. 72.

²¹ Steven Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 130-131.

²² Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 172. Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," p. 138.

While most local leadership in Königsberg preferred widespread restriction of foreign Jewish merchants, one magistrate recognized the short-sighted approach to excessive taxation. Karl Friedrich Lau, the Fiscal Advocate (*Advocatus Fisci*) in Königsberg in the early eighteenth century wrote two reports to the crown stressing the extent to which the city's Jews were suffering under the weight of too many taxes. Previous to becoming Fiscal Advocate, Lau was a professor of law at the Albertina for ten years from 1684 to 1694. In addition to his duties as city tax collector, Lau eventually served on the newly created Jewish commission in 1708.

In 1698, Lau complained that customs duties (*Zölle*) in Königsberg for Jews were way too high. Jewish merchants who came to Königsberg were forced to pay exorbitant fees which were discouraging Polish and Lithuanian Jews from trading in the city. Lau's ultimate concern was with the future financial success of Königsberg. Such high taxes were to the detriment of East Prussian trade with Eastern Europe. If such taxes continued, Polish and Russian Jews might actually make good on their threats to conduct trade in Danzig instead.²³ A few years later in 1705, Lau renewed his objections to current policy in a report he produced for the newly crowned Frederick I. The Fiscal Advocate underscored again the extreme limitations placed upon Jewish trade in Königsberg. Most Polish Jews, oftentimes in the city on behalf of Polish magnates, were only allowed to conduct business in Königsberg for a very short period, usually no longer than five days. Some Polish Jews received permission (at a price) to stay for longer periods, but such limitations only served to curtail successful business.²⁴

²³ Lau therefore concluded that Jews crossing over the Prussian border should not have to pay more than 1 fl. "Unmassgebliches Bedenken Advokati fisci wegen der Juden Zölle, Schutz- und Geleitsgelder," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, pp. 427-428.

The crown in Berlin vacillated in its policies towards Jewish traders in Königsberg. Frederick William (the Great Elector), a strong supporter of free trade, had a vision for East Prussia to become the Holland of Central Europe. The obstinacy of the entrenched guild leadership in Königsberg and their refusal to develop a wider European trade network led him to instead seek out foreign merchants like the Jews.²⁵ After Frederick William's death in 1688, however, the Jews of Prussia experienced renewed commercial restrictions under Frederick I (1688-1713), who catered more to the wishes of the guilds than did his father.²⁶

The protection of the longstanding guilds, however, was a losing battle in the face of growing absolutism. The guilds were the ultimate form of local privilege that the crown wished to abolish in the pursuit of total control over all aspects of its territory's social and economic life.²⁷ The goal was to wrest control away from the local government and to end the entrenched privileges of the guilds that served to limit expansion and suppress free trade. In large part, the guilds' consistent antipathy towards the Jews should be seen as a defensive response to the emergent power of the bureaucratic state.²⁸ The Jews in East Prussia were caught up in an overarching power

²⁴“Bericht des Advokatus fisci Karl Friedrich Lau, August 27, 1705,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, pp. 444-445. See also Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p. 172.

²⁵ Selma Stern, *The Court Jew*, trans. Ralph Wieman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), pp. 139-140.

²⁶ Ismar Elbogen, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), pp. 142-143.

²⁷ Glinski, p. 148.

²⁸ Mordechai Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press 1996), p. 145.

struggle between the old structure of power that dated back to the period of the Teutonic Knights and the centralizing force of the Hohenzollerns.

During the reign of Frederick II (1740-1786), the crown allowed the Jews of Königsberg to continue trading in the city against the protestations of the guilds. He also opened up new areas of Prussian manufacturing to Jews. The Prussian state had entrusted the growing sector of provincial manufacturing in large part to foreigners like the Jews. In Königsberg, the French, the English and the Jews dominated new areas of manufacturing. Against the wishes of local manufacturers, several British merchants had established factories in Königsberg in the 1710s. They created a new class that for a long time remained separate from the entrenched caste system. Industry was primarily a royal endeavor; thus, the local authorities had little control over what happened.²⁹

Despite certain concessions for the Jews, Frederick II was also responsible for the Charter of 1750, which severely limited Jewish commercial success for the rest of the eighteenth century. The Charter forbade Prussian Jews from any manual trades that had privileged guilds.³⁰ The only Jews who received exemptions from the oppressive economic limitations of the Charter of 1750 were the extremely wealthy, including the Itzigs in Berlin and the Friedländers in Königsberg. These Jews received a new designation of a “General Privilege.”³¹ The notorious Charter would define Jewish economic and religious life for the next sixty years until the Edict of 1812. This self-

²⁹ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, pp. 91-92.

³⁰ Those trades without established guilds were specifically mentioned: “engraving, [art] painting, the grinding of optical glasses, diamonds, and jewels, gold and silver embroidery, fine cloth needlework, [and] the collecting of gold dust by a sieving process.” The Charter is translated in Jacob R. Marcus, *The Jew in the Medieval World* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965), p. 89.

³¹ Steven Lowenstein, “Jewish Upper Crust and Berlin Jewish Enlightenment: the Family of Daniel Itzig,” in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1850*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 185.

proclaimed “philosopher from San Souci” was responsible for what many historians consider the most backward and confining document relating to Jews of its period.³² In many respects, the longstanding perception of Frederick II as an enlightened monarch does not actually hold water. He may have been personally interested in the ideas of the enlightenment, but this did not translate in actual state reform or enlightened policies towards the Jews.³³

Christian merchants in Königsberg responded to the Charter of 1750 with another call for increased limitations of Jewish trade within the confines of Königsberg. On July 9, 1751, they wrote a petition to the East Prussian Chamber requesting that Jewish merchants in Königsberg be forced to conduct their business on the outskirts of the city. The authorities denied the request, since this would make it more difficult for the foreign merchants to conduct business.³⁴

The mid-eighteenth century was the heyday of silk manufacturing and trade in Prussia, largely because the Frederick II subsidized the silk trade extensively.³⁵ Many Prussian Jews in the eighteenth century earned their fortunes in textiles and fabrics. Silk and linen were the two trades in which Joachim Moses Friedländer made his fortune in

³² Heinz M. Graupe describes it as “perhaps the worst document in the development of the Jewish legal position to date.” Heinz Moshe Graupe, *The Rise of Modern Judaism: An Intellectual History of German Jewry, 1650-1942*, trans. John Robinson (Huntington: Robert E. Krieger Publishing Co., Inc., 1979), pp. 91-92.

³³ Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," pp. 130-131. See, for example, Julius H. Schoeps, *"Du Doppelgänger, Du bleicher Geselle...": Deutsch-jüdische Erfahrungen im Spiegel dreier Jahrhunderte, 1700-2000* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 2004), p. 32. Karl A. Schleunes, "Enlightenment, Reform, Reaction: The Schooling Revolution in Prussia," *Central European History* XII, no. 4 (1979): p. 319.

³⁴ Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," pp. 138-139.

³⁵ All told, it is estimated that Frederick II invested around 2 million Thalers into the Prussian silk industry. W.O. Henderson, *Studies in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great* (Liverpool: Frank Cass & Co. Ltd., 1963), pp. 28-36.

Königsberg in the middle of the century.³⁶ While Frederick II blocked Jewish involvement in certain textiles like wool in which the Huguenots specialized, Jews were able to flourish in the silk and linen trades. Even though silk guilds existed, the king was nonetheless successful in gaining concessions for non-guild members to conduct trade. In 1751, the silk trade in Königsberg was divided almost evenly between Jews and Christians; thirteen Christians and ten Jews were involved in the trade.³⁷

Like his father, Frederick II valued the textile industry above all else and saw it as the future of Prussian industry. His ultimate goal, largely unrealized, was to have the entire textile industry in Prussia be native. On the one hand, the king kept the local leadership from expelling the Jews altogether from East Prussia. Yet in many other respects, the crown was responsible for limiting profitability of Jewish trade networks. By forcing Jews to only engage in trade of Prussian-made goods, Frederick II lessened the amount that his kingdom could profit from the extensive reach of Jewish merchants.

One way in which local leadership in Königsberg sought to curb Jewish economic competition was to limit their residency in the Kneiphof district of the city. Local frustration with Jews settling in the area dated back to the early eighteenth century. In 1707, the authorities in Kneiphof directly defied a recent regulation from the crown regarding the Jews and expelled them from their part of the city.³⁸ The Kneiphof was an island portion of the city built on stilts over the river Pregel. Once the three cities that comprised Königsberg were united in 1724, the Kneiphof served as a central meeting

³⁶ Stern, *The Court Jew*, p. 152. Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," pp. 143-144. Schmoller, pp. 88-89.

³⁷ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, pp. 93-94.

³⁸ Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," p.208.

point for trade.³⁹ Many Jewish and Christian merchants lived there in order to be close to business. It was also considered the most attractive and desirable part of Königsberg to live. Richard Brookes, an eighteenth century English writer and traveler, declared it to be the “handsomest of the three [cities].”⁴⁰

In the autumn of 1748, the Kneiphof township ordered that both Joachim Moses Friedländer and Mendel Levin, another Jewish trader, would have to vacate their housing in the city by Michaelmas in September 1749. Friedländer and Levin, on behalf of the entire Jewish community in Königsberg, petitioned Frederick II in January 1749 to intervene and stop the eviction. They claimed that Christian merchants had no reason but petty rivalry to justify such a move. Friedländer often butted heads Christian merchants in Königsberg over his growing business, and the Jews claimed this was one more manifestation of their jealousy. According to the petition, the Jews who lived there were not taking valuable space from Christian residents, since the Kneiphof had many vacancies.⁴¹ The attempt to bar Jewish residence in Prussian town centers where business flourished was not unusual. In Breslau in 1779, Christian merchants accused local Jews of spying on their business practices for their own personal gain. They urged the authorities to force them to move out of the city center.⁴²

³⁹ Gause, *Königsberg in Preussen: die Geschichte einer europäischen Stadt*, pp. 7, 16-17. For a first hand description of the Kneiphof, see Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: U. Helmer, 1988), pp. 16-17.

⁴⁰ Richard Brookes, *A Dictionary of the World: or, a Geographical Description of the Earth*, vol. 2 (London: 1772), p. 117.

⁴¹ Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), pp. 76-77.

⁴² Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618-1780," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 15.

Two years earlier in 1746, Christian merchants had expressed to Frederick II frustration with Jewish settlement in the Kneiphof and the fact that they had left the “Jewish quarter” and rented houses on some of the best streets in the city “in order to be closer to arriving merchants.”⁴³ Since Königsberg never had an actual ghetto or Jewish quarter, presumably the Christian merchants were referring to the Burgfreiheit, where Jews traditionally resided in Königsberg. Exasperated by the financial latitudes that the crown already gave Jewish merchants, they saw such an encroachment on the Kneiphof as one of the last straws.

Eventually the township gave Friedländer and Levin an extension of residency to September 1750, but despite such orders, there is no indication that Friedländer, Levin, or any of the Jews of Königsberg ever left the Kneiphof. Almost fifteen years later in 1764, Frederick II gave Joachim Moses permission to purchase a house there. His only restriction was that he could not buy a house on Langgasse, which was often considered to be the most prestigious street in all of Königsberg. Joachim Moses eventually purchased a two story house in Kneiphof across from the town-hall on Brodbänkenstrasse, a house that remained in the Friedländer family for over a century. Eduard von Simson (1810-1899), whose mother was Marianne Friedländer (1786-1866), was born in that house. Simson later served as the president of the Frankfurt National Assembly from 1848-1849.⁴⁴

⁴³ “Eingabe der sämtlichen Kaufmannschaft Königsbergs, May 22, 1746,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), vol. 3.2, p. 998.

⁴⁴ Ernst Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Hamburg: Comm. Vlg. Lucas Gräfe, 1913), p. 22. Bernhard von Simson, ed., *Eduard von Simson: Erinnerungen aus seinem Leben* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), pp. 1-2.

To own a house in such a prominent location across from a local governmental office signified that the Jews of Königsberg had in many respects managed to overcome the economic limitations put upon them by local administrators.⁴⁵ The city's Jews eventually even overcame the prohibition of living on the Langgasse. Fanny Lewald's grandfather Levin Markus (d. 1805) lived for thirty six years at the corner of Langgasse and Magisterstrasse.⁴⁶

The Jewish community of Königsberg thrived financially despite the heavy resistance of provincial leadership. This was in large part because both the Jews and regional authorities were subject to the increasing control of the sovereign in Berlin. The guilds and their allies in local government could make harsh pronouncements and call for excessive taxation and limits on Jewish trade, but ultimately such written decrees held little weight practically. The Jews could and almost always did appeal to the sovereign for protection. It is not a coincidence that the first place Jews settled in Königsberg was in the Burgfreiheit area surrounding the castle, because it was the only area of the city under direct royal control. They knew that their ultimate ally was not nearby in the Court House on Brodbänkenstrasse in Königsberg but rather four hundred miles away in the City Palace on Unter den Linden in Berlin.

In the process of Prussian state building in the eighteenth century, economic necessities led to increased religious toleration, not only of Jews but other Christian religious minorities.⁴⁷ Time and again, Prussian kings mentioned Jewish blasphemy and

⁴⁵ Robert Liberles describes the complicated process that Jews often had to go through in the German lands to own a home. Liberles, p. 18.

⁴⁶ Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1861), p. 9.

⁴⁷ For more on the connection between economics and religious toleration, see Joel Harrington and H.W. Smith, "Confessionalization, Community, and State Building in Germany, 1555-1870 " *The Journal of*

the religious danger that they posed to Christian inhabitants in Königsberg and in Prussia at large as reasons why they should not be tolerated. But despite such proclamations, the crown tolerated Jews for financial reasons. They continued to come to the East Prussia city regularly to conduct business and even settled in some of the choicest parts of the city. It appears as if the fear of God's wrath was ultimately secondary to the financial needs of the state.⁴⁸

Polish Jewish Influence in Königsberg

After a long journey from his village in Lithuania, twenty four year old Solomon Maimon (1753-1800) arrived in Königsberg, East Prussia, to a whole new world of opportunity. When writing his autobiography years later, Maimon reflected on the cultural and linguistic gap between himself, a Polish Jew, and his German co-religionists from whom he sought assistance. Maimon wrote of the reaction of some Jewish students at the Albertina when he was first introduced to them upon his arrival:

As soon as I showed myself to these young gentlemen, and opened to them my proposal [to study philosophy and science], they burst into loud laughter. And certainly for this they were not to be blamed. Imagine a man from Polish Lithuania of about five and twenty years, with a tolerably stiff beard, in tattered dirty clothes, whose language is a mixture of Hebrew, Jewish German, Polish and Russian, with their several grammatical inaccuracies, who gives out that he understands the German language, and that he has attained some knowledge of the sciences. What were the young gentlemen to think?⁴⁹

For the Jews in Königsberg who first met Maimon, it was, as the philosopher later described, amusing and worth a few jokes at the Pole's expense. But Maimon was

Modern History 69, no. 1 (1997): pp. 87-89. Joachim Whaley, *Religious Toleration and Social Change in Hamburg 1529-1819* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).

⁴⁸ Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," pp. 168-169.

⁴⁹ Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), pp. 188-189.

certainly not a unique arrival in the city. His disheveled appearance, along with his speech, an incomprehensible (at least to them) mixture of languages were a daily sight in the city.

What brought these Jewish men, often young and inexperienced, to Königsberg? Maimon, whose sights were ultimately set on Berlin, sought increased philosophical understanding and access to the broader intellectual circles of a German city. Other Jews came to Königsberg for more materialistic reasons. Lithuanian Jewish poet Issachar Falkensohn Behr (1746-1817) arrived in the city in 1768 as a poor merchant. The story, most likely legend, surrounding Behr's arrival in Königsberg is that he had in his possession a single piece of velvet to sell that was promptly stolen. This misfortune supposedly led Behr to pursue medicine at the Albertina instead.⁵⁰

For Jacob Adam, a Jew from southwestern Poland, it was not knowledge but rather the promise of financial success that drew him to the city in 1809. Adam had spent two relatively unsuccessful years as a merchant in the Lower Silesian town of Glogau and was seeking a more lucrative and independent business position. He ended up selling ribbons and other wares, the profits from which were enough to eventually purchase a market stall in East Prussia. Born in 1789 in Posen, by the age of twenty, Adam had already spent several years in Berlin studying the Talmud. Like many other bright but poor Jews from Eastern Europe, Adam had to choose at an early age between rabbinical learning and commerce, between a life of meditation and a life of movement. He chose the latter.⁵¹ This is not to imply that rabbis or Jewish scholars lived in one place their

⁵⁰ Andreas Wittbrodt, Nachwort, *Gedichte von einem Polnischen Juden*, by Issachar Falkensohn Behr (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2002), pp. 66-67.

whole lives. In fact, they often moved from position to position, but unlike most Jewish traders, they were not constantly travelling.

Solomon Maimon's description of his arrival in Königsberg in the 1770s reveals the cultural gap between newly arrived Polish Jews and the established Jewish community in Königsberg. Yet we should not be so quick as to see this division as a fundamental difference between Polish and German Jews. It was rather the difference between urban and rural Jewish life. Indeed, as we saw in Chapter One, the roots of the Königsberg Jewish community in the early eighteenth century were as much Polish as they were German. The preponderance of Polish Jewish merchants in Königsberg is one of the main reasons the community was founded in the first place. In order for these Jewish merchants to fulfill their religious duties, the state needed to allow for a place of worship, along with a cantor and a rabbi.

Since its founding in the thirteenth century, Königsberg had always been a commercial town (*Handelsstadt*) rather than a manufacturing center.⁵² Trade and commerce in Königsberg developed as much along geographic lines as it did along socio-political lines. The city's hinterland was north eastern Poland. Their line of trade continued until the unification of Germany in 1871 when the East Prussians largely abandoned their historical trade routes in favor of national loyalty to the rest of Germany.⁵³ In the early modern period, the main economy in East Prussia was trade with Poland and exchange conducted by intercessory traders, oftentimes Jews, who

⁵¹ Jacob Adam, *Zeit zur Abreise: Lebensbericht eines jüdischen Händlers aus der Emanzipationszeit* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1993). Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," p. 135.

⁵² Reinhard Brandt, "Kant in Königsberg," in *Studien zur Entwicklung preussischer Universitäten*, ed. R.Brandt and W.Euler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), p. 280.

⁵³ Srokowski, p. 40. Wilder, pp. 47-63.

represented larger Polish magnates. In contrast to Central Europe where Jews usually aligned with the royal courts, in Poland the Jews developed a particularly close relationship with noble families under whom they lived. Since the early sixteenth century, noble Polish landowners had legal authority over Jews who lived on their estates.⁵⁴

Königsberg was responsible for most Polish exports (mainly to England), totaling 4 million zlotys a year.⁵⁵ Even though Jews were not formally allowed to reside in Königsberg until the early eighteenth century, and only then a select few who were able to acquire Letters of Protection (*Schutzbriefe*), an ongoing influx of Polish Jewish merchants during various times of the year left an impression on non-Jewish observers that Königsberg was a place of significant Jewish settlement.

Polish Jews working on behalf of Polish magnates had had limited access to Königsberg since the middle of the seventeenth century. They attended the city's annual fair in the summer, but their presence was often unwanted and resulted in frequent clashes with local authorities. Some Polish Jews were heavily taxed, others even arrested. It became such a problem that on August 20, 1650, Frederick William issued an "Edict Regarding the Arrest of Polish Jews at Annual Fairs." The proclamation called on local authorities throughout Prussia to cease arresting Polish Jews at trade events. The king reminded local magistrates that these Jews had a royal privilege valid for the next seven years, and that the Prussian king had an agreement with the Polish crown that

⁵⁴ Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 22.

⁵⁵ Wilder, pp. 5-6.

Polish Jews trading on behalf of the Polish nobility would be able to do business in Prussia unhindered.⁵⁶

In East Prussia, burghers were not happy with Polish Jews gaining regular access to Königsberg's markets. A report from November 1705 to the crown asserted that the Jews who were coming to Königsberg were "loud, poor people from Poland who only peddle inferior linen from Silesia, calico and other odds and ends." The stress on the pettiness of their goods was certainly strategic, as the burghers wanted to give the crown the impression that such traders were unworthy of entry into Königsberg's markets.⁵⁷ One tactic that they regularly used was to try to limit Jewish access to the smaller fairs on the outskirts of the city. This approach was ultimately unsuccessful. A royal decree from November 1699 gave two Jews by the names of Salmon Joseph and Levin Ilten permission to conduct business at all of the local fairs.⁵⁸

Through the regular renewal of temporary residence, many Polish Jews managed to become residents of Königsberg, much to the dislike of the crown. Ultimately, the crown's attempts to curb Polish Jewish residence in East Prussia in the eighteenth century were unsuccessful. By the middle of the century, a new generation of Polish Jews lived in Königsberg who had grown up in the city.⁵⁹ In addition to those Polish Jews who settled in Königsberg permanently, three types of Polish Jews came regularly to Königsberg in the eighteenth century.

⁵⁶ Mylius, *Corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (CCM), Th. V, Abt. V, Cap. III, Nummer I, pp. 121-122.

⁵⁷ "Bericht der preussischen Regierung, November 30, 1705," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, p. 457.

⁵⁸ Saalschütz, "Zur Geschichte der Synagogen-Gemeinde in Königsberg," pp. 172-173.

⁵⁹ Moses Shulvass, *From East to West: The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1971), pp. 59-60.

The first group were Polish Jewish youth such as Salomon Maimon who came to Königsberg to seek out wider access to knowledge and the sciences. They felt closed in and intellectually inhibited by life in their small villages in Poland and Lithuania. In a letter wrote to Immanuel Kant on April 7, 1789, Maimon wrote that he was “condemned at birth to live out the best years of [his] life in the woods of Lithuania, deprived of every assistance in acquiring knowledge.”⁶⁰ Many of these Jews enrolled in the university. Some like Maimon only stayed for a short while and used Königsberg as a stopping point between their home and larger German cities like Berlin and Hamburg. Others stayed longer and ended up remaining in the city for most of their adulthood. Certain Polish Jews arriving in Königsberg paradoxically travelled further east in order to gain access to Western Europe.⁶¹ This phenomenon underscores Königsberg’s unusual placement on the borderlands of Europe.

The second type of Polish Jew who traveled to Königsberg were the aforementioned Jewish traders who had legitimate business contacts back in Poland. These merchants were the key intermediaries between Eastern and Western European trade that garnered so much attention from both the sovereign and local municipal authorities.⁶² As we saw in the previous section, the Prussian crown consistently upheld their right to trade in Königsberg. In April 1707, Fiscal Advocate Lau again defended the right of Jews to trade in East Prussia. This time it was in response to a recent judgement on the part of the township of Lyck (Elk) to deny Polish Jew Joachim Saphai future

⁶⁰ Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, trans. Arnold Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 133.

⁶¹ Shulvass, p. 86.

⁶² Stern, "The Jews in the Economic Policy of Frederick the Great," p. 138.

access to local fairs. This decision was agreed upon by both merchants in Königsberg and Lyck, and they even went so far as to confiscate Saphai's goods the last time he was in Lyck. Lau underscored to Frederick I that Saphai was an agent trading for a Polish dignitary by the name of Widczewski and that such business was valuable to the crown.⁶³ Some Polish Jews brokered large deals for their wealthy Polish clients. In 1743, a Jew by the name of Samuel Isaackowitz purchased Samuel Slumke's leather factory. Isaackowitz worked directly for Polish Lithuanian Prince Radziwiłł.⁶⁴

Despite their close connection to Polish nobility, these Polish Jews left a negative impression on certain German observers. A German traveler named Andreas Meyer commented on the type of Jews who congregated near the Green Bridge in Königsberg:

No one is more industrious as the countless swarm of Polish Jews, who cut such a miserable figure with their threadbare black clothing and the smell of onions and garlic overwhelms you."⁶⁵

The Green Bridge was the bridge that connected the Kneiphof Island to the Old City of Königsberg. It was a place where foreign merchants gathered during the summer months.⁶⁶ Meyer's use of the adjective "industrious" to describe the Polish Jews is derogatory and meant to imply excessive zeal for money making. The rest of his description conjures up what would eventually become the German caricature of the

⁶³ "Bericht des Advokatus fiscali Lau April 1707," in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1962), vol. 1.2, p. 464.

⁶⁴ Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 98. Gause does not provide the first name of the Prince, but it is most likely Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł (1702-1762).

⁶⁵ Quoted in Hamilton H.H. Beck, "Neither Goshen nor Botany Bay: Hippel and the Debate on Improving The Civic Status of the Jews," *Lessing Yearbook XXVII* (1996): p. 74. Originally from A. Meyer. *Briefe eines jungen Reisenden durch Liefland, Kurland und Deutschland* (Erlangen: Walther, 1777), p. 75.

⁶⁶ In his biography of Immanuel Kant, J.H.W. Stuckenberg described it as "the centre of a lively trade during the summer, where especially German, Dutch, English, Poles and Jews carried on an extensive traffic." J.H.W. Stuckenberg, *The Life of Immanuel Kant* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1882), p. 4.

Ostjude, the inferior Eastern European Jew that figures largely in late nineteenth century anti-Semitic images.⁶⁷

The third group of Jews from Poland who had a conspicuous presence in Königsberg in the eighteenth century were “beggar Jews” (*Betteljuden*), oftentimes referred to by Prussians as “deadbeat Jews” (*Schnorrjuden*). These poor Jews wandered into East Prussia from Poland and Lithuania, seeking protection from persecution or better financial opportunities. They relied on the charitable support of local Jewish communities to provide for their needs. In the early nineteenth century, the Jews of Königsberg even had a communal position called the “Director for the Support of the Foreign Poor.”⁶⁸ The movement of poor Polish Jews into East Prussia beginning in the early eighteenth century led to a harsher backlash than elsewhere in Prussia.⁶⁹ The number of complaints from provincial authorities regarding the influx of poor Jewish beggars and the settlement of Jews without writs of protection had increased. Between the 1710s and the 1740s the Prussian government issued multiple decrees regarding *Betteljuden*. The state called on all subjects living near the Polish borders to not assist incoming Jews.⁷⁰ Both the Prussian state and the Jewish community desired to limit their numbers. The state was worried about the potential transmission of diseases, while the

⁶⁷ For more on the *Ostjude*, see Steven Aschheim, *Brothers and Strangers: The Eastern European Jew in German and German-Jewish Consciousness* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983). S. Adler-Rudel, *Ostjuden in Deutschland, 1880-1940* (Tübingen: Mohr, 1959). Jack Wertheimer, *Unwelcome Strangers: East European Jews in Imperial Germany* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987).

⁶⁸ CAHJP D/KO1 487, p. 1.

⁶⁹ Israel, p. 198.

⁷⁰ Shulvass, pp. 67-68.

German and established Polish Jews were concerned about the negative impression that such vagrants and illegal settlers left on the community as a whole.⁷¹

In the eighteenth century they were perhaps undesired by the wealthier members of the Prussian Jewish community; yet, they were still tolerated and supported. Moreover, beggar Jews, who roamed the countryside and entered cities for short periods of time, were transmitters of culture and information in their own way. Otto Ulbricht describes beggars as “wandering newspapers, purveying news from distant villages and cities.”⁷² As they received alms and sustenance from the community, they also relayed information and colorful anecdotes from their travels. They were the ultimate border crossers and wanderers on the margins of society both socially and geographically.⁷³

The presence of *Betteljuden* in Prussia influenced Prussian Jewish policy as a whole. In 1722, Frederick William complained that “the Jews descend on our land like locusts and ruin the Christians.”⁷⁴ A year later, the Prussian king made the bold decision to cease the granting of new *Schutzbriefe* altogether. He also declared that old *Schutzbriefe* were to be destroyed upon a Jew’s death. This ended for a time the practice of extending the privileges of a *Schutzbrief* to one’s children. These stricter measures remained in place until the revised patent of 1730.⁷⁵

⁷¹ Aschheim, pp. 21-22. Shulvass, pp. 13-15. See also Breuer, pp. 247-248. Marc Raeff, *The Well-Ordered Police State: Social and Institutional Change through Law in the Germanies and Russia, 1600-1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1983), pp. 68-69.

⁷² Otto Ulbricht, "The World of a Beggar Around 1775: Johann Gottfried Kästner," *Central European History* 27, no. 2 (1994): pp. 156-173. For more on Jewish beggars and vagrants and how the Jewish community collectively dealt with them, see Derek Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001).

⁷³ Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," pp. 134-135.

⁷⁴ Quoted in Tobias Schenk, "Der preussische Weg der Judenemanzipation : zur Judenpolitik des "aufgeklärten Absolutismus", " *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35, no. 3 (2008): p. 453.

Christian-Jewish Business Ventures

The Jews of Königsberg in the eighteenth century largely went into business with other Jews, but in some instances they decided to work closely with other German and foreign merchants. In 1711, Bendix Jeremias and an English merchant by the name of Adam Fuller took over payment to the crown of local Jewish poll taxes (*Geleit*). In order to guarantee a certain level of annual payment, Frederick I had decided to contract out as much of the work of tax collection as possible. Fuller and Jeremias committed themselves yearly to pay upfront the full amount due to the crown, and this put them in charge of collecting the taxes. For the first two years, Fuller and Jeremias paid the crown 3,700 Gulden (florin). Presumably the motivation for the pre-payment was an eventual surplus of collected taxes from which they could profit. After two years, Adam Fuller chose not to renew his contract to collect the Jewish poll taxes in Königsberg, but Bendix Jeremias continued this work for several years. Members of the Jewish community were actually known to address him as “The highly esteemed Mr. Jeremias, Royal Prussian Court Jew and Collector of the Jewish Poll Tax.”⁷⁶ As we saw in Chapter One, his role as tax collector caused tensions within the Jewish community who resented the thought that one of their own was trying to gain undue profits from governmental taxes.

Another example of a Christian-Jewish business venture in Königsberg comes from the institution of a new Jewish tax in the 1760s. Beginning in 1766, each year the Jews of Prussia had to collectively contribute coins or raw materials in the amount of

⁷⁵ Reinhold A. Dorwart, *The Prussian Welfare State Before 1740* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1971), pp. 136-137.

⁷⁶ The term often used to describe the person who collected the taxes was *Arrendator*. In Polish this means leaseholder, but in the Prussian context it referred to the person who collected the *Geleite*, also called the *Arrende*. Glinski, p. 177-178. Jolowicz, pp. 41-42.

12,000 silver marks for the eventual minting of coins in the Royal Treasury. Invariably the Jews received a rate below market value. In Königsberg, many of these coins came from Poland, and since many Jews had a working relationship with the Polish nobility, they often took part in the trade of their foreign coins.⁷⁷ In Königsberg, Abraham Wallach and Joseph Seeligman worked in collaboration with the purveyor of the German mint in Königsberg, who at this time was Johann Conrad Jacobi (1718-1774). Together they collected from Jews old silver coins intended for the royal mint.⁷⁸

Jacobi was a prominent figure in Königsberg and a close friend of Immanuel Kant. Jacobi lived on the prestigious Langgasse in the Kneiphof and was close neighbors to many wealthy Jews, including the Friedländers and the Lewalds. After his marriage to Maria Charlotte Jacobi (née Schwink), an active socialite in Königsberg, Jacobi's residence became a central meeting place for intellectuals in Königsberg.⁷⁹ It is not unreasonable to think that at some point his Jewish business associates would have spent time in the home as well. Based on various sources, however, it appears as if Jacobi had a mixed opinion of his business dealings with Jews. In 1751, Jacobi came into contact with several merchant Jews in Berlin who caused him to curse all Jews in general.⁸⁰ Yet a letter from a year later to a Berend Schrader from Braunschweig seems

⁷⁷ Stern, *The Court Jew*, pp. 163-164. See also, Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, vol. IV (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), p. 207.

⁷⁸ Glinski, p. 186.

⁷⁹ For more on Jacobi, see *Neue Deutsche Biographie*, Vol. 10 (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), pp. 231-232.

⁸⁰ Glinski, p. 193. Gerhard von Glinki quotes Jacobi as expressing, "The Jews are all s..." (*Die Juden sind alle sch...*). This quote and others come from an extant *Kopierbuch* from Johann Conrad Jacobi dating from the 1750s. In his bibliography, Glinski says it is "in private hands", but does not indicate its location.

to suggest that Jacobi was open to Jewish friendships: “I seek to have friendships with everyone [...] why would anyone reproach me for striving for such with a Jew?”⁸¹

The so-called silver tax was one of the many taxes with which Frederick II burdened the Jews. Another such tax was the Porcelain tax of 1769, which forced Jews all over Prussia to buy porcelain from the Royal Porcelain Manufactory in Berlin. At the start of a marriage, the purchase of a house, or the birth of a child, Jews had to buy up to three hundred Thalers worth of state porcelain, much of which was quite unattractive. Low sales led Frederick II to create the 1769 ruling, but in many respects the Jewish porcelain tax backfired. Prussian Jews started selling the ugly porcelain abroad at markets, which further depreciated its value. This also led the porcelain to become known in Europe as “Jewish porcelain” (*Judenporzellan*), not the best marketing campaign in late eighteenth century Prussia.⁸²

During the Seven Years’ War, many Jews established business contacts with the Russians while they occupied the city. The Russian army was stationed in Königsberg just under five years from 1758-1762. Throughout this time, the Russian military and resident state officials became actively involved in the life of the city. Russian officials often visited lectures at the university. The Russians forced the East Prussians to celebrate Russian holidays. They also converted the Steindammer Church into a Greek Orthodox church for Russian worshipers.⁸³ A Jew by the name of Jacob Hirsch became a

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 194.

⁸² For more on the porcelain tax, see Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 78. Albert A. Breuer, *Geschichte der Juden in Preussen (1750-1820)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1991), p. 78. Walter Schwarz, "Frederick the Great, his Jews, and his Porcelain," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 11, no. 1 (1966): pp. 300-305.

⁸³ Kasimir Lawrynowicz, *Albertina: Zur Geschichte der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg in Preussen*, trans. Gerhild Luschnat (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), p. 147. For more on the Russian occupation of

supplier of various goods to the Russian army stationed in the city.⁸⁴ In addition, Joachim Moses Friedländer profited greatly from the Russian presence in Königsberg. The stationing of the Russian army in Königsberg during the war was a boon to Friedländer and other Jewish merchants who already had a robust trade in Russia. By the 1760s, Joachim Moses Friedländer boasted to Frederick II that he had sold almost 143,000 Thaler worth of Prussian goods in Russia and Poland.⁸⁵

Several Jewish merchants in Königsberg were also known to do business with the Farenheid family, who were some of the wealthiest burghers in the Kneiphof. Friedrich Reinhold Farenheid (1703-1781) dominated the salt trade in Königsberg and would eventually become a city councilman.⁸⁶ In addition, the Jews of Königsberg also managed to create advantageous relationships with foreign businessmen. Originally from Scotland, the Motherby family had a harmonious relationship with the Jewish community of Königsberg throughout the eighteenth century. Robert Motherby (1736-1801) originally came to Königsberg from Scotland and started a trading company with another Scottish family called Green, Motherby & Co. Motherby was also known to dabble in philosophical pursuits and developed a close friendship with Kant, so much so that Kant invested almost all of his assets in the Motherby's firm.⁸⁷ In his biography of Kant,

Königsberg, see Schumacher, pp. 212-213. Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), p. 285.

⁸⁴ Glinski, p. 187.

⁸⁵ Friedländer, p. 20.

⁸⁶ They were related to Daniel Gabriel Fahrenheit (1686-1736), who developed the temperature scale. Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, p. 99.

⁸⁷ Glinski, p. 166. For more on the Motherby family, see R. W. McConchie, "Propagating what the Ancients taught and the moderns improved': The Sources of George Motherby's *A New Medical Dictionary*; or, a General Repository of Physic, 1775," in *Selected Proceedings of the 2008 Symposium on*

Stuckenberg claimed that Motherby was one of the few in Königsberg who managed to rise above petty prejudice of the Jews and embrace them whole-heartedly.⁸⁸

The relationship between the Motherby family and the Jews of Königsberg continued into the nineteenth century. In 1801, Robert's son William Motherby gave a public lecture at the synagogue. In the next chapter, I discuss this particular event and other cross-cultural interactions between Jews and Christians in Königsberg. I also explore the broader connection between commercial exchange and cultural adaptation.

New Approaches in English Historical Lexis, ed. R. W. McConchie, A. Honkapohja, and J. Tyrkkö (Somerville: Cascadilla Proceedings Project, 2009), pp. 123-124.

⁸⁸ In his description of Motherby, Stuckenberg has in quotes, "Motherby esteemed in the Jew the man, and despised the Jew in the Christian." But he does not indicate the origins of the quote. Stuckenberg, p. 116. Caygill, p. 12.

Chapter Five Cross-Cultural Exchange

In 1787, author and local historian Ludwig von Baczko (1756-1823) published a history of Königsberg. Baczko, who was born into a Polish Catholic family in the East Prussia town of Lyck (Ełk), fled as a very young child with his mother and siblings to Königsberg during the Seven Years War (1756-1763). At the age of twenty one, Baczko became blind from a serious bout of smallpox.¹ Even ten years later, Baczko was able to vividly describe the atmosphere in the center of Königsberg during the summer months:

[After a long winter] all is once again in movement on the banks of the Pregel. The abundance of people who get on or off the ships, the different styles of dress of the Polish nobility, the common Poles, the Polish Jews, once and a while a Russian, or also sometimes a man in Swedish national garb mixed in, [these people] give the city the liveliest of impressions, that only a large commercial town can provide.²

In the eighteenth century, Königsberg was a place of vibrant economic and intellectual exchange. The docks and the markets bustled with activity. Baczko goes on to describe how the foreign merchants tended to concentrate their trade and business transactions in various neighborhoods in Königsberg. The Latvians lived and worked in the Rossgarten suburb, the Lithuanians in the Sackheim district. The Poles concentrated near the cattle markets and the surrounding banks of the river, while the Russians settled on the outskirts of town. In the area of town called the Licent, the Swedish, Danish, English and Dutch lived together.³

¹ After his illness, Baczko became a teacher and an extensive writer, including a memoir and several books on the history of Königsberg. For a biography of Baczko, see *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1875), pp. 758-59.

² Ludwig von Baczko, *Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung Königsbergs*, 2nd ed. (Königsberg: Goebbels & Unzer, 1804), pp. 96-97.

As we have seen already, the Jews primarily concentrated in the Burgfreiheit and the Kneiphof. By the 1750s, the Kneiphof, a relatively small island, had become not only the center of Jewish life in Königsberg but also the mercantile hub of the city.⁴ Until it moved to the Old City in 1862, the Albertina was also on the island.⁵ This meant that the students and the professors at the university inhabited the same space in the city as its merchants and traders.

The first aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the enmeshment of commercial and cultural exchange in Königsberg. The geographic proximity of Königsberg's trade and scholarship facilitated this dual exchange. In particular, I argue in the following that the monetary transactions in which Jews engaged with other Jews and non-Jews were moments of cultural exchange as well. Jews who frequented the markets and fairs in Königsberg exchanged not only goods and money but also intangible items. Among other things, Jews transferred ideas, languages and customs. Cross-cultural trade between Polish Jews, German Jews, and Christian merchants in the eighteenth century took place in Königsberg on a regular basis. While organized social gatherings were primarily with other Jews, the nature of commercial life in Königsberg meant that the city's Jews were in regular, daily contact with Christians. This section serves as a bridge to Part Two of the dissertation in which I discuss *ha-Measef* and the educational life of

³Ibid., p. 97. For more on the international flavor of Königsberg, see Richard Armstedt, *Geschichte der Königl. Haupt- und Residenzstadt Königsberg in Preussen* (Stuttgart: Hobbing und Büchle, 1899), p. 247. Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Population Shifts and Occupational Structure," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p.66. Margot Westlinning, "Der junge Herder in Königsberg," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 73.

⁴ By the twentieth century, Jews had spread to all areas of the city and divided themselves mostly by denomination. Yoram K. Jacoby, *Jüdisches Leben in Königsberg/Pr. im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1983), p. 22.

⁵ I. Gribkovskaia, O. Halskau, and G. Laporte, "The Bridges of Königsberg: A Historical Perspective," *Networks* 49, no. 3 (2007).

the Jews of Königsberg. Jewish commerce not only provided the means for the community to fund such endeavors; daily financial life also formed part of the process by which the Jews gradually adopted European and German cultural values over the course of the eighteenth century.

The second goal of this chapter is to provide some examples of the gradual integration of the growing cohort of middle and upper class Jews into wider German cultural and material life. I outline some of the various aspects of Jewish Christian cross-cultural exchange in Königsberg, including close friendships with Christians and the participation in various city cultural events. Bourgeois Jews began to adopt German and wider European sensibilities. One way in which a historian can gauge this is through the presence of outward signs of integration in Jewish homes. The reading patterns of the Jews, in particular what types of non-Jewish books the Jews of Königsberg read, also reveals the extent to which certain Jews had adopted German culture. Some Jews became so enmeshed in non-Jewish life that they decided to convert. The number of such conversions were small but nonetheless significant, because the first wave of baptisms were of prominent, wealthy Jews.

I also look at the extent to which Jewish students at the Albertina were able to integrate into wider academic social circles. While barred from certain student activities and leadership positions, particular Jews did manage to create significant relationships with other Christian students and faculty. Lastly, I discuss the role of Jews in Königsberg's public life. Throughout the eighteenth century, magistrates barred Jews from attending public commemorations and events in Königsberg. I discuss the ways in

which the Jews of Königsberg dealt with their exclusion. This more often than not meant having alternate public commemorations at the main synagogue.

Merchant Philosophers

The last chapter looked at the commercial life of Polish Jews in Königsberg and the extent to which trade with Poland fueled Jewish travel and settlement in the city. The Jews that I discussed in this section were mostly full-time merchants, a demanding job that necessitated frequent travel. For most Jews in Königsberg and elsewhere, the frequent travel and busy life of a merchant made it difficult to balance business and serious scholarship. This is not to say that most Jewish merchants in Königsberg were not literate or knowledgeable of Jewish tradition. In their youth, a significant number of them spent time in *hadarim* and *yeshivot*, the Jewish equivalents of elementary and secondary education.

For a select number of Jews, however, commerce and the life of the mind were not mutually exclusive pursuits. The father of *haskalah* himself, Moses Mendelssohn, was a lifelong silk merchant. Mendelssohn could aptly be named a “merchant philosopher” who combined his financial and cultural activities. His commercial transactions afforded him opportunities to forge relationships with Jews richer than himself. This gave him necessary contacts to later establish himself as a scholar as well.⁶

One example of the twofold pursuits of Moses Mendelssohn is his journey to Königsberg in 1777. When discussing Mendelssohn’s trip eastwards during the summer of that year, historians usually highlight his role as a public mediator in the synagogue

⁶ Engelhard Weigl, *Schauplätze der deutschen Aufklärung: ein Städterundgang* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1997), p. 177.

dispute discussed in Chapter Two between the Jews of Königsberg and the local synagogue inspector. While Mendelssohn did use his travels as an opportunity to support the religious interests of the Königsberg Jewish community, his journey was primarily a business venture. Mendelssohn had a brother-in-law in Memel (Klaipėda) who desired assistance in some business matters.⁷ In the late eighteenth century, Jews had to receive special permission to stay overnight in Memel, a smaller city northeast of Königsberg on the border of East Prussia and Lithuania. Mendelssohn did not have such permission and instead stayed in Königsberg and traveled north to Memel to see his family.

The most prominent case in Königsberg of dual involvement in both financial and intellectual pursuits was the Friedländer family. In the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, the children and grandchildren of Moses Levin Friedländer became key figures in both the economic and cultural successes of the local Jewish community. Moses Levin, who later changed his name to Friedländer, originally came from Zülz in Upper Silesia. The name Friedländer is most likely derived from a town by the name of Friedland, which lies 12 kilometers northwest of Zülz. He received his first *Schutzbrief* and permission to settle in Königsberg in 1718 after he married a daughter of Bendix Jeremias, the de facto leader of the early Jewish community in Königsberg. He was also a cousin of Marcus Magnus, a Jewish elder and prominent businessman in Berlin.⁸

In particular, the children of Moses Levin's son Joachim Moses Friedländer (1712-1776) made a mark on the Jewish community in Königsberg. As we learned in

⁷ Ibid., p. 171. Memel is the historic German name for Klaipėda, currently the third largest city in Lithuania.

⁸ Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und Judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 10. Ernst Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Hamburg: Comm. Vlg. Lucas Gräfe, 1913), pp. 13-14.

the last chapter, Joachim earned his fortune trading in linen and silk. He traveled for months on end to Russia and Poland for business. Unlike his brothers Israel Moses and Ruben Moses Friedländer, who went bankrupt during the first two Silesian Wars (1740-1745), Joachim profited and expanded his textile trade. The Seven Years' War (1756-63) was also a boon to Joachim Moses, and he eventually founded a family firm named "Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne."⁹ Joachim Moses raised his children not only in the Jewish tradition; he also made sure they were exposed to the German language and customs. Joachim Moses himself had a traditional education and even studied for a time under Cabbalistic scholar Jonathan Eybeschuetz in Prague. He had learned German and other European languages during his many years of business.¹⁰

Born in Königsberg in 1750, David Friedländer, Joachim's most famous son, left the city for Berlin at an early age. There he married into the prosperous Itzig family.¹¹ He eventually founded the first secular "Jewish Free School" in Berlin in 1778. David also played a significant role in the Jewish emancipation debate of the late eighteenth century, which would culminate in the Edict of 1812. That David Friedländer spent his formative years in Königsberg became a point of pride for the Jewish community in the city. In the centennial celebration of the founding of the new synagogue, quoted in the introduction to the dissertation, Joseph Levin Saalschütz mentioned several key dates from the last one hundred years, one of which was the birth of David Friedländer. As a

⁹ Friedländer, pp. 15-20.

¹⁰ Ernst Fraenkel, "David Friedländer und seine Zeit," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* 2 (1936): p. 68.

¹¹ For more on the Itzig family, see Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 25-26, 91-93.

reformed rabbi, Saalschütz and his listeners evidently took great satisfaction in the fact that such a renowned Jew grew up in Königsberg.¹²

A couple of David's other six siblings moved to Berlin, but most of the family remained in Königsberg and worked for the family business or started independent financial ventures. During the course of the eighteenth century, the family grew not only in number but also in stature. In addition to occupying positions of religious authority, the descendants of Joachim Moses enriched both the cultural life of the Jewish community and the community's increasing role in public life in Königsberg. As we will see in Chapter Seven, Joachim's son Simon Friedländer and his grandson Samuel Wulff Friedländer were key figures alongside Isaac Euchel and Mendel Breslau in the publication of *ha-Measef*. Samuel Wulff, who also figures in the history of Jewish education in Chapter Eight, became a city councilor in Königsberg in 1809.¹³

While noteworthy, the concept of a "merchant philosopher" has limited historical application. Families like the Friedländers were atypical both in their degree of wealth and in the diversity of their pursuits. What can apply more broadly, however, is the notion of Jewish merchants as cross-cultural traders who were purveyors of both material goods and culture. Even though Jewish merchants were not formal scholars or rabbis, this did not mean that they did not partake in the exchange of ideas and traditions alongside their business transactions.

¹² Joseph L. Saalschütz, *Das Jahrhundert eines Gotteshauses: in der Königsberger Synagoge, bei der Feier ihres Hundertjährigen Bestehens, am 30. Kislew 5617 (27. Dezember 1856)* (Königsberg: Rautenberg, 1857), p. 10.

¹³ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Assimilation and Community Reconsidered: The Jewish Community in Königsberg, 1871-1945," *Jewish Social Studies* 5, no. 3 (1999): p. 108. See also Kessler, p. 12.

Mercantile Exchange

The classic early modern source of Jewish trade in Central Europe is the memoir of female merchant Glückel of Hameln (1646-1724). To be successful in her trade of gold, pearls and other jewelry, Glückel relied on an extensive familial network in Northern Europe that she continued to expand through the expedient marriages of her children. One such marriage Glückel described in detail was her eldest daughter Zipporah's marriage to the son of Elijah Gomperz (Cleve), a prominent banker from Amsterdam. Glückel and her family traveled by boat from Altona outside of Hamburg to the Dutch port city for the wedding. With evident pleasure, Glückel described the wealth and grandeur of the wedding celebration. Sephardim and fellow Ashkenazim attended, not to mention prominent Gentiles, including none other than Prince Frederick, the future king of Prussia. To have Prince Frederick and other European notables at their table was a sign of their social standing and advancement.¹⁴ On many levels, the relationship between the Hamelns and the Cleves was contractual. Through marriage, Glückel and her husband Chayim not only created a familial tie with the Cleves; they also cemented a business relationship. Indeed, financial and personal connections were inseparable in the world of early modern business.¹⁵

¹⁴ Glückel von Hameln, *The Memoirs of Glückel of Hameln*, trans. M. Lowenthal (New York: Schocken, 1977), pp. 95-99. Robert Liberles urges historians not to read too much into Zipporah's wedding about the attendance of Gentile notables at Jewish weddings in general. Apparently this is one of the few examples. Robert Liberles, "'She Sees That Her Merchandise Is Good, and Her Lamp Is Not Extinguished at Nighttime': Glikl's Memoir as Historical Source" *Nashim* 7 (2004): p. 15.

¹⁵ Natalie Zemon Davis describes this close bond within the Jewish community as the "proximity of, the porousness between, family matters and commercial matters." Natalie Zemon Davis, "Religion and Capitalism Once Again? Jewish Merchant Culture in the Seventeenth Century" *Representations* 59 (1997): p. 72. Richard Menkis writes of the connection between marriage and business in the Bordeaux Jewish community. Richard Menkis, "Patriarchs and Patricians: The Gradis Family of Eighteenth-Century Bordeaux," in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1870*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorokin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 19-22.

The Jews of Königsberg also used strategic marriages to stabilize commercial relations between business partners and to gain access to more state concessions and privileges.¹⁶ When Hinde Fischel (1722-1788), the daughter of Königsberg merchant Levin Fischel, married Joachim Moses Friedländer in 1738, Friedländer was able to acquire the privileges of his father in law's *Schutzbrief*. This was desirable to both Fischel and Friedländer, as they were longstanding financial partners. Joachim Moses' brother Israel Moses Friedländer (1694-1773) married Rosina Jeremias, the daughter of communal leader Bendix Jeremias, which enabled him to be included on Jeremias' *Schutzbrief*.¹⁷ Joachim's third child, Meyer Friedländer (1745-1808) married one of the daughters of Hanover Court Jew Meyer Michael David. Meyer Friedländer even took it upon himself to write the Prussian crown to boast of the 50,000 Thaler dowry that her father provided and how his marriage brought "considerable capital into your majesty's dominion."¹⁸ Through marriage, the Friedländers in Königsberg also developed ties with the Itzigs and Ephraims in Berlin and the Arnsteins in Vienna.¹⁹

Jews in the German lands were not the only ones who considered marriage a quasi business transaction. Jews throughout Europe engaged in the same type of arranged marriages in the pursuit of upward social mobility.²⁰ Such tactics also have a long

¹⁶ Stefan Hartmann, "Das Generalverzeichnis der Königsberger Juden Vom 24. März 1812 als Familien- und Sozialgeschichtliche Quelle," *Preussenland* 29, no. 3 (1991): p. 41.

¹⁷ Kessler, p. 9. Friedländer, p. 14.

¹⁸ Gerhard von Glinski, *Die Königsberger Kaufmannschaft des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderts* (Marburg: J.G. Herder, 1964), p. 197.

¹⁹ Steven Lowenstein, "Jewish Upper Crust and Berlin Jewish Enlightenment: The Family of Daniel Itzig," in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1850*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 191.

historical and geographic trajectory. Documents from the Cairo Geniza reveal evidence of strategic marriages in the twelfth century between Cairo merchant families and Jews as far away as India.²¹

Marriage is a prominent and well-documented example of how the financial and religious life of the Jewish community was intertwined.²² If we expand the parameters of Jewish communal life beyond its rituals and rites, however, the myriad of ways in which Jews engaged in the exchange of culture in daily life become more apparent. A broader notion of culture helps us understand the degree to which Jews participated in inter-cultural and cross-cultural exchange. Both ideas and behavior, culture includes not only manifestations of “high” culture like art and literature but also religious beliefs and practices, customs, and language. It also includes aspects of life that are often categorized as commonplace or routine, such as food, clothing, or even housing.²³ Furthermore, culture and how it intersects with material life applies to the context of Jewish business transactions. In the course of buying and selling goods at the markets, Jews also exchanged ideas and social mores with other Jews and Christians.

²⁰ Paula Hyman writes of twin economic and kinship ties among the Jews of Alsace-Lorraine. P. Hyman, *The Emancipation of the Jews of Alsace: Acculturation and Tradition in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991), p. 58.

²¹ I am grateful to Martin Jacobs for pointing this out to me. See, for example, S.D. Goitein and Mordecai Friedman, *India Traders of the Middle Ages: Documents from the Cairo Geniza* (Leiden: Brill, 2007), p. 719.

²² For more on Jewish marriage and its economic aspects, see Robert Liberles, “On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618-1780,” in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 25-31. Mark Glazer, “The Dowry as Capital Accumulation among the Sephardic Jews of Istanbul, Turkey ” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 10 (1979).

²³ David Biale writes that “[culture] is what people do, what they *say* about what they do, and, finally, how they understand both of these activities.” David Biale, “Preface: Toward a Cultural History of the Jews,” in *Cultures of the Jews: A New History*, ed. D. Biale (New York: Schocken Books, 2002), p. xvii. Economist David Throsby culture as “a set of attitudes, beliefs, mores, customs, values and practices which are common to or shared by any group.” David Throsby, *Economics and Culture* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 5.

The field of anthropology has recognized the myriad of social, cultural and material expectations present in kinship networks.²⁴ Exchange among wider familial trading networks took place not just on a material level but also on a ritual plane. In the course of daily life, individuals oftentimes combine these acts without reflection. Such deeply imbedded social relationships occur not only in ceremonies and formalized contexts but also occur in everyday places like the dinner table or at one's place of work.²⁵ Among other European religious minorities, such concurrent financial and social interactions were as common as they were with the Jews. Distinct from the Anglican majority, Non-Conformist sects in Great Britain formed separate kinship and business ties.²⁶ Religious connections frequently formed the basis of professional and economic exchange for other minorities, including the Puritans in America, Catholics in Northern Ireland, and Huguenots in Northern Europe.²⁷

For commercial success, Jews depended on the movement of a large Jewish trading Diaspora. By migrating and traveling all over Europe and further afield into

²⁴ Marcel Mauss, *The Gift: The Form and Reason for Exchange in Archaic Societies* (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 3-5, 65. The work of French anthropologist Marcel Mauss analyzes pre-capitalistic kinship networks and how they functioned. His research on earlier gift economies in Polynesia, Melanesia, and the American Northwest demonstrated the ways in which "obligation and liberty [intermingled]". Beneath the surface of the gift economy, premised on voluntary and disinterested gift giving, Mauss found a complicated system of expectation and demand imposed not by individuals but by collectives.

²⁵ In *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, Claude Lévi-Strauss broadens Mauss' definition of what constitutes ritual exchange. He discusses the ways in which symbolic moments of social exchange among members of a kinship network occur even in modern times. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Elementary Structures of Kinship* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1969), pp. 52-68.

²⁶ See L. Davidoff and C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850*. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1987).

²⁷ On the Puritans, see Daniel S. Smith, "Parental Power and Marriage Patterns: An Analysis of Historical Patterns in Hingham, Massachusetts," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 35, no. 3 (1973):419-425. On the Huguenots, see Philip Benedict, "The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 81, no. 5 (1991): i-164.

remote areas of the Ottoman Empire and the Mediterranean, Sephardic Jews created economic and social connections with Jews and non-Jews in distant locales.²⁸ For this reason, one can describe the type of exchange carried out by Diaspora communities like the Jews as a type of transnational exchange. Like Diaspora, the term “transnational” articulates the far-reaching aspect of merchant Jewish exchange.²⁹

Trade networks developed over centuries; as foreign merchants arrived in distant locales, some settled and adopted local customs and language, while others continued to travel and cast a broader net.³⁰ This was especially true in the Atlantic world between the sixteenth and eighteenth centuries in which Sephardic Jews from both continents created a collective culture based on shared familial, religious and communal ties. Sephardic trade networks relied on the trust that came from a shared history.³¹ The weak political allegiances of many transnational Jews, particularly Sephardic Jews in the Atlantic trade Diaspora, contributed to their financial success.³² The Ashkenazic Jews of Europe relied

²⁸ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Syracuse Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. 22. Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. B.D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 127. For an example of how Jews played a role in Transatlantic trade, see Holly Snyder, “English Markets, Jewish Merchants, and Atlantic Endeavors: Jews and the Making of British Transatlantic Commercial Culture, 1650-1800,” in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800*, eds. R. Kagan and P. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 50-74.

²⁹ John Lie, "From International Migration to Transnational Diaspora," *Contemporary Sociology* 24, no. 4 (1995): p. 304.

³⁰ Philip D. Curtin’s work on Africa illuminates the complex ways in which mercantile networks develop. In Curtin’s view, the eighteenth century would be the “twilight of the trade diasporas.” Philip Curtin, *Cross-Cultural Trade in World History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 230-54.

³¹ Daviken Studnicki-Gizbert, "La Nación among the Nations: Portuguese and Other Maritime Trading Diasporas in the Atlantic, Sixteenth to Eighteenth Centuries," in *Atlantic Diasporas*, ed. R. Kagan and P. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), pp. 76-80. For more on how Jewish trade networks developed, see Jonathan Israel, *European Jewry in the Age of Mercantilism, 1550-1750* (Portland: Littmann Library of Jewish Civilization, 1998).

³² Adam Sutcliffe, "Jewish History in an Age of Atlanticism," in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500-1800*, ed. R. Kagan and P. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns

on a similar communal network for success. In the case of the Ashkenazim, the collective was not as disparate or far reaching, but they nonetheless shared the aspect of being a network of coreligionists with a common cultural and religious identity. Furthermore, up until the late eighteenth century, most did not have fixed national loyalties that would interfere with wider trade.

As a member of the Hanseatic league, Königsberg played a role in the creation of long distance trading networks that spread throughout northern Europe. Also based on kinship bonds, these networks of merchants, retailers, and wholesalers were the foundation of the Hanse's success.³³ The commercial life of Königsberg's Jews and the amount of international travel that they conducted gave them exposure to other political realities and contexts, mostly those in Eastern Europe. Unlike other German travelers, such journeys did not seem as foreign or unknown to them, since as Jews in some respects they already lived separate from the rest of Prussian society.³⁴

Jewish merchants travelled extensively and oftentimes spent more time on the road during the year than they did at home. This became a part of their identity and an aspect of life that they shared with each other.³⁵ The diary of Jacob Adam, the Polish Jew introduced in the last chapter who came to Königsberg in the early 1800s, provides a

Hopkins University Press, 2009), p. 28. For a general discussion of the relationship between trade diasporas and the governing authorities, see Curtin, pp. 41-49.

³³ David Gaimster, "A Parallel History: The Archaeology of Hanseatic Urban Culture in the Baltic c. 1200-1600" *World Archaeology* 37, no. 3 (2005): p. 412. Curtin, pp. 7-8.

³⁴ Moshe Rosman writes that "[the Jews] acted as "citizens" of a Jewish 'country', called Ashkenaz, with its own language, Yiddish, its own laws and customs, its collection of autonomous Jewish administrative and social institutions, and its civic, kinship, business, educational, intellectual, and religious networks. Moshe Rosman, "Jewish History across Borders," in *Rethinking European Jewish History*, ed. J. Cohen and M. Rosman (Oxford: Littman Library, 2009), pp. 23-24.

³⁵ Studnicki-Gizbert, pp. 80-81. Studnicki-Gizbert shows how poignant this bond was among those Sephardim who fled persecution.

glimpse of how transitory life was for a travelling Jewish merchant. During his time in East Prussia, Adam received word from a friend that he might be able to cross paths with his father in Elbing. Adam's father was also a merchant and had spent most of his son's childhood away from home. Excited about the prospect of a reunion, Adam checked in hastily at a local inn and immediately went to the local market in search of his father. After not finding him there, Adam went to a nearby bar to relax and drink a beer. Not long after, his father entered the bar. It had been years since they had spent time together, and Adam's father did not immediately recognize his son: "He did not know me until I spoke out loud the word "Father". Then he realized who I was."³⁶

To establish and maintain a thriving trade, Jews often spent years on the road, rarely seeing their immediate family. In many cases, the less prosperous a person's trade was, the more time he ended up spending away from home. For instance, prosperous Jewish traders from Flatow in West Prussia tended to return home twice a year for the holidays, while merchants of lesser means were only able to go home every few years at most.³⁷ Even when they were not travelling for their business, the Jews of Königsberg were in constant movement even within the city. They spent very little time at their residence and instead frequented taverns and other public locales throughout the day where they interacted with Jews and non-Jews alike.³⁸

Familial culture and kinship interactions shaped commercial exchange between the Jews of Europe. The wide trade networks that the Jews had mirrored their complex

³⁶ Jacob Adam, *Zeit zur Abreise: Lebensbericht eines jüdischen Händlers aus der Emanzipationszeit* (Hildesheim: Olms, 1993), p. 89.

³⁷ Steven Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005).

³⁸ Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618-1780," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 18-20.

and broad family trees. Since Jewish merchants travelled so frequently, their journeys often included personal and religious objectives along with monetary ones. They planned business around weddings and other religious ceremonies. Merchant Jews stayed with extended family members at various points in their journeys. This amalgamation of pursuits was not unusual. While Christian merchants also relied on personal connections to create business transactions, within the Jewish community of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, this connection was particularly tightly woven.

The commercial life of the community entered into all aspects of daily life.

Natalie Zemon Davis describes this porous relationship:

Crossed-over strands of action and communication networks buzzing with diamond prices, bills of divorces, bans, bankruptcies, and rabbinical admonition seem to heighten the energy of enterprise, religion and family life all at once. [...] Their partnerships were usually among circles of kin or at least familiars; large sums of money were raised quickly, not through a relatively anonymous trading company or governmental rent-charge, but through, say, a discussion after a prayer service.³⁹

Samuel Slumke was one such Jew in Königsberg who, like Davis suggests, had important business conversations after prayer services in his home. Within the context of religious duty and liturgical expression was also the opportunity for personal financial advancement. As discussed in Chapter Three, Slumke was an early member of the Jewish community who produced braid and lace in Königsberg. According to his competitor Nissen Marcowicz, Slumke's motivation for conducting a Sabbath worship service in his home was to gain more profitable business contacts with visiting Polish Jewish merchants.⁴⁰

³⁹ Davis: p. 73.

⁴⁰ Geheimes Staatsarchiv, Berlin-Dahlem (GStA), Preussischer Kulturbesitz (PK), Hauptabteilung (HA) XX, Etats-Ministerium (EM) D Tit. 38 d 4 Nr. 100, pp. 1-3.

The creation of various private synagogues (*Winkelschule*) was one way in which the commercial and cultural life of the community crossed over in Königsberg. Polish Jews who regularly travelled to Königsberg not only needed places to stay; they also needed places to worship and conduct prayer. Resident Jews created makeshift synagogues in their homes to accommodate the religious needs of their visiting Jewish business partners. In the past, Polish Jews had complained that they were unable to fulfill their religious obligations in the city, because of a lack of religious infrastructure.⁴¹

Another way in which culture and commerce intermingled in Königsberg was in the area of language. Jews in East Prussia spoke what has been termed by Yiddish linguist Dovid Katz as “Northern Transitional Yiddish.” It was a mixture of Western and Eastern dialects of Yiddish.⁴² The transitional nature of East Prussian Yiddish underscores the concept of Königsberg as a bridge between East and West, between German and Polish culture. This mixture of German and Slavic words in the East Prussian dialect of Yiddish reveals the extent to which German and Polish Jews converged at Königsberg’s annual markets and fairs. Moreover, the fusion of various languages into one points to Jewish interaction with the wider Christian world. Jews borrowed words and phrases from the surrounding culture and integrated it into Yiddish. Yiddish linguist Max Weinreich writes, “[The] Jews were never isolated from the outside

⁴¹ Selma Stern, *The Court Jew*, trans. Ralph Wieman (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1950), p. 217.

⁴² Dovid Katz, "Origins of Yiddish Dialectology," *Language & Communication* 8 (1988): pp. 52-53. For more on Yiddish dialects in Central Europe, see Steven Lowenstein, "The Shifting Boundary between Eastern and Western Jewry," *Jewish Social Studies* 4, no. 1 (1997): pp. 60-78. Steven Lowenstein, "The Complicated Language Situation of German Jewry, 1760-1914," *Studia Rosenthaliana* 36 (2002).

world, and if no other evidence were available, Yiddish proves the point.”⁴³ In Königsberg in the eighteenth century, these interactions were primarily of an economic nature, but they nonetheless led to the mixture of Yiddish and the creation of diverse dialects.

Jewish merchants in Königsberg primarily spoke Yiddish to each other. Most had limited expertise in German, Polish, Russian and other trade languages.⁴⁴ In February 1744, Hartog Jacob, a *Schutzjude* and communal Jewish elder in Königsberg, pled with Frederick II to overturn a recent ruling in Königsberg that called on Jewish merchants to switch the language of their bookkeeping to German. He expressed to the crown that such a switch would be impossible: “We are born and raised in the Jewish language. In addition, our people conduct their commercial records in all other cities and countries throughout the whole world in no other language but the Jewish language.” Hartog Jacob goes on to maintain that such a logistical change would complicate trade with Jews in other lands, especially Poland, where Jews have no knowledge of German.⁴⁵ Those Jews who had managed to gain extensive knowledge of European languages used that skill to their commercial advantage. Certain Jews who came to the Königsberg markets and fairs were able to make money as translators.⁴⁶

⁴³ Weinreich coined the phrase “fusion language.” Max Weinreich, “History of the Yiddish Language: The Problems and Their Implications,” *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 103, no. 4 (1959): p. 567.

⁴⁴ Lowenstein, “The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870,” p. 127.

⁴⁵ “Eingabe von Hartog Jacob und Consorten in Königsberg, February 17, 1744,” in *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden*, ed. Selma Stern (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), vol. 3.2, p. 987.

⁴⁶ Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), p. 98.

In his autobiography, Ludwig von Baczko, the Königsberg author who provided our opening anecdote regarding the heightened activity near the Pregel river in summer, described his exposure to Yiddish as a child in the Kneiphof. Baczko wrote of his fascination with the myriad of foreign languages he encountered in Königsberg during his youth. Since he lived in the Kneiphof with many “loud Jews”, Baczko claimed that he was able to gain a certain degree of proficiency in Yiddish: “I was able to convincingly mimic the lively languages of certain local Jews, Poles, and French.” Baczko goes on to describe how he would sometimes stand outside of Jewish homes and carry on pretend conversations between two fictitious Jews. This would regularly get the attention of Jews inside, who would sometimes come out and marvel at his ability to imitate their language.⁴⁷ Baczko’s later interactions with Jews, all of which were positive, suggest that his intent was not mockery but rather just childhood amusement. Baczko’s anecdote reveals the degree to which Yiddish was both a marker of Jewish integration and simultaneously an ongoing sign of their separateness.⁴⁸ Yiddish was largely comprehensible to Germans, since its linguistic roots were in Middle High German; yet, a child could recognize that it was foreign and parrot the differences. Moreover, the anecdote underscores the close proximity in which Jews and Christians lived in Königsberg and how unplanned interactions such as this did occur.

The actual substantive exchange of ideas and values that took place among Jewish and Christian merchants is much more difficult to illustrate than noticeable Jewish cultural changes such as language or the creation of religious institutions. Conversations

⁴⁷ Ludwig von Baczko, *Geschichte meines Lebens* (Königsberg: A.W. Unzer, 1824), p. 227. For another firsthand account of the language of the Jews of Königsberg, see Karl Rosenkranz, *Königsberger Skizzen* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1991), pp. 52-54.

⁴⁸ David Biale describes this paradox. Biale, pp. xx-xxi.

that took place between Jews and non-Jews conducting business at fairs, taverns, and other locales in Königsberg are more often than not unrecorded. Traders documented profits and percentages, but not as often anecdotes from life. Chapter Four outlined some of these interactions. Regrettably, a dearth of autobiographical writings from eighteenth century Jewish merchants from East Prussia limits the amount of concrete examples of such interactions.

From the evidence we do have, we can see that exchange between Jews and non-Jews was always a mixture of the social and commercial, the religious and the mundane. Daily life in the community centered not only around the synagogue but also in shops and markets where Jews bartered and negotiated and in the streets where Jews and Christians walked. Cross-cultural interactions occurred regularly among the city's merchants. The transference of cultural mores and behavior in the process of regular commercial interactions was gradual and perhaps more subtle, but nonetheless significant. The multifaceted exchange in which the merchant Jews engaged was in some respects less artificial than the literary and cultural societies of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, since it emerged out of daily life and routine.

Cultural Interactions

Most specific examples of Christian Jewish interactions from eighteenth century Königsberg are of prominent individuals who recorded and preserved accounts of their lives. A certain wealthy subset of the Königsberg Jewish community had opportunities to interact socially with Christians. This is the class of Jews in the late eighteenth century that engaged in a new form of social relationship between Jews and Christians which did

not exclusively revolve around business transactions. In this context, social interaction became an end in itself.⁴⁹

An eighteenth century traveler by the name of Andreas Meyer described how well regarded certain Jews in Königsberg were:

Here [in Königsberg] there are sizable houses of trade. In addition to the squalid Jews who inhabit the periphery of the city, there exists a wealthy contingent of Jews who have set up residence in the city center. They are held in great esteem. Many of their wives and daughters enjoy here a certain degree of respect.”⁵⁰

This esteem translated into invitations to various social gatherings. Two Jews were active members of a German poetry society in Königsberg by the name of “Floral Wreath of the Baltic Sea” (*Blumenkranz des baltischen Meeres*).⁵¹ First named “Vesta” in 1805, the literary society eventually changed its name to the more romantic moniker. Max von Schenkendorf (1783-1815) founded “The Floral Wreath” with aristocrat and fellow intellectual Freiherr Ferdinand von Schrötter (1785-1863). They decided to limit the club’s membership to only twelve. Although small, the society sought members from all walks of life. A local actor and playwright by the name of Franz Carnier was a member, as was aristocrat Karl von der Gröben (1788-1876).⁵²

⁴⁹ In the 1970s, Jacob Katz called this new type of relationship the beginnings of a “semi-neutral society” that became more widespread in larger population centers like Berlin, Paris, and London. Katz qualifies the term with “semi”, because Jews still encountered prejudice and were still blocked entry into certain institutions. Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870*, pp. 54-56. For more on Jewish integration into German society and the notion of a “semi-neutral society”, see Michael Maurer, “Verbürgerlichung oder Akkulturation? Zur Situation deutscher Juden zwischen Moses Mendelssohn und David Friedländer,” in *Musik und Ästhetik im Berlin Moses Mendelssohns*, ed. A. Gerhard (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999), pp. 27-56.

⁵⁰ Quoted in Hamilton H.H. Beck, “Neither Goshen nor Botany Bay: Hippel and the Debate on Improving the Civic Status of the Jews,” *Lessing Yearbook XXVII* (1996): pp. 74-75.

⁵¹ Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 54. Klaus Garber, *Das Alte Königsberg: Erinnerungsbuch einer Untergegangenen Stadt* (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 2008), p. 98.

David Assing (1787-1842), formerly Assur, was one of the Jewish members of the society. Assing was related by blood to Fanny Lewald and eventually by marriage to Karl August Varnhagen von Ense. Beginning in 1803, Assing was a medical student at the Albertina where he became friends with fellow student Max von Schenkendorf.⁵³ The second Jewish member of the “Floral Wreath” was Samuel Friedländer (1790-1851), who was also a medical student at the Albertina. Samuel, later known as Ludwig Hermann Friedländer, developed a particularly close bond with Schenkendorf. In 1810, they collaborated on a poetry collection in memory of a female poetess who had recently died. A year later, Schenkendorf wrote in Friedländer’s autograph book (*Stammbuch*). He quoted a New Testament passage from the Third Letter of John 3:5 as a sign of their friendship:

‘Dear friend, you are faithful in what you are doing for the brothers.’
As John said to his friend, so I say to you. Yours truly, Max von Schenkendorf
Königsberg, December 11, 1811, on my birthday.⁵⁴

Over the years Schenkendorf wrote several such expressions of his affection for Friedländer. The degree of collaboration and affection between the two men was along the same lines as the iconic Christian-Jewish relationship between Moses Mendelssohn and Gottfried Ephraim Lessing which developed a few decades earlier.⁵⁵

The “Floral Wreath of the Baltic” was a close-knit group of friends who all believed in the tight bonds of friendship and had a love of literature and poetry. The

⁵² Shortly thereafter, Groben became a Prussian general in the Napoleonic wars and later a member of the Prussian House of Lords (*Preussisches Herrenhaus*) in the 1850s. Ludwig Friedländer, *Erinnerungen, Reden und Studien*, vol. 1 (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1909), pp. 1-2.

⁵³ Krüger, p. 110.

⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 54. Friedländer, *Erinnerungen, Reden und Studien*, p. 2.

⁵⁵ For more on this friendship, see Klaus Berghahn, "On Friendship: The Beginning of a Christian-Jewish Dialogue in the 18th Century," in *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered*, ed. K. Berghahn (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 14-18.

members had Romantic nicknames that they used when together. For instance, Samuel Friedländer went by the name “Fridolin”.⁵⁶ Such camaraderie was part of a larger German cult of friendship that developed in the late eighteenth century. In many instances, Jews took part in this culture in which friends exchanged verbose and sentimental letters which were often read aloud in groups. This elevation of friendship and effusive affection was not counter to the ideals of Enlightenment but rather formed a part of its culture.⁵⁷

In the nineteenth century, coffee houses increasingly became locations of urban sociability and cross-cultural mixing.⁵⁸ By the 1820s, Königsberg had several ones that eventually became locales of Jewish Christian interaction. The most prominent café was the Siegelsche Coffeehouse on the Französische Strasse.⁵⁹ Karl Rosenkranz, a professor of philosophy at the Albertina in the 1830s, described the motley crew of people who patronized the establishment and the changing ambiance of the Siegelsche depending upon the time of day one was there:

Interns, medical doctors, teachers from different institutions, some older students, traders, judges, pensioners, retired soldiers, brokers, orchestral musicians, officers who discuss dogs, horses, and women, land owners who frequently come to the city, and bureaucrats, etc. all form a certain whole and bring [to the place] a special public atmosphere.⁶⁰

⁵⁶ Ernst A. Hagen, *Max von Schenkendorf's Leben, Denken und Dichten* (Berlin: Verlag der Königlichen Geheimen Ober-Hofbuchdruckerei, 1863), p. 70. Fridolin was a medieval Irish missionary who founded a monastery in Baden in the sixth or seventh century.

⁵⁷ Berghahn, p. 7.

⁵⁸ For a discussion of the role of coffee in Jewish life, see Elliott Horowitz, “Coffee, Coffee Houses and the Nocturnal Rituals of Early Modern Jewry,” *AJS Review* 14, no. 1 (1989): 17-46. See Habermas for more on how coffee houses fit into the growing bourgeois public sphere. Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (Boston: MIT Press, 1991), pp. 32-34.

⁵⁹ Gudrun Marci-Boehncke, *Fanny Lewald: Jüdin, Preussin, Schriftstellerin* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1998), p. 42. See also Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), pp. 454-55.

⁶⁰ Rosenkranz, p. 112. For another nineteenth century description of the Siegelsche, see Alexander Jung, *Königsberg und die Königsberger* (Leipzig: H. Kirchner, 1846), pp. 337-53.

In the 1840s, the Siegelsche Coffee House became the center of heated political discussion between young revolutionaries, including Jewish student Johann Jacoby, who went on to be a part of the Frankfurt National Assembly.⁶¹

The acculturating Jews of Königsberg increasingly took part in the cultural life of Königsberg. They filled the seats of the first municipal theater in Königsberg founded in 1755 in honor of the five hundredth anniversary of the founding of the city. Like the coffeehouses, the theater was a place in the city where intellectuals, merchants, bureaucrats, and nobility shared the same space, even if they did not always interact with each other.⁶² In one instance, a local Jewish woman provided the content for a successful theatre production. In 1795, the wife of Jewish merchant Joseph Seligmann authored a play entitled *Bestrafte Eitelkeit* (Punished Vanity) that was rather successful on the stage in Königsberg.⁶³

Königsberg had literary salons, many in the homes of the local aristocracy. One of note was the salon of Heinrich Christian von Keyserling, whose house on the Vorderrossgarten was a meeting place for the city's literary, musical and philosophical elite.⁶⁴ Since no mention in either primary or secondary sources is ever made of Jews attending any of these aristocratic gatherings, it is unlikely that the hosts ever invited them. Salons in the homes of the Königsberg middle classes, however, were more open

⁶¹ Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), p. 443.

⁶² Conrad Ernst Ackermann was behind the project. Urte von Berg, *Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel: Stadtpräsident und Schriftsteller in Königsberg, 1741-1796* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2004), p. 58. Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," p. 162.

⁶³ No sources mention her name, but it is likely to have been Johanna Seligmann, who also performed in 1786 at the memorial for Mendelssohn discussed later in the chapter. Krüger, p. 53.

⁶⁴ Bruno Schumacher, *Geschichte Ost- und Westpreussens* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1957), pp. 234-35. Berg, p. 59.

to Jews. Johanna Motherby, the wife of Scottish merchant Robert Motherby, hosted a salon. In light of the established relationship between the Motherby family and the Jews of Königsberg, it is possible that certain Jews visited her salon.⁶⁵ Heinriette Barckley, the wife of merchant David Barckley, also had a salon that Max von Schenkendorf and Samuel Friedländer regularly attended. At the Barckley house, they were known to engage in dramatic readings of German plays, including Goethe's *Torquato Tasso* (1790).⁶⁶ Certain Jews might have also made an appearance at Kant's famous "Table Society" (*Tischgesellschaft*). At one o'clock daily, the professor had a standing invitation for his friends and acquaintances outside the university to join him for food and discussion. Moses Mendelssohn certainly attended these gatherings during his visit, and it is likely that some of Kant's former Jewish pupils showed up as well.⁶⁷

Certain social contexts, however, were still entirely closed to Jews. Königsberg's Freemason Lodges did not allow Jewish membership in the eighteenth century. The first Prussian Jew accepted to a Masonic lodge was in Berlin in 1767. Elsewhere in Prussia, membership took several more decades.⁶⁸ A fraternal organization dating back to the late seventeenth century, freemasonry wished to create a new social network divorced from religion, class and politics. This, however, often did not materialize. When Prussian bureaucrats started to become members of Masonic lodges in Danzig and Thorn in the 1780s, the aristocrats distanced themselves from the organization rather than accept

⁶⁵ Garber, p. 99.

⁶⁶ Hagen, pp. 43-44.

⁶⁷ Moreover, some of the regular visitors to Kant's table like Robert Motherby and Johann Conrad Jacobi were individuals known to be tolerant of Jews. Berg, pp. 60-61.

⁶⁸ The first Jew admitted to the Freemasons in Berlin recited his oath on the Pentateuch rather than on the whole Christian Bible Jacob Katz, *Emancipation and Assimilation: Studies in Modern Jewish History* (Westmead: Gregg International Publishers Ltd., 1972), p. 150.

middle class Germans. The delicate social balance of a closed society kept members from opening their doors to those who were culturally different.⁶⁹ Prussian lodges were some of the last to accept Jews fully into their membership, in large part because the Hohenzollerns blocked their admission. Despite this prohibition, individual lodges in Prussia oftentimes allowed Jews to attend as guests.⁷⁰ In 1789, a Russian Jewish Freemason by the name of Levin from the Urania Lodge in Saint Petersburg had plans to travel to Königsberg and requested guest admission to the Johannis Lodge and permission to participate in lodge activities. During Russian occupation of Königsberg during the Seven Years War, the Russians were actually responsible for revitalizing the Johannis Lodge (also called the Dreikronen Lodge). Despite this connection, the Königsberg lodge not only denied Levin entry into their facilities; they also took his request as an opportunity to lecture their fellow lodge in Russia about the dangers of admitting Jews into the fold.⁷¹

Face-to-face interactions between Jews and Christians is not the only way to gauge the degree of Jewish integration in Königsberg. One can also find examples of a growing engagement on the part of Königsberg's Jews with German intellectual and cultural life. In an effort to integrate more fully, the Jews of Prussia adopted the values of German bourgeois culture, in particular a zeal for *Bildung*. Most accurately translated

⁶⁹ Stanislaw Salmonowicz, "Königsberg, Thorn und Danzig: Zur Geschichte Königsbergs als Zentrum der Aufklärung," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 27. Hoffmann writes of how the exclusion of Jews from German Freemasonry was in large part justified by a definite perception of masculine sociability in which Jewish men did not fit. Stefan-Ludwig Hoffmann, "Brothers or Strangers?: Jews and Freemasons in Nineteenth-Century Germany," *German History* 18, no. 2 (2000): p. 145.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*: p. 151. For a detailed study of Jews and Freemasons, see Jacob Katz, *Jews and Freemasons in Europe, 1723-1939*, trans. L. Oschry (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1970).

⁷¹ Ulrich Wyrwa, *Juden in der Toskana und in Preussen im Vergleich* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 74-75. John H. Zammito, *Kant, Herder and the Birth of Anthropology* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2002), p. 100.

as self-improvement or self-cultivation, the pursuit of *Bildung* included a dedication on the part of the individual to pursue knowledge privately. It was not only about education but ultimately about character formation.⁷² In his old age, Joachim Moses Friedländer liked to read contemporary German literature, including the works of Herder and Lessing.⁷³ In his recollections from childhood, Eduard von Simson remembered once flipping through some books of his late grandfather Simon Joachim Friedländer (1764-1813). One work was a first edition of Gotthold Ephraim Lessing's *Wie die Alten den Tod gebildet* (How the Ancients Represented Death), first published in 1769, in which there were marginalia in his grandfather's hand indicating a knowledge of Latin.⁷⁴ This recollection validates the claim that Joachim Moses gave his children a classical education alongside a Jewish one. This focus on the Greek and Latin classics was of central concern to the pursuit of *Bildung*.⁷⁵ Rebekka Friedländer (1770-1838), the daughter of Meyer Friedländer, shared her grandfather's love of the German language and culture.⁷⁶ This interest, most likely nurtured in her youth by her close friend and

⁷² Hoffmann: pp. 143-45. Hoffmann outlines some of the reasons why *Bildung* became particularly important to the Jews and other marginalized groups. For more on Jewish adoption of the German concept of *Bildung*, see David Sorokin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). Berghahn, pp. 18-20. George L. Mosse, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, ed. J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 2-4.

⁷³ Fraenkel: p. 68.

⁷⁴ Bernhard von Simson, ed., *Eduard von Simson: Erinnerungen aus seinem Leben* (Leipzig: S. Hirzel, 1900), p. 3.

⁷⁵ Mosse, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Rebekka Friedländer should not be confused with Rebecca Friedländer (1783-1815), the German author who changed her name to Regina Froberg after she converted. Froberg was the former wife of Moses Friedländer, the son of David Friedländer. She was also a figure in the Jewish salon movement of the late eighteenth century. She divorced Moses in 1804 and converted later in life. See Deborah Hertz, "Emancipation through Intermarriage? Wealthy Jewish Salon Women in Old Berlin," in *Jewish Women in Historical Perspective*, ed. Judith Baskin (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1998), pp. 200-01.

tutor Isaac Euchel, extended even to Christian religious works. She preferred to read scripture from Martin Luther's Bible translation and also had a well-worn copy of Christian sermons.⁷⁷

The Friedländer family amassed quite a large collection of European art and rare books, in particular copper engravings (*Kupferstiche*). Simon Joachim Friedländer had a sizeable number of them, as did his other elder brothers, Bernhardt, Meyer, and Wulff Friedländer.⁷⁸ The brothers appeared to have a friendly competition going between them as to who could amass the most copper engravings. The collection was so large and notable that for a time the family opened up their home to the public to view the engravings.⁷⁹ The interest in copper engravings likely came from the family's acquaintance with Johann Michael Siegfried Löwe (1756-1831), a Jewish artist who specialized in them. Born into a poor family in Königsberg, the Friedländer family took Löwe under their wing, and he remained in lifelong contact with them.⁸⁰

The autobiography of Fanny Lewald (1811-1889) is full of examples of the early nineteenth century integration of Königsberg's Jews into German society. Lewald's family earned their fortune in shipping and banking. The family business, Beer Markus

Liliane Weissberg, "Bodies in Pain: Reflections on the Berlin Jewish Salon," in *The German-Jewish Dialogue Reconsidered*, ed. K. Berghahn (New York: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 61-65.

⁷⁷ Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 30.

⁷⁸ Simson, ed., p. 3.

⁷⁹ Baczko, *Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung Königsbergs*, pp. 353-54. Fraenkel: pp. 67-68. Jolowicz extrapolates from Baczko's list of the Friedländer's art and book collections that the family "rarely" collected Hebrew books, but there is no such suggestion of that in Baczko's actual list of what they owned. Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), p. 93.

⁸⁰ Löwe's birth name was Moses Samuel Löwe. He moved from Königsberg to Berlin and later to St. Petersburg. Ronny Kabus, *Juden in Ostpreussen* (Husum: Husum Druck- und Verlagsgesellschaft 1998), p. 24. Krüger, p. 54. See also Jolowicz, p. 102.

and Company, was run by Fanny's father David Markus (1787-1846) and her uncle Beer Markus.⁸¹ David Markus, who changed his name to the less Jewish sounding Lewald, eventually became one of the first Jewish city councilors in Königsberg. As a teenager, Fanny spent considerable time socially with non-Jews. In fact, her first marriage proposal was from a devout Christian and theology student by the name of Leopold Bock, who was apparently not bothered by Fanny's religious affiliation.⁸²

Lewald's description of her family home in Königsberg reveals the degree to which her Jewish parents emulated Christian values and tastes. The foyer had numerous copper engravings on the walls. Some were English, others replicas of Old Masters. One reproduction was of a Madonna and Child by sixteenth century Italian painter Hannibal Caracci (1560-1609). A professor from the Albertina had painted Greek goddesses on the foyer's ceiling and white pheasants on the walls. Lewald declared both the foyer and the formal living room of her house to be "our museum."⁸³ The way they decorated their regular living quarters also revealed the Lewald's adherence to current bourgeois tastes. The fabric of their curtains had "pagodas and Chinamen." By the early nineteenth century, Germans had already begun to demonstrate a fascination with Asian art and culture.⁸⁴ They had lined the walls of the daily parlor with family portraits. Like most

⁸¹ For more on Lewald's life, see Deborah Hertz, "The Lives, Loves, and Novels of August and Fanny Lewald, the Converted Cousins from Königsberg," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 46 (2001): pp. 95-112.

⁸² Deborah Hertz, "Work, Love and Jewishness in the Life of Fanny Lewald," in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1870*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), pp. 205-06, 15. .

⁸³ Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1871), pp. 60-64. Lewald writes that the painter was "Proffesor Huhn", but I was unable to find any professors by that name at the Albertina.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 63-64. Lewald's description of the furniture and decorations in her home mirrors that given by Steven Lowenstein of houses of the Jewish upper classes in Berlin at the time. See Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, p. 49. For a discussion of German

girls in her school, an artist had painted a childhood portrait of her with her siblings. The pastel portrait was life-sized, and the children sat in a contrived, artistic pose. Lewald dangled a bunch of grapes towards her eldest brother seated in front of her. Such stylized portraits were common among the rising Jewish middle class in Prussia who had embraced contemporary artistic sensibilities and conventions.⁸⁵

Certain wealthier Jews who adopted German culture and engaged in regular cross-cultural interactions decided to leave the Jewish community altogether.⁸⁶ For them, *Bildung* became a type of ersatz-religion, a secular form of salvation achieved not through submission to a higher power but rather through self-improvement.⁸⁷ With the encouragement of their parents, Fanny Lewald and her siblings converted to Christianity as in the 1820s. Her father wanted to convert as well, but did not for fear that such a move would damage his important business relationships with Polish Jews.⁸⁸ Both Jewish members of the “Floral Wreath of the Baltic Sea” literary society discussed above converted to Christianity. Ludwig Hermann Friedländer did so at the age of twenty two.

Orientalism, see Suzanne Marchand, *German Orientalism in the Age of Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009).

⁸⁵ Lewald, p. 64. Henryk Rietz, "Die Kultur West- und Ostpreussens in den Jahren 1772 bis 1815," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 3.

⁸⁶ Lowenstein breaks down Prussian conversion into three waves: 1770-1815, 1800-1820, and 1822-1830. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, pp. 123-26.

⁸⁷ D. Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 17. Shulamit Volkov, "Die Verbürgerlichung der Juden in Deutschland: Eigenart und Paradigma," in *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Verbürgerlichung, Recht und Politik*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), p. 123.

⁸⁸ Deborah Hertz, *How Jews Became Germans: The History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 167.

He would have done so earlier, but out of respect to his parents, waited until he left Königsberg in 1812.⁸⁹

Concerned Jews at the time labeled the trend an “epidemic of baptism” (*Taufepidemie*).⁹⁰ Berlin was the center of most Jewish conversions to Christianity in Prussia in the early nineteenth century, but percentage wise Königsberg was not far behind. The city had a disproportionate amount of conversions. Only two percent of the total Jewish population at the time, Königsberg had seven percent of Prussia’s Jewish converts.⁹¹

Most of the Friedländer family converted to Christianity in the next generation or two. By the early twentieth century, it appears as if the descendants of Joachim Moses Friedländer did not even know that they had Jewish roots. In the introduction to his 1913 biography of his Jewish forefathers, Ernst Friedländer of Hamburg wrote that many of the approximately three hundred living relatives of the Königsberg branch of the family might be aware of how successful and rich their ancestors were. But what Ernst Friedländer thought might come as surprise and “perhaps a slight feeling of uneasiness” to his readers was that they were Jewish.⁹² In less than two hundred years, the Friedländers’ descendants were entirely Christian.

⁸⁹ David Assing eventually converted in the 1810s and married Rosa Marie von Varnhagen (1783-1840). Friedländer, *Erinnerungen, Reden und Studien*, p. 12.

⁹⁰ Kessler, p. 53. Both Steven Lowenstein and Deborah Hertz have challenged the notion that conversions to Christianity were that widespread. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, pp. 120-76. Lowenstein, "Jewish Upper Crust and Berlin Jewish Enlightenment: The Family of Daniel Itzig," p. 201. Deborah Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988).

⁹¹ Breslau had fourteen percent of Prussia’s Jewish population and twenty two percent of Jewish converts. A. Menes, "The Conversion Movement in Prussia During the First Half of the 19th Century," *Yivo Annual of Jewish Social Science* VI (1951): pp. 193-94. Hartmann: p. 41. Albert A. Breuer, *Geschichte der Juden in Preussen (1750-1820)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1991), pp. 376-79.

The Albertina

Even though the university did not allow Jews to matriculate until the 1730s, several managed to enroll before that. Polish Jew Solomon Fürst (ca.1660-1725), studied at the university in the 1710s shortly before he became the first official rabbi of the Königsberg Jewish community. In addition to his studies, Fürst unofficially taught Hebrew at the Albertina, as well as did translation work for the university. Fürst's position at the university as a teacher and translator so early in the eighteenth century was unusual. He was the first active rabbi in Prussia to attend university classes.⁹³

For at least a century, Jewish converts to Christianity had studied at the university. Some students converted years before, clearly out of conviction. Others converted right before matriculating and appear to have used baptism as a means to gain access to higher education in Königsberg. By the middle of the eighteenth century, the Albertina even had a special scholarship designated for Jewish converts called the Mahranschen Stipend. Christian Gottfried Seligmann (1717-1781) was the first convert to receive it.⁹⁴ Seligmann was a former rabbi from Prague who converted to Christianity in Königsberg in 1750. He eventually became a mathematics teacher at the Friedrichs-Collegium, as well as the city's official translator of Hebrew and Yiddish documents.⁹⁵

⁹² Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 9.

⁹³ Krüger, p. 91. Jolowicz, p. 45.

⁹⁴ Kessler, p. 36. For biographies of many of these converts, see Kessler.

⁹⁵ The Upper Count of the Castle (*Oberburggraf*) gave him this responsibility in April 1750. G.D. Kypke objected to Seligmann's position, since he had traditionally been the one to do the translations for local government. Heinrich Blank, "Die Übersetzer Für Hebräisch und Jiddisch in Königsberg in der Zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," *Mitteilungen des Vereins für die Geschichte von Ost- und Westpreussen* 15, no. 1 (1940): pp. 1-2. Kessler, p. 36.

The Albertina was the last Prussian university to allow Jewish matriculation. In fact, Frederick William I had to coerce the university administration to admit Jews.⁹⁶ In 1731, Abraham Moses Levin was one of the first Jewish students to attend the Albertina. Levin was a brother of Joachim Moses Friedländer. Because Levin could not recite the Christian oath, the university replaced the oath with a generic handshake. Levin, however, felt so unwelcome among the faculty and students in Königsberg that he left after only a few years.⁹⁷

In order to bypass the numerous limitations of Jewish commerce in Königsberg, many foreign Jews who wanted to conduct trade in the city registered as students at the Albertina. One example of this was Salomon Seligo (ca.1751-1816), a Jewish student from Potsdam who enrolled at the university in 1780 purportedly to study medicine. Instead of studying, however, Seligo worked for over thirteen years at the business firm Seligmanns Witwen Sohn & Co.⁹⁸ Such abuse of student enrollment angered the Medical Faculty, who complained to the crown in 1793 about the quality of Jewish students enrolled.⁹⁹

Although Jewish enrollment at the Albertina started out slowly, by the late eighteenth century, Königsberg had the highest percentage of Jews in all German universities.¹⁰⁰ Open Jewish matriculation at the Albertina, however, did not mean that

⁹⁶ Andreas Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), p. 82.

⁹⁷ Beck: p. 73. Steffen Dietzsch, "Kant, die Juden und das akademische Bürgerrecht in Königsberg," in *Königsberg: Beiträge zu einem besonderen Kapitel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. J. Kohlen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), p. 119.

⁹⁸ In 1799, Seligo and his family converted to Christianity. They eventually moved to Berlin. Dietzsch, p. 121. Krüger, p. 94. Kessler, p. 36.

⁹⁹ Beck: pp. 73-74.

Jews had access to all university meetings and activities. For instance, the student senate did not allow Jews to take on certain leadership positions. A Jew could not serve as the “Entrepreneure”, the elected organizer of the winter ball, even though Jews were members of the student senate. Johann Jacoby eventually protested this restriction and had it overturned.¹⁰¹

One significant example of Christian Jewish interaction at the Albertina was between Jews and the faculty. Several Jews like Berlin native Marcus Herz developed lifelong friendships with their former professors. As a teenager in the 1760s, Herz came to Königsberg and established a rapport with Immanuel Kant while attending his philosophical lectures.¹⁰² In March 1770, Herz had even been a respondent at Kant’s dissertation defense, even though the university senate had initially objected to having a Jew take on such an honorary role.¹⁰³ Even after returning to Berlin and becoming a practicing physician in 1774, Herz continued his philosophical pursuits, lecturing and publishing several works.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ In the late eighteenth century, Jewish enrollment averaged around sixty. By 1812, one hundred and twelve Jews attended the Albertina. Steffen Dietzsch, *Immanuel Kant: eine Biographie* (Leipzig: Reclam Verlag, 2003), p. 119.

¹⁰¹ This was Jacoby’s first time to be in the public eye. He went on to be one of the key players in the March 1848 revolution. Edmund Silberner, "Zur Jugendbiographie von Johann Jacoby," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* IX (1969): p. 14.

¹⁰² Years later Kant reflected on his Jewish friend in a letter to Johann Heinrich Lambert dated September 2, 1770: “[Marcus Herz] is a young man of excellent character, industrious and capable, who adheres to and profits from every piece of good advice.” Immanuel Kant, *Philosophical Correspondence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967), p. 60.

¹⁰³ Martin Davies, *Identity or History? Marcus Herz and the End of the Enlightenment* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), p. 20.

¹⁰⁴ In Berlin, Herz married Hamburg native Henriette De Lemos, who later became a leading hostess in the intellectual circles of the Berlin salons. Hertz, *Jewish High Society in Old Regime Berlin*.

Kant also befriended another Jewish medical student at the Albertina by the name of Aaron Isaac Joel (1747-1813). Joel attended Kant's lectures while studying medicine, and eventually became Kant's personal physician, along with his duties as resident doctor at the Jewish hospital in Königsberg.¹⁰⁵ In a letter to Mendelssohn dated July 13, 1778, Kant expressed his admiration for Joel: "His sound intelligence, industry, orderliness, and above all, the friendly disposition of his heart permit the expectation that he will establish himself before long as a skillful and respected physician."¹⁰⁶ Like several other Jews before him, Euchel also had significant interactions with Immanuel Kant. In 1786, eighteen of Kant's students, including Euchel, published a poem praising their mentor, who had just been appointed to the position of University Rector.¹⁰⁷ Euchel also developed a friendship with Johann Bernhard Köhler (1742-1902), a professor at Oriental Languages at the Albertina who became Euchel's private Arabic tutor. As we will see in Chapter Seven, Köhler eventually supported Euchel's Hebrew literary project, *ha-Measef*, and his later bid to replace Köhler upon his retirement.

Euchel was one of the first Jewish students to study at the university exclusively in the humanities. His classes gave him access to a new circle of non-Jews, some of whom became acquaintances and even friends.¹⁰⁸ While the majority of Jewish social exchange still revolved around other Jews and the community as a whole, some Jews

¹⁰⁵ Krüger, p. 93.

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Altmann, ed., *Moses Mendelssohn: Briefwechsel*, vol. II, 2 (Stuttgart: Friedrich Frommann Verlag, 1976), p. 136. Altmann translated this passage in Alexander Altmann, *Moses Mendelssohn: A Biographical Study* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1973), p. 360.

¹⁰⁷ Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. C. Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 225. *An Herrn Professor Kant, da er zum erstenmal Rector der Königsbergischen Universität wurde: den 23. April 1786* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1786). Part of the poem is reprinted in Ernst Wichert, "Verse Kant's und an Kant," *Altpreussische Monatsschrift* 15 (1878): p. 383.

¹⁰⁸ Kennecke, pp. 83-84. Feiner, p. 225.

developed closer ties with non-Jews. What remained the same, however, was the secondary status of the Jews before the state. This continued denial of political rights and general public discomfort with Jews as potential equal citizens influenced the degree to which Jews were allowed to attend state sponsored events.

Public Life

Throughout the eighteenth century, the Jewish community in Königsberg marked important historical events in the life of their city and of Prussia as a whole. Often, however, these Jewish commemorations took place separately and removed from the public at large, usually taking place in the main synagogue. Royal coronations and public events in honor of the crown were important civic events to which the Jews were often excluded. That Jews chose to conduct complimentary commemorations or events despite their outright exclusion points to how much the community desired political integration and equality. The Jews of Königsberg felt like they had a personal stake both in the history and life of their city and in the fortunes of the Prussian state.

In many respects, this was the beginnings of a German Jewish subculture that David Sorkin and other scholars argue developed in the nineteenth century.¹⁰⁹ Sorkin links Jewish embourgeoisement and partial application of the German ideal of *Bildung* to the creation of a distinct German-Jewish subculture and internal associational life. The increasing rejection of rabbinic authority and the widespread secularization of German Jews during the course of the nineteenth century did not lead to the dissolution of Jewish

¹⁰⁹ Sorkin, pp. 173-77. Since David Sorkin first suggested the concept of a German-Jewish subculture, several other scholars have suggested alternate terms that might sound less pejorative. Jacob Borut proposed the alternate German term *Teilkultur* (partial culture). Jacob Borut, "Vereine für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur at the End of the Nineteenth Century," in *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 41 (1996): 112-113. Rainer Liedtke, *Jewish Welfare in Hamburg and Manchester, c. 1850-1914* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 241-42.

communal ties; rather, it led to a transformation of the type of ties Jews created and the underlying ideology uniting Jews together. A “new form of ideological coherence” emerged which served as a communal bond between a large portion of middle-class German Jews who desired to emulate broader German cultural trends. When confronted with exclusion, Jews create alternate societies and events which mirrored larger German ones.¹¹⁰ Moreover, even when Jews were more or less accepted into German associational life, they continued to have their own German Jewish societies. Recent historiography has seen this not as Jewish rejection of emancipation but rather as confirmation of their sense of belonging and evidence of a multicultural society.¹¹¹

Even though Jews were not invited to the grand celebrations in 1701 celebrating the coronation of Frederick I, they still had their own public service to mark the momentous occasion. Rabbi Solomon Fürst composed a Cabbalistic poem of homage to the newly crowned king entitled “Solomon’s Golden Shield.”¹¹² In 1713, Frederick William I had no formal coronation in Königsberg, because he disliked ostentatious displays. But when the newly crowned Frederick II visited Königsberg in July 1740, the city had a celebration for him in the public square directly in front of the castle. While the government invited members of Christian minority communities to attend, including the French Huguenots, the Jews of Königsberg were not welcome.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ David Sorkin, "The Impact of Emancipation on German Jewry: A Reconsideration," in *Assimilation and Community*, ed. J. Frankel and S. Zipperstein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 188. Simone Lässig, "How German Jewry Turned Bourgeois: Religion, Culture and Social Mobility in the Age of Emancipation," *GHI Bulletin* 37 (2005): pp. 64-66. Volkov, pp. 128-30.

¹¹¹ Till van Rahden, *Jews and Other Germans: Civil Society, Religious Diversity, and Urban Politics in Breslau, 1860-1925* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 2008), pp. 4-5, 12-13. Lässig: p. 70.

¹¹² Wyrwa, p. 111. Krüger, p. 91.

¹¹³ Clark, pp. 75-76. Wyrwa, p. 114.

In 1798 with the coronation of Frederick William III, most of the celebrations took place in various churches in Königsberg, which excluded the Jews. The king, however, did take the time later on in his visit to accept the congratulations of the Jewish elders. Queen Luise also saw a delegation of Jewish women.¹¹⁴ The local branch of the Society of Friends (*Gesellschaft der Freunde*) organized a public gathering in honor of Frederick William III the same week. Important members of the community, including prominent Christians, took part in the event. Jacob Aronsson (b. 1774), one of the society's founding members, gave a talk entitled "On the Duties of a Citizen to the Monarchal State."¹¹⁵

When the one hundred year anniversary of Frederick I's crowning came along, the Jews marked the occasion with the rest of the city on January 19, 1801. Many local dignitaries attended a celebration at the German Society (*Deutsche Gesellschaft*). At the synagogue, Rabbi Joshua Beer Herzfeld delivered a sermon in German on certain passages from the Proverbs. The Königsberg Jewish community commemorated the important public occasion by opening the Torah Ark (*Aron ha-Kodesh*). In addition to the address on Proverbs, Dr. William Motherby (1776-1847) read an recent essay he had written about cowpox immunizations. He urged his Jewish listeners to provide them free of charge to poor children in the community. Motherby's participation in the Jewish event underscored the rapprochement that the community had with the family over the

¹¹⁴ Wyrwa, p. 120.

¹¹⁵ Jacob Aronsson, "Über die Pflichten des Bürgers im monarchischen Staat: Eine in der Gesellschaft der Freunde in Königsberg am 7ten Juni, 1798 zur Feier der Huldigung gehaltene Rede" (Königsberg: Degen, 1798). Born in Berlin, Aronsson studied medicine in Königsberg from 1794 to 1798. Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), p. 97.

years. Moreover, it transformed the event from a minority religious celebration to a public event that was noticed in the local press.¹¹⁶

Perhaps the most noteworthy event in Königsberg during the eighteenth century that illustrated German Jewish integration was a memorial service for Moses Mendelssohn held on May 9, 1787. The musical event was held in the town hall in Königsberg. Backed by an orchestra and a sizeable choir, two Jewish female vocalists performed a musical rendition of Karl Rahmler's poem *Sulamith und Eusebia*. Bernhard Wessely, the nephew of Naphtali Herz Wessely, wrote the music to the "*Trauerkantate auf den Tod Moses Mendelssohns*." The audience numbered over five hundred people and included both Jews and non-Jews.¹¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, who was never known to attend musical events, attended the performance out of respect to his late friend, although he complained afterwards about how the vocals felt to him like an "eternal bothersome whining."¹¹⁸ The Society for the Furtherance of the Hebrew Language sponsored the event, and the society's leader Isaac Euchel introduced the music and closed the program. The evening was both the crowning and concluding public event of the short lived Hebrew literary society in Königsberg. Shortly thereafter, Euchel and the society's journal *ha-Measef* moved to Berlin.¹¹⁹

While a memorable evening, non-Jewish attendance at an event organized by and performed by Königsberg's Jews did not indicate full acceptance of the Jewish

¹¹⁶ "Vermischte Nachrichten und Bemerkungen," *Neue Allgemeine Deutsche Bibliothek* 58, no. 1 (1801): p. 208.

¹¹⁷ Julius Fürst, *Bibliotheca Judaica*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1863), p. 506. Feiner, p. 219. The *Berlinische Monatsschrift* printed the text to *Sulamith and Eusebia*. *Berlinische Monatsschrift* 6 (June 1786): 481-486.

¹¹⁸ Quoted in Kurt Joachim Grau, ed., *Kant - Anekdoten* (Berlin: Georg Stilke, 1924), p. 35.

¹¹⁹ Feiner, p. 219. See Chapter Seven for an extensive discussion of the *Hevrat Dorshe Leshon 'Ever*.

community into Königsberg's public life. A widespread reverence in the East Prussian city for the late Mendelssohn certainly motivated a large non-Jewish contingent to attend. Although a Jew, Prussians considered Mendelssohn to be a German philosopher of note. Königsbergers in particular seemed to have a reverence for Mendelssohn, as evidenced by the accolades in the local press during his visit. Moreover, in the Kanter bookhouse a portrait of Mendelssohn hung along with Kant and other Königsberg intellectuals.¹²⁰ Yet the event nonetheless signified the emergence of a new type of public space in which Jews and non-Jews began to mix socially.

In his work on the Jews of Breslau, Till van Rahden uses both the terms integration and inclusion to describe the complex relationship between Jews and Germans in the nineteenth century. To him, integration implies a broader level of acceptance, while inclusion merely suggests that Jews took part in culture without fully belonging.¹²¹ From looking at select instances of Jewish cross-cultural exchange in Königsberg, we can see examples of both inclusion and of full-fledged integration. Changed Jewish reading habits and the adoption of European decorative tastes in their homes suggest a Jewish desire for integration into German society. Such aspirations pointed more towards the possibility of future incorporation but in and of themselves did not indicate actual integration.

Jewish admittance into the student body at the Albertina was a form of reluctant inclusion for most of the eighteenth century. But their entry into the university eventually led to more profound forms of Jewish integration in Königsberg. The best example of true integration outlined above is the invitation by Schenkendorf and

¹²⁰ Berg, p. 58.

¹²¹ Rahden, p. 7.

Schrötter for two Jews and fellow students to join their fledging brotherhood. This was a voluntary act unprovoked by the state. Yet, we must also keep in mind that both of the Jews invited into the “Floral Wreath of the Baltic Sea” were close to conversion and indeed might have already discussed with their friends their eventual wish to leave Judaism behind. In the early nineteenth century, the boundaries of German-Jewish integration and inclusion were still shifting and far from clear-cut. In the Königsberg Jewish community, we can see glimpses of the change to come. The collective embourgeoisement (*Bürgerlichkeit*) of the German Jews, however, was still decades away. At this point, it was still limited to a certain strata of the Königsberg Jewish community.¹²²

The interplay of culture and exchange is useful in a discussion of the process by which German Jews became middle-class (*Verbürgerlichung*). Financial success gave the Jews of Königsberg and elsewhere the means and the opportunity to initially pursue a middle class lifestyle. Commercial endeavors not only provided the funds to purchase the material trappings of such a way of life; they were also the first ways in which Jews engaged in cross-cultural interactions.¹²³ Later Jews were able to become middle class and adopt bourgeois sensibilities without as much wealth or status. By this point, education and the whole-hearted adoption of *Bildung* carried its own prestige and pedigree separate from the balance of one’s bank account. As Simone Lässig expresses, becoming a part of the German middle classes later became as much about the

¹²² Mosse, pp. 1-2.

¹²³ Volkov, p. 124.

“accumulation of cultural capital” as it was about actual wealth.¹²⁴ Yet in the early stages of integration, cultural integration was predicated on economic exchange. It was the foundation upon which Jewish acculturation was built.

¹²⁴ Lässig: pp. 61-62. Simone Lässig, "Bildung als *Kulturelles Kapital*? Jüdische Schulprojekte in der Frühphase der Emanzipation," in *Juden, Bürger, Deutsche: Zur Geschichte von Vielfalt und Differenz, 1800-1933*, ed. A. Gotzmann, R. Liedtke, and T. Rahden (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2001), pp. 263-98.

Chapter Six A Learned Siberia: Königsberg's Place in Historiography

When historians think of Königsberg, the first figure that usually comes to mind is Immanuel Kant. Many mention well-known anecdotes about the famous philosopher's eccentricities and self-described isolation. Kant's daily walk around old Königsberg, which many inhabitants claimed was so repetitive you could set your watch by his amblings, is part of the mythology both of the philosopher and of the city itself. Nineteenth century poet Heinrich Heine wrote that "the neighbors knew that it was exactly half-past three when Kant, in his grey coat and with the Spanish reed in his hand, stepped out of his door."¹ Königsberg, the place of Kant's birth, life, and death, was an appropriate setting for the insular philosopher. In good weather, the city was at least a week's journey by land to Berlin. The winter's were particularly harsh, with the first snowfall usually in October. The Pregel river was frozen solid in the winter, so much so that one could walk between the ships fixed in place for the season.²

In writing the introduction to *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View*, first published in 1798, Kant had a problem. The science of anthropology, which Kant defined as knowledge of the world, was difficult for a man who had never left East Prussia to acquire. In some respects, the world came to him in the form of curious pilgrims looking for interaction with the learned philosopher. These travelers came from

¹ Quoted in J.H.W. Stuckenberg, *The Life of Immanuel Kant* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1882), p. 162.

² Ludwig von Bacsko, *Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung Königsbergs*, 2nd ed. (Königsberg: Goebbels & Unzer, 1804), p. 96. Edmund Silberner, "Zur Jugendbiographie von Johann Jacoby," *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* IX (1969): p. 12.

a world similar to his own, a republic of letters.³ In Kant's case, this phrase is particularly pertinent. His voluminous correspondence with fellow intellectuals took the place of face to face meetings with those faraway from Kant's house on Prince's Street in Königsberg.

How could a man who had stayed put his whole life assert a pragmatic knowledge of the world? In the discrete form of a footnote, Kant explained himself.

A large city like Königsberg on the river Pregel, the capital of a state, where the representative National Assembly of the government resides, a city with a university (for the cultivation of the sciences), a city also favored by its location for maritime commerce, and which by way of rivers has the advantages of commerce both with the interior of the country as well as with neighboring countries of different languages and customs, [this city] can well be taken as an appropriate place for enlarging one's knowledge of people as well as of the world at large, where such knowledge can be acquired even without travel.⁴

For Kant, the pursuit of knowledge so central to man's highest purpose took place first and foremost in his local surroundings. Through daily life in Königsberg, Kant saw himself as able to walk the path towards universal knowledge.

In this short description of the city of his birth, life, and death, Kant lays out some of the main reasons why Königsberg in the late eighteenth century was positioned to become a key center of the Jewish Enlightenment or *haskalah*. Not only was it the capital of East Prussia and the royal seat of the Hohenzollerns, it was a longstanding Northern European center of scholarship. The Albertus University in Königsberg, more frequently called the Albertina, was founded in 1544 with the specific goal of reaching

³Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. C. Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 186.

⁴Immanuel Kant, *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, trans. V. Dowdell (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1996), pp. 5-6. Some scholars have challenged Kant's view of Königsberg and question the amount of political and cultural importance he gave to his hometown. See for example, Reinhard Brandt, "Kant in Königsberg," in *Studien zur Entwicklung Preussischer Universitäten*, ed. R.Brandt and W.Euler (Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 1999), pp. 279-80.

both German and non-German academics. In a July 1544 proclamation, the founders of the Albertina expressed the wish, “that our academy would be of use to the large population of people who border East Prussia to the east and west.”⁵

As a Prussian stronghold bordering Poland-Lithuania, Königsberg was strategically positioned to have a dual intellectual influence on east and west. Chapter Four showed how Königsberg was also a commercial bridge between Eastern and Western Europe that attracted both German and Polish Jewish merchants. It was in this environment that the Friedländer family made their fortunes. The Friedländer family’s successful commercial endeavors in the mid eighteenth century provided the necessary funding for intellectual pursuits and eventually for the later publication of *ha-Measef* and the local *haskalah* movement.⁶ Without the Friedländer family and their financial and social clout with the wider European Jewish community, *ha-Measef* would have never been published.

Yet, despite the pivotal role of Königsberg and its most prominent Jewish family in the creation of *ha-Measef*, the historiography of the German Jewish Enlightenment has been slow to recognize the city and the Friedländer’s contribution to the project. In the following, I argue that this is partially because of an oftentimes singular focus on Berlin to define the Prussian Jewish experience. Yet, it is not only the supremacy of Berlin but also the ambivalence surrounding Königsberg’s location removed geographically from

⁵ Fritz Gause, *Königsberg in Preussen: die Geschichte einer Europäischen Stadt* (Munich: Gräfe und Unzer Verlag, 1968), p. 62.

⁶ Steven Lowenstein has a similar argument regarding the Jewish community in Berlin. He pinpoints the Seven Years’ War as the event that led to the creation of a new Jewish economic elite in Berlin. Those Jews, including the Itzig family, entrusted with the minting of coins during the war became extraordinarily wealthy. This gave them the means to fund cultural and intellectual endeavors. Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 25-27. See also Engelhard Weigl, *Schauplätze der deutschen Aufklärung: ein Städterundgang* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1997), pp. 176-77.

the heart of Prussia that has contributed to the historian's lack of attention. Both provincial and progressive at the same time, Königsberg in the eighteenth century was a city of extremes and contradictions. Such contradictions emerge from Königsberg's location on the borderlands of Eastern and Western Europe. It was an international port city that struggled to satisfy its intellectual citizens with proper reading material. It was a place where one of Prussia's foremost philosophers resided; yet, descriptions of the city as "half Asian" or as a "learned Siberia" belie Kant's own rosy picture of Königsberg in the opening to *Anthropology*.

The city's contradictions have led to confusion regarding its place in Prussian Jewry. As one of the three largest Jewish communities in eighteenth and nineteenth century Prussia, Königsberg had a place of prominence alongside Berlin and Breslau. Neither Breslau, located in lower Silesia (current day southwest Poland), nor Königsberg were in Brandenburg. But Breslau, was less than two hundred miles from Berlin. Königsberg's location four hundred miles east of the administrative center of Prussia created a sense of isolation, whether imagined or real, that shaped local and outsiders' perceptions of the city. Some of these perceptions appear to come from concrete experiences in Königsberg, while others come from longstanding prejudices about East Prussia and its capital.

The negative descriptions of Königsberg that follow might come as a surprise to the reader after the presentation of the port city in the previous chapters as a cross-cultural center of trade and exchange. All of this was true, but it was also the case that the city was limited culturally by its non-contiguous placement on the Northern Baltic. In the case of Königsberg, its geographic remoteness from Brandenburg in many respects

shaped its historical legacy.⁷ German and Jewish historiography have reflected the contradictory impressions of Prussian contemporaries and the sense of ambivalence about life in Königsberg.

Immanuel Kant and the Albertina

German scholar Eberhard Weigl writes that the “age of Enlightenment in Königsberg begins and ends with Immanuel Kant.”⁸ The itinerary of almost every learned individual who came to Königsberg included attendance at one of Kant’s university lectures and oftentimes a personal visit with him in his home. Kant was a fixture in Königsberg’s social and intellectual life and often interacted with prominent Jewish townspeople. In her autobiography, Fanny Lewald wrote of how her maternal grandfather was regularly greeted by Kant on his daily walk past their house.⁹ Throughout his years at the Albertina, a circle of budding German philosophers like Johann Gottlieb Fichte surrounded Kant. In some respects, these students gave Königsberg a heightened cultural and intellectual energy; yet they also brought to the city their preconceived notions of Königsberg’s inferiority and remoteness.

Even though Berlin did not have its own university until the early nineteenth century, most Berliners did not choose to move east to Königsberg and study at Prussia’s premiere university. Only a small number enrolled at the university, and in the eighteenth century most came to study under Kant. The majority of the university’s

⁷ In the context of Imperial and Colonial Studies, Edward Said has referred to this as the “primacy of geography” and the “perceived character and destiny of particular geography.” Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), p. 78.

⁸ Weigl, p. 131.

⁹ Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Frankfurt am Main: U. Helmer, 1988), p. 6.

enrollment came from East Prussia, West Prussia, and Eastern Europe. The Lutheran church in Prussia encouraged and sometimes even forced native theology students to do their theological studies in Königsberg.¹⁰ The only deviation from this was among the Jews. In their case, the Albertina's location so far east in Europe did not appear to dissuade Jews from Berlin from coming to study.¹¹ This changed, though, once the Humboldt University opened in Berlin in 1810 and the Frederick Williams University in Breslau in 1811. The number of Jews who decided to come to Königsberg to study after that dropped precipitously.¹²

In the 1744, roughly fifteen percent of the student body at the Albertina was from Poland and Lithuania.¹³ In particular, the medical and philosophical faculties attracted students from Eastern Europe. The university even had Polish and Lithuanian Seminars that were conducted in Polish and Lithuanian. These seminars were intended to accommodate not only students from those lands but also German students who intended to move there and become pastors or teachers.¹⁴ Those few students who came to

¹⁰ Hartwig Notbohm, *Das Evangelische Kirchen- und Schulwesen in Ostpreussen während der Regierung Friedrich des Grossen*, vol. 5, *Studien zur Geschichte Preussens* (Heidelberg: Quelle & Meyer, 1959), pp. 80-81. For a general discussion of Jews in German universities, see Keith Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities: Jewish University Students in Germany, 1815-1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

¹¹ Heinz Ischreyt, "Material zur Charakteristik des Kulturellen Einzugsgebiets von Königsberg i. Pr. in der Zweiten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1995), pp. 33-34. Andreas Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), p. 83.

¹² Monika Richarz, *Der Eintritt der Juden in die Akademischen Berufe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), pp. 107-08.

¹³ In 1744, the Albertina had 1,032 students, 181 of whom were from Poland and Lithuania. Stanislaw Salmonowicz, "Königsberg, Thorn und Danzig: Zur Geschichte Königsbergs als Zentrum der Aufklärung," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 19.

¹⁴ Rural teachers in Lithuania were in such demand that those who were fluent in Lithuania received all kinds of financial incentives for their promise to work there. Henryk Rietz, "Die Kultur West- und Ostpreussens in den Jahren 1772 bis 1815," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max

Königsberg from Brandenburg and other German lands for the specific purpose of studying under Kant often felt as if they were in a sort of self-imposed exile in East Prussia. On the one hand, the city boasted a university with a formidable professorship. No one could dispute the presence of intellectual greatness in the city; yet, this was not enough to persuade most tourists or temporary residents that Königsberg was a place one would want to stay for a lifetime. In this respect, Königsberg was a provincial city that only a native East Prussian would appreciate fully and see as a destination rather than just a temporary residence.

Much of the longstanding professorship at the Albertina were native Königsbergers, and some of the professors who moved to Königsberg to teach were unhappy. Karl Rosenkranz, a philosophy professor at the Albertina beginning in 1833, thought the city had a “northern cruelty” and a “certain bleakness” that a visitor only grew to appreciate after a much longer stay.¹⁵ Johann Gottlieb Fichte (1762-1814), who came to Königsberg in 1806 to be a temporary lecturer at the university and also the newspaper censor despised the place. He described Königsberg as a “terrible city” (*eine ungeheure Stadt*). Apparently, the negative feeling Fichte had for the residents of Königsberg was mutual. Fichte was so unpopular with the students at the university that more than once disgruntled students smashed the window panes of his house. His later role as a press censor certainly did not help matters. His reception, along with his own

Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 7. Reinhold A. Dorwart, *The Prussian Welfare State before 1740* (Cambridge Harvard University Press, 1971), p. 189.

¹⁵ Karl Rosenkranz, *Königsberger Skizzen* (Berlin: Nicolai, 1991), p. 14.

prejudices, led Fichte to conclude that “Königsberg is not for me.” (*Königsberg is nicht mein Ort*).¹⁶ He only ended up staying a few months.

Contrary Impressions

After Moses Mendelssohn’s visit to Königsberg in the summer of 1777, Kant wrote to his friend and protégé Markus Herz in Berlin. In a letter to Herz dated August 20, 1777, he expressed the degree to which he yearned for a regular companion like Mendelssohn: “To have a man like him in Königsberg on a permanent basis, as an intimate acquaintance, a man of such temperament, good spirits and enlightenment – how that would give my soul the nourishment it has lacked so completely here.”¹⁷ Despite Kant’s later praise of Königsberg in the introduction to *Anthropology*, his lament at not having a man like Mendelssohn nearby does suggest a level of discontent and longing for the wider intellectual circles of Berlin.

One can find a similar restlessness in personal letters and diaries from Jews living in Königsberg. For middle class Jews living in the city, Berlin was a place of greater enlightenment and sophistication. Fanny Lewald felt more of an affinity towards the relatives on her father’s side, the Markus family, because they shared her longing for the wider circles of a larger cosmopolitan city.¹⁸ Together Fanny and her paternal relatives

¹⁶ Kasimir Lawrynowicz, *Albertina: Zur Geschichte der Albertus-Universität zu Königsberg in Preussen*, trans. Gerhild Luschnat (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1999), pp. 232-33. Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), pp. 333-34.

¹⁷ Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, trans. Arnold Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 87.

¹⁸ Deborah Hertz, "The Lives, Loves, and Novels of August and Fanny Lewald, the Converted Cousins from Königsberg," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* 46 (2001): p. 108.

bemoaned what they viewed as the provinciality of life in Königsberg and lamented their perceived isolation from learned society:

A completely different atmosphere prevailed in the house of my paternal grandparents. The Markuses had lived in Königsberg for four generations, and this grandfather had already traveled around Germany as part of his education and later married a woman from cosmopolitan Berlin. [...] He and his wife had reached the intellectual level of the Jews of Berlin, and were not too happy living in Königsberg. Grandmother did not like life in the provinces. She never felt at home there, and Grandfather would also have preferred living in Berlin or Hamburg.¹⁹

This picture of a contained and limited community is curious, considering the regular movement of people in and out of a transportation hub and port city like Königsberg. Fanny Lewald, herself discontent with the city, nonetheless wrote of the regular guests her father had from Poland and elsewhere for business purposes and of the liveliness of their home due to regular social interactions. Lewald described the extravagant dinners that her father used to impress his business clients from Russia and Poland. It appears, however, as if the type of Jewish and non-Jewish merchants from Russia and Poland that regularly travelled to and from Königsberg were not the type of people Lewald or other members of the Jewish community believed raised their level of social or intellectual discourse.

Königsberg was a city of interesting extremes in the eighteenth century. On the one hand, the local Enlightenment encouraged a relatively early climate of intellectual openness; yet on the other hand, the city was a center of Prussian militaristic nationalism.²⁰ A significant military presence in the city influenced the atmosphere of the Northern port city. In 1789, Russian author Nicholay Karamzin (1766-1826) noted that

¹⁹ Lewald, p. 7. Translated in Fanny Lewald, *The Education of Fanny Lewald: An Autobiography*, trans. H.B. Lewis (New York: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 5.

²⁰ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Die Jüdische Minderheit in Königsberg/Preussen, 1871-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), p. 11.

the army is so present in Königsberg that “one is continually running into uniforms.” Karamzin was very cognizant of appearance and attire. After describing the Prussian uniforms in detail, declaring them to be inferior to Russian military garb, he goes on to remark that once he left Königsberg, he did not see a “single properly-dressed person.”²¹ Those who came to the city from larger, cosmopolitan cities who were disappointed with the city were still able to recognize that it was cosmopolitan compared to the rest of the East Prussia.

Travelers to and from Königsberg by land were often struck by how remote the city was. Thomas Nugent (ca. 1700-1772), an English traveler, wrote that “leaving Königsberg, you travel through a cold and barren country and meet with nothing worth notice, till you come to Memel.”²² The differing topography and climate most likely contributed to the psychological sense of living separate from the rest of Prussia. Königsberg was closer to neighboring Poland-Lithuania than to the rest of Prussia. Geographically, East Prussia was a part of Eastern Europe and not at all similar to the rest of the German lands.²³ In some respects, however, the feeling of seclusion mentioned by Jews and non-Jews alike in the city was more psychological than real. The isolation that Königsberg residents felt was related more to a sense of cultural disconnect with the rest of Prussia than it was to actual geographic seclusion.

The impressions of Poles and Russians, both Jewish and Christian, who came to the city reveal that the feeling of isolation in Königsberg was indeed relative to one’s

²¹Nikolai Karamzin, *Letters of a Russian Traveler, 1789-1790*, trans. F. Jonas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1957), pp. 38-45.

²² Thomas Nugent, *The Grand Tour; or, a Journey through the Netherlands, Germany, Italy, and France*, vol. 2 (London: 1778), p. 179.

²³ Stanislaw Srokowski, *East Prussia* (Poznan: Rolnicza Drukarnia i Ksiegarnia Nakladowa, 1934), p. 5.

perspective. Instead of seeing Königsberg as a place of cultural exile, they largely viewed the city as a place of intellectual and commercial opportunity. A Russian officer by the name of Andrei Bolotov came to Königsberg in 1759 and expressed his wonder at the vastness of the Kanter book house and the amount of scientific knowledge it contained: “Since I had never been in such a highly regarded and enormous bookstore, [...] for a few minutes I stood almost in a state of ecstasy.”²⁴ This description of Königsberg as a mecca for books is in stark contrast to the impression that many professors at the university gave of the city as a publishing wasteland. East Prussians arriving in Königsberg had similar positive impressions. Johann Gottfried Herder (1744-1803) was originally from Mohrunen (current day Morąg), a smaller town in East Prussia. When he came to Königsberg at the age of seventeen to attend university, he remarked how intimidating the city was: “How astonished was I at everything [in Königsberg]! How large everything seemed to me!”²⁵

In Chapter Four, I discussed how Salomon Maimon traveled to Berlin via Königsberg in the late 1770s in search of more intellectual fulfillment. This, however, was not the first exposure Maimon had received to Königsberg. As a child growing up in Mir, a small town on the Niemen river in Poland Lithuania, Maimon had already been introduced to Königsberg through the wares and stories his father brought back with him from his travels. In his autobiography, Maimon related how his father’s trade with Königsberg brought into the house a “more refined mode of life.” They started to eat

²⁴ Quoted in Weigl, p. 20. For more on Bolotov in Königsberg, see Adelheid Rexheuser, “Andrej Bolotov: Königsberg als Bildungserlebnis eines russischen Aufklärers,” in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), pp. 87-121.

²⁵ Quoted in Wilhelm Dobbek, *Johann Gottfried Herders Jugendzeit in Mohrunen und Königsberg, 1744-1764* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1961), p. 76. For more on Herder’s time in Königsberg, see Margot Westlinning, “Der junge Herder in Königsberg,” in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), pp. 69-85.

better meals to measure up to the attractive brass utensils the father procured in the East Prussian city. Maimon wore damask clothing for the first time after his father brought home the fabric after one of his many trips to the city.²⁶ Later in his twenties, Maimon came to Königsberg in pursuit of more intellectual interactions that he lacked in Mir. The Jewish students he met from the Albertina, however, encouraged him to go to Berlin instead of staying there: “They advised me to go to Berlin, where I should best attain my object.”²⁷ Because of their suggestion, Maimon only stayed in Königsberg for a short time, and left for Berlin as soon as he was able.

Many Jewish merchants from Eastern Europe who traveled regularly to Königsberg for commercial purposes also had positive impressions. For them, the city was the beginning of the West. An example of this sentiment can even be found in the novel *The Rise of David Lewinsky* by Lithuanian born author Abraham Cahan. First published in 1917, Cahan’s main character comes to New York from Antomir, a city in northwest Russia. Cahan describes one Jewish resident in Antomir by the name of Michael Minsker who traveled to Königsberg for weeks at a time as a grain exporter. The childhood protagonist saw Minsker as one of the few worldly Jews he encountered in Antomir.²⁸ For those Jews who lived in small hamlets and *shtetls* in Poland and Lithuania, Königsberg was a cosmopolitan and wealthy German city. Despite such positive impressions of Königsberg emanating from Eastern European Jews, however, the notion of the East Prussian capital as provincial and limited nevertheless dominates the

²⁶ Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 21.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 190.

²⁸ Abraham Cahan, *The Rise of David Lewinsky* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 2002), p. 40.

historical narrative. The subservient role of the Prussian provinces to the capital in Berlin held more sway over people's impressions than did the relationship between East Prussia and its direct neighbors.

Berliners in Königsberg

In the early modern period, Berlin was a very different place from the European metropolis it would become. Geography certainly did not play a part in its eventual rise to prominence. Its topography and natural resources were not impressive, nor was its location that strategic for extensive trade.²⁹ In many respects, Königsberg was always better positioned to be a center of commerce and trade than Berlin. The East Prussian city's location on the Baltic Sea and multiple waterways and in a land rich with amber deposits made it a valuable resource for the state.³⁰ Even in the early eighteenth century, Berlin and Königsberg were of similar stature. Demographically, Berlin was always larger than Königsberg, but the discrepancy between the two cities' populations in the early eighteenth century was much less than after Berlin's rapid increase in the mid-1850s.³¹

Despite this, the perception of Königsberg emanating from Berlin always appears to have been rather negative. Not even the future Frederick II could appreciate the city in

²⁹ Christopher Clark, *Iron Kingdom: The Rise and Downfall of Prussia, 1600-1947* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), p. 1.

³⁰ Helmut Motekat, "Berlin und seine Faszination für Künstler aus Ost- und Westpreussen," in *Preussen und Berlin*, ed. U. Arnold (Lüneburg: Nordostdeutsches Kulturwerk, 1981), p. 100.

³¹ In the early 1700s, Berlin had a population of less than 60,000, while Königsberg had around 40,000. By 1800, however, Königsberg's population had actually *decreased* from the 1750s when it had 55,000 inhabitants. In contrast, by 1800, Berlin's population was over 170,000. Fritz Gause writes that in the early eighteenth century, at 40,000 residents was double the size of Berlin, but he must not have taken into account the suburbs of Berlin. Gause, p. 110. Gudrun Marci-Boehncke, *Fanny Lewald: Jüdin, Preussin, Schriftstellerin* (Stuttgart: Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1998), p. 41.

which his grandfather had been crowned with much pomp in 1701. In 1739, one year before becoming king himself, the crown prince travelled to Königsberg at the behest of his father. In a letter to a friend, he declared how miserable he was in the city: "I am certain that if I stay here much longer, I will lose whatever amount of sanity I have. I would rather die than remain here."³² A year later when he was crowned king in Königsberg, Frederick II registered his distaste again for Königsberg by leaving the city the same evening of his coronation.³³ This contrasted sharply with his grandfather's coronation in 1701, which was a drawn out affair with ongoing celebrations that lasted for months. This degree of antipathy emanating from the crown itself was bound to have an influence on how bureaucrats in Berlin perceived Königsberg.

Native East Prussians picked up on the oft undisguised disdain that Berliners in the city had for Königsberg and responded in kind. In 1727, Georg Friedrich Rogall (1700-1733), a Pietist professor at the university expressed derision for "foreigners" from Berlin who were appointed to governmental positions in East Prussia:

They are either cold or loud and do not participate at all in [our] world. [...] They consider us a lifeless group, and we resent that they sit among themselves twelve hours a day at the tobacco shop joking and having fun.³⁴

It would be incorrect to call the type of sentiment that Rogall expressed a type of rivalry between Berlin and Königsberg, because that would imply that the two cities were at all

³² Quoted in Otto van Baran, "Der Zorn Friedrich des Grosses über Ostpreussen," *Altpreussische Monatsschrift* 3-4 (1885): p. 190. Frederick II's hatred for Königsberg became even more pronounced after the Seven Years' War in the 1750s when Russia waged war in East Prussia.

³³Weigl, p. 137.

³⁴ Quoted in Carl Hinrichs, *Preussentum und Pietismus: Der Pietismus in Brandenburg-Preussen als Religiös-Soziale Reformbewegung* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1971), p. 266.

considered on an equal plane. This was simply not the case, and most residents in Königsberg had an inferiority complex about life in the provincial city.

Ludwig von Baczko, the author who used to mimic the Yiddish of Jews in the Kneiphof as a child, noticed similar impressions of Königsberg when travelling outside of East Prussia. In his memoir, he described how the distance of Königsberg from the Leipzig book trade effected outsider's impressions of the city: "In Germany, [East] Prussia is decried as almost a learned Siberia, and it is certainly the case that to some extent we are hurt by our great distance from Leipzig, the center of the German book trade." Baczko goes on to suggest that perhaps the citizens of Königsberg stand to gain more than lose from this distance, since "every moment we do not have the opportunity to achieve, to acquaint ourselves with the refutation or confirmation of new hypotheses, to have more to consider and ponder."³⁵ The reformer Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835), who came to Königsberg in 1809 and only stayed for a year, was not so kind in his reflections on the city to grant that the remote city had anything to offer. Once describing Königsberg as "terribly boring", Humboldt also reflected that "the people eat poorly and never laugh."³⁶

Such impressions of Königsberg only got worse as the population of Berlin grew and the city eventually became a European metropolis on par with Vienna, Paris, and London. In 1909, Ludwig Heinrich Friedländer (1824-1909), doctor of Philology at the Albertina in Königsberg wrote in his memoir that many Berliners he encountered had the

³⁵ Ludwig Baczko, *Versuch einer Geschichte und Beschreibung der Stadt Königsberg* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1787), p. 592.

³⁶ Quoted in Manthey, p. 357.

impression that his hometown of Königsberg was almost a “half Asian” city.³⁷ The phrase “half Asian” was first used by Germans beginning in the late nineteenth century to denote certain areas of Eastern Europe. Its origin was the 1876 work *Aus Halb-Asien: Land and Leute des ostlichen Europas* (From Half Asia: the Land and People of Eastern Europe) by German Jewish writer Karl Emil Franzos (1848-1904).³⁸ Such terminology placed Königsberg on the extreme borders of Europe and, thereby in their estimation, of civilization.

Königsberg in German Historiography

German historiography on Königsberg vacillates between interpreting the city’s isolation as either imagined or genuine. In his late nineteenth century biography of Immanuel Kant, J.H.W. Stuckenberg saw Königsberg as being closed off from the rest of the German lands. He described it as a “frontier city which had little communication with the heart of Germany, being remote from other universities, as well as from Berlin, Weimar, and other intellectual and literary centers.”³⁹ The notion of Königsberg as being part of Prussia’s periphery is appropriate, since it was not contiguous with the rest of Prussia and was the easternmost part of the kingdom. But Stuckenberg’s description of Königsberg as a “frontier city” belies the city’s royal pedigree and the central importance of East Prussia and the Teutonic Knights to the myth of German nationhood.

³⁷ Ludwig Friedländer, *Erinnerungen, Reden und Studien*, vol. 1 (Strassburg: Karl J. Trübner, 1909), p. 41. Ludwig Friedländer was a descendent of the Königsberg branch of the family. His uncle was Ludwig Hermann Friedländer from Chapter Five.

³⁸ For more on Franzos and his negative view of *Ostjuden*, see Richie Robertson, “Western Observers and Eastern Jews: Kafka, Buber, Franzos” *The Modern Language Review* 83, no. 1 (1988): pp. 87-105.

³⁹ Stuckenberg, p. 37.

Secondary literature on Königsberg often portrays the city as a quaint and sleepy town. Joseph Kohlen writes of how “in Königsberg, time moves slower”, literally in German the clocks tick slower.⁴⁰ Perhaps this was true in the nineteenth and twentieth century, but this perception obscures the earlier commercial and intellectual importance of Königsberg. Its towering castle and cathedral, before they were destroyed by British and Russian bombs in 1944, were a remembrance of the city’s past as an important center for the Teutonic Order, as a member of the Hanseatic league, and later as the birthplace of Frederick I. Elsewhere Kohlen does recognize the peculiar blend of cosmopolitanism and provincialism in Königsberg. From the perspective of the west, East Prussia had become “an end of the line for Prussia’s political and cultural geography.” Yet, he nonetheless declares Königsberg a “strategic port, the largest in the kingdom.”⁴¹

In her biography of Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel, Urte von Berg depicts eighteenth century Königsberg as an “outpost of Berlin”, not traditionally provincial but nonetheless with a different “social design” as elsewhere in the “heartland of Prussia.” Its remote location and transitional location in Europe fostered a sense of self-sufficiency and independence in the city.⁴² Engelhard Weigl, a scholar of the German Enlightenment, describes Königsberg in the late eighteenth century as a “lonely cultural

⁴⁰ Joseph Kohlen, “Nachwort” in *Daphne: Nachdruck der von Johann Georg Hamann, Johann Gotthelf Lindner u.a. herausgegebenen Königsberger Zeitschrift (1749-1750)*, ed. J. Kohlen (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 1991).

⁴¹ Joseph Kohlen, “Druckerei-, Verlags- und Zeitungswesen in Königsberg zur Zeit Kants und Hamanns. Das Unternehmen Johann Jakob Kanters,” in *Königsberg: Beiträge zu einem besonderen Kapitel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. J. Kohlen (Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang GmbH, 1994), pp. 1-2.

⁴² Urte von Berg, *Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel: Stadtpräsident und Schriftsteller in Königsberg, 1741-1796* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2004), pp. 55-56.

island, whose inner life was hardly known beyond regional barriers.”⁴³ Weigl’s interpretation of Königsberg was that its relative geographic separation was only part of the reason that the city remained culturally isolated from the rest of Prussia. He also maintains that there was a rooted sense of regionalism and provincialism that shaped the city’s history. Ernst Ribbat has a similar perspective, describing Königsberg as “a provincial city and not a metropolis – a provincial city whose bourgeois intellectual elite were clearly focused westwards.”⁴⁴

Primary and secondary sources alike use the term “provincial” in a pejorative sense to imply that the city is back water and falls short of the expectations of its worldly or intellectually minded inhabitants. Yet from a historical perspective, we should not shy away from the label of “provincial.” It can be used without prejudice to refer to Königsberg’s geographical location away from the governmental and administrative center of Prussia. In more recent historical terminology, Königsberg can certainly be considered part of the far-reaching periphery of Berlin. Concurrently, however, Königsberg was its own center with the surrounding market towns in East Prussia as its periphery.⁴⁵

⁴³ Weigl, p. 135.

⁴⁴ Ernst Ribbat, "Königsberg als Ort der Literatur: Entwicklungslinien im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert," in *Ostpreussen: Facetten einer Literarischen Landschaft*, ed. Frank-Lothar Kroll (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 2001), p. 25.

⁴⁵ Louise Hecht writes that “few [in Jewish history] would associate Königsberg with ‘periphery’, but based on my research, the city was often imagined in such a manner.” Louise Hecht, "The Beginning of Modern Jewish Historiography: Prague – a Center on the Periphery," *Jewish History* 19 (2005): p. 347.

Königsberg in Jewish Historiography

Scholarship on the German *haskalah* and its tendency to focus in on Berlin has obscured the importance of Königsberg. This preference dates back to the nineteenth century. In his multivolume work *The History of the Jews* (1853), Heinrich Graetz described Königsberg in the eighteenth century as “a kind of colony to Berlin.” Graetz connected the two cities together by highlighting David Friedländer, since he moved to Berlin in early adulthood but sustained a close relationship to his family in East Prussia.⁴⁶ Such a view of Königsberg as a colony implies a subservient relationship between the two Jewish communities. Graetz’s mid-nineteenth century perception of Königsberg as merely a satellite of Berlin continued in twentieth century historical accounts. One obvious reason exists for this historical perception. The looming presence of Moses Mendelssohn over the Jewish Enlightenment has led some historians to relate all intellectual activities back to Mendelssohn, “the father of the *Haskalah*”, in Berlin, even if he was only tangentially involved.⁴⁷

Oftentimes past scholars have referred to the Berlin *haskalah* when in actuality they were referring as much to Königsberg as to Berlin. That the crucial early years of *ha-Measef* took place in Königsberg is often overlooked by scholars.⁴⁸ In his brief

⁴⁶ Heinrich Graetz, *History of the Jews*, vol. V (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1895), p. 397.

⁴⁷ Tobias Schenk, "Der Preussische Weg der Judenemanzipation : zur Judenpolitik des "Aufgeklärten Absolutismus", *Zeitschrift für Historische Forschung* 35, no. 3 (2008): p. 451. Nahum Slouschz does this in reference to *ha-Measef*, which he writes was created “under the auspices of Mendelssohn and Wessely.” Wessely was named as an inspiration for *ha-Measef*, and the editors corresponded with him. But Mendelssohn was not directly involved. Nahum Slouschz, *The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature (1743-1885)*, trans. H. Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909), p. 31. Bernard Martin also writes that *ha-Measef* was published “under the direct influence of Mendelssohn.” Bernard Martin and Daniel Silver, *A History of Judaism*, vol. 2 (New York: Basic Books, 1974), p. 213.

⁴⁸ For instance, Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay’s 1956 article “The Ideology of the Berlin *Haskalah*” uses quotes from Isaac Euchel and writers of *ha-Measef* to elucidate the philosophy of the Berlin *maskilim*. Isaac

description of *ha-Measef*, Simon Dubnow does not even mention that the journal started in Königsberg. In a seven page summary of the beginnings of *ha-Measef*, Moshe Pelli fails to mention Königsberg at all.⁴⁹ To correct this historical misperception, many recent works in the growing field of *haskalah* scholarship pinpoint Königsberg as an important center of the German Jewish Enlightenment together with Berlin.⁵⁰ Despite being put alongside Berlin in importance, the city has been neglected in Jewish historiography, especially among English language scholars.⁵¹

Israeli historian Shmuel Feiner describes Königsberg as a key center of *haskalah* and acculturation. Feiner challenges the centrality of Mendelssohn in all aspects of the German *haskalah*. In his pursuit of reinterpreting Mendelssohn's role, he stresses the

Eisenstein-Barzilay, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 25 (1956): pp. 1-37.

⁴⁹ Simon Dubnow, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, vol. IV (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), pp. 344-45. Moshe Pelli, "The Haskalah Begins in Germany with the Founding of the Hebrew Journal *Hame'asef*," in *Yale Companion to Jewish Writing and Thought in German Culture, 1096-1996*, ed. S. Gilman and J. Zipes (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1997), pp. 101-07.

⁵⁰ See Shmuel Feiner, *Haskalah and History: The Emergence of a Modern Jewish Historical Consciousness*, trans. C. Naor (Oxford: Littman Library, 2002), p. 11. Edward Breuer names the two major centers of German Jewish Enlightenment as Berlin and Königsberg. Mordechai Breuer, "The Early Modern Period," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press 1996), pp. 15-16. David Sorkin does as well. David Sorkin, "Enlightenment and Emancipation: German Jewry's Formative Age in Comparative Perspective," in *Comparing Jewish Societies* ed. T Endelman (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), p. 90. See also Martin Davies, *Identity or History? Marcus Herz and the End of the Enlightenment* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995), pp. 22-23.

⁵¹ There is not a single history in English devoted exclusively to the Jews of Königsberg. This is not, however, to imply that no research has been done on individual Jews who lived in Königsberg. In his work on the *haskalah*, Moshe Pelli has touched on certain key figures from Jewish intellectual circles in Königsberg. See, for example, Pelli's analysis of Isaac Euchel. Moshe Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah: Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Enlightenment in Germany* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), pp. 190-230. Several German historians have written monographs on the Jews of Königsberg. See for example, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Die jüdische Minderheit in Königsberg/Preussen, 1871-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996). Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004). Yoram K. Jacoby, *Jüdisches Leben in Königsberg/Pr. im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1983). Wyrwa compares Königsberg and Berlin with various cities in Tuscany. Ulrich Wyrwa, *Juden in der Toskana und in Preussen im Vergleich* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003).

importance of Königsberg. It is no doubt true that Mendelssohn was not involved in all aspects of the German *haskalah* and we historians should challenge the prevailing narrative of the German Jewish *haskalah* as emanating solely from the inspiration of “the Jewish Socrates.” Yet, what is nonetheless evident is that Mendelssohn’s maskilic contemporaries were preoccupied with his presence and desired his approval in their undertakings. Even the new generation of *maskilim* discussed in the next chapter demonstrated an ongoing respect bordering on awe for Mendelssohn.

David Sorkin has referred to the location of the German Jewish Enlightenment as Berlin-Königsberg. In his discussion of the Berlin *haskalah*, Sorkin suggests that the lingering presence of traditional elements alongside growing secularism in the Berlin Jewish community set the stage for eventual change and reform. Since the confrontation between tradition and modernity was less pronounced in port cities like Copenhagen or Hamburg, the Jews there had less need to press for reform of Jewish life or practice. Thus, Sorkin locates internal communal change and innovation in situations of state and societal confrontation and conflict rather than in an atmosphere of openness and flux that a port city brings. This interpretation, however, begs the question why Königsberg became an important center of the German *haskalah*, since it was also a port city.⁵²

The prevailing historiographic interpretation of Königsberg’s place in the German *haskalah* as just a branch of the more substantial movement in the larger Prussian capital relies too heavily on the self-perceptions and prejudices of historical sources and overlooks actual historical reality. Even though the self-perception of the Königsberg *maskilim* was that they were secondary and dependent on Berlin for both practical and moral support, we as historians should look at the Königsberg *haskalah* as

⁵² Sorkin, p. 105.

its own distinct movement. As Nancy Sinkoff writes in the context of the Polish Jewish Enlightenment, “While the iconic status of Berlin as the center of the Jewish Enlightenment is well deserved, it is misleading to equate influence with bald imitation.”⁵³ The small group of *maskilim* in Königsberg had both intellectual and familial ties with Jews to Berlin; yet they functioned autonomously and had their own separate literary society. The Friedländer family were financial and intellectual equals to the Itzig and Ephraim families in Berlin and were able to spearhead their own independent endeavors, both intellectual and political. As we will see in the next chapter, *ha-Measef* needed to find subscribers from all over Europe to keep the journal afloat, but the actual administration of the journal in its nascent stage was entirely local.

In German-Jewish history, the prevailing notion of a normative urban experience like that of Berlin, Hamburg or Frankfurt am Main obscures life in cities like Königsberg. Geographically removed from the rest of Germany, Königsberg can only suffer from direct comparisons with such places. Put next to Berlin or other cities with larger Jewish communities, the East Prussian capital, especially in the nineteenth century, comes across as having what historian Stefanie Schüler-Springorum calls a kind of “cozy provinciality.”⁵⁴ Other cities in Jewish historiography suffer from a degree of vagueness surrounding their cultural contributions. Steven Zipperstein’s work on Odessa has shown how the Ukrainian port city in many respects occupied “an ambiguous place in the history of the cultural transformation of Russian Jewry.”⁵⁵

⁵³ Nancy Sinkoff, *Out of the Shtetl : Making Jews Modern in the Polish Borderlands* (Providence: Brown Judaic Studies, 2004), p. 7.

⁵⁴ Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, "Assimilation and Community Reconsidered: The Jewish Community in Königsberg, 1871-1945," *Jewish Social Studies* 5, no. 3 (1999): p. 121.

But we must not forget that provincial environments can also spearhead reform or cultural innovations.⁵⁶ In order to grasp the Königsberg's significance in the initial stages of the creation of a coherent and recognizable *haskalah* movement in Prussia, one need only look at the number of *maskilim* and prominent Jewish intellectuals who were either born in Königsberg or spent time there in the course of their lives. Included in this list, among others, are David Friedländer, Isaac Euchel, Mendel Breslau, and Marcus Herz.⁵⁷ Eventually most central players in the local *haskalah* movement in Königsberg moved to Berlin. Along with them moved the journal *ha-Measef* in 1787, only three years after its founding. As we will see in the next Chapter, the main reason the journal moved from Königsberg to Berlin was because Isaac Euchel, the journal's main editor, decided to move to the Prussian capital. But another underlying reason was precisely the perception among the Jews of the city that Berlin was the epicenter of German Jewish intellectual endeavor.

⁵⁵ Steve Zipperstein, *The Jews of Odessa: A Cultural History, 1794-1881* (Stanford Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 3.

⁵⁶ In his research on Hungary, Michael Silber draws into question the assumption that Jews in urban environments, particularly in Pest, were more progressive and acculturated than Jews in the provinces. In fact, the evidence Silber draws from his research on casinos reveals the opposite was more often the case. Middle class Jews in provincial market towns gained access to casinos and other social settings typically before Jews of the same rank in the capital. Michael Silber, "The Entrance of Jews into Hungarian Society in *Vormärz*: the case of the 'Casinos'". In *Assimilation and Community*, eds. J. Frankel and S. Zipperstein (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 309.

⁵⁷ Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), p. 60. Jorg H. Fehrs, "Königsberg: ein Zentrum der Aufklärung," in *Deutsch-jüdische Passagen*, ed. W. Jasper (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1996), p. 215.

Chapter Seven *Ha-Measef* and the Königsberg Haskalah

In 1819, David Friedländer published a volume of remembrances of Moses Mendelssohn, including one discussion which took place in the parlor of his “immortal teacher” in 1784.¹ This particular dialogue on the creation of the world quickly became a heated confrontation between Naphtali Herz Wessely, a regular guest at the house, and Isaac Euchel, an admirer of Mendelssohn’s from Königsberg who was visiting Berlin at the time. Both men were stubbornly convinced of the veracity of their position. In the midst of the argument, Friedländer related that Mendelssohn chose not to intervene and instead “sat quietly in his chair with afflicted eyes and remained silent.”²

The theological dispute between Wessely and Euchel encapsulates the gap between older *maskilim* like Wessely who were more firmly entrenched in Talmudic learning and a new generation of Jews like Euchel who increasingly distanced themselves from certain aspects of Jewish tradition. The new generation of *maskilim* sought closer collaboration with each other and desired even more engagement with European culture and ideas. To accomplish these goals, they needed to organize alliances and create a means to transmit ideas. Euchel and several other Jews in Königsberg provided this opportunity in the publication of the first edition of *The Gatherer (ha-Measef)* in 1782.

In this chapter, I discuss the first two years of the journal and the pivotal role of the Friedländer family in its publication. I argue that the family was a bridge between the

¹ David Friedländer, *Moses Mendelssohn: Fragmente von ihm und über ihn* (Berlin: Friedrich Enslin, 1819), pp. 31-64. Friedländer did not go in depth into the actual content of the discussion.

² Ibid. Moshe Pelli thinks that Friedländer exaggerated the conflict between Wessely and Euchel for effect. By all other accounts, Euchel and Wessely had a congenial relationship. Moshe Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah: Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Enlightenment in Germany* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), p. 194.

Jewish commercial elite and the local *maskilim*, who were dependant on their funding. Despite the Friedländers' practical and financial support of *ha-Measef*, the journal nonetheless moved to Berlin in 1784. The reasons for this move were first and foremost practical. Isaac Euchel, the primary editor of *ha-Measef*, had been offered a job at the newly opened Oriental Publishing House in Berlin right after he had been turned down for a teaching position at the Albertina in Königsberg. Since the editors had long been discontent with the facilities available in Königsberg for printing in Hebrew, it made sense to move the administrative center from the East Prussian capital to Berlin where it could be printed by a Jewish printer. While the main impetus for the move was Euchel's employment future, the longstanding perceptions of Königsberg as isolated and provincial that I discussed in Chapter Six also influenced the editors' decision to move the journal's administrative center to Berlin.

The origins of *ha-Measef* were in a local Jewish society in Königsberg named the Society for the Furtherance of the Hebrew Language (*Chevrat Dorshe Leshon Ever*). The group numbered at least a dozen and had regular meetings. One practical reason for the creation of a literary society was to pool one's financial resources to purchase more books, which were expensive and oftentimes in short supply. But the overarching goal of the society was to encourage the cultivation of the Jewish people through a renewed interest in the Hebrew tongue.³

Most members of the *Chevrat Dorshe Leshon Ever* in Königsberg were in their mid-twenties. They were either wealthy merchants or tutors in the homes of prominent

³ Andreas Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), p. 63. Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), p. 99.

families.⁴ Together they considered themselves to be a new breed of *maskilim*. These younger *maskilim* had respect for the older generation of Jewish enlighteners such as Moses Mendelssohn and Naphtali Herz Wessely, who were 54 and 58 respectively when the society was formed.⁵ Yet, they also had a new and more controversial vision for the future of Judaism and Jewish education. Their suspicion of the rabbinical establishment ran deeper, as did their dislike for the current order of Jewish leadership. Unable to fully relate to the older generation of Jewish *maskilim* and not fully accepted in progressive German intellectual circles, the founders of *ha-Measef* sought to forge their own reform program. Unlike previous *maskilim*, who developed their ideas as individuals, the Society of Friends worked primarily as a group with common goals.⁶

From the beginning, one of the expressed goals of the society was the eventual publication of a Hebrew journal. This is especially evident since the four founders of the society were also the editors of *ha-Measef* a year later. The founding members of the *Chevrat Dorshe Leshon Ever* in Königsberg were Isaac Euchel (1756-1804), Mendel Breslau (1760-1829), Simon Joachim Friedländer (1764-1812), and Samuel ("Sanvil") Wulff Friedländer (1764-1837). Euchel and Breslau were in charge of the actual content of the journal, whereas Simon and Sanvil Friedländer were responsible for the finances and the practical aspects of printing a journal. The postal address for the journal was the

⁴Kennecke, pp. 49-50. Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, trans. B. Martin, vol. 8 (Cincinnati Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), p. 75. Zinberg mentions how this pattern of membership was typical of the new *maskilim* in general. They came from two socially distinct groups.

⁵Shmuel Feiner, "Mendelssohn and "Mendelssohn's Disciples": A Reexamination," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* XL (1995): p. 146.

⁶ Andreas Kennecke, "*Hame'assef*: Die erste moderne Zeitschrift der Juden in Deutschland " *Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 23, no. 2 (1999): p. 178. David Jan Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment : Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 208-09.

offices of “Joachim Moses Friedländer and Sons”.⁷ In their opening manifesto *Nachal ha-Besor* (River of Good News) the four founders broke down their respective duties:

Four men, whose signatures appear below, were chosen as chairmen and charged with a sacred duty; two will examine the articles to be printed, removing any impurity or blasphemy which may not be admitted to the House of God. The other two will oversee the income and expenditures and the other needs of the group.

The separation of duties between the practical and the cerebral mirrored the larger class divisions in the German *haskalah* between the *maskilim* and their financial benefactors. *Maskilim* relied on wealthy Jewish families to fund their efforts. In the case of *ha-Measef*, the affluent Friedländer family not only provided money for the project, two young men from the family volunteered to do the practical, day to day clerical work.⁸

In addition to the editors Simon and Sanvil Friedländer, several members of the wider family provided their moral and economic support for the project. Michael Friedländer, the well-known doctor and future personal physician of Madame de Staël in Paris, financially supported the project.⁹ David Friedländer connected the editors with Jewish intellectuals in Berlin. In many respects, the Friedländer family in Königsberg served as a bridge between the *maskilim* and the wealthy Jewish merchants who financed projects like *ha-Measef*. This is because they were both a wealthy and an intellectual

⁷ Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. C. Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 193.

⁸ Steven Lowenstein writes that “on the whole, the wealthy were the protectors and patrons of the Enlightenment rather than its creative spirits.” Steven Lowenstein, “Jewish Upper Crust and Berlin Jewish Enlightenment: The Family of Daniel Itzig,” in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1850*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 187.

⁹ Isaac M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Sekten*, vol. 3 (Leipzig: Dörffling und Franke, 1859), p. 316, note 1. Ernst Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Hamburg: Comm. Vlg. Lucas Gräfe, 1913), p. 37. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 65.

family. Most *maskilim* came from humble beginnings and did not socialize regularly with the new Jewish financial elite.¹⁰

Maskilim were often traditionally educated Jews who got their start in life as tutors in the homes of the wealthy Jewish elite. Breslau and Euchel were both tutors in the homes of two of Joachim Moses Friedländer's sons. A native of Copenhagen, Euchel had come to Königsberg in 1778 to serve as the tutor in the house of Meyer Friedländer (1745-1808), an influential and powerful businessman in the community. Meyer chose the Danish Euchel over other Polish Jewish tutors in large part because of his desire for his children to speak fluent German.¹¹ Breslau was a tutor in the home of Meyer's younger brother Bernhardt Friedländer (1749-1808).¹² In addition to having similar careers, the two young Jewish scholars had a similar interest in Jewish education. In 1786, both Breslau and Euchel published works relating to the instruction of Jewish youth. Breslau's Hebrew work *Childhood and Youth* (*Yaldut u-baharut*) was an allegorical dialogue in the same vein as Moses Hayyim Luzzatto's *Glory to the Righteous* (*La-yesharim tehillah*), first published in 1743.¹³ Euchel intended his translation of the

¹⁰ Steven Lowenstein, *The Jewishness of David Friedländer and the Crisis of Berlin Jewry*, ed. S. Feiner, vol. 3, *Braun Lectures in the History of the Jews in Prussia* (Ahva Press, 1994), p. 7. Margot Westlinning discusses how this connection between merchants and intellectual life can also be seen in Königsberg as a whole. Margot Westlinning, "Der junge Herder in Königsberg," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), pp. 73-74.

¹¹ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, pp. 47-48. For more on Euchel, see Shmuel Feiner, "Isaac Euchel: Entrepreneur of the Haskalah Movement in Germany" (Hebrew) *Tsiyon* 52 (1987):pp. 427-469.

¹² Kennecke, "*Hame'assef*: Die erste moderne Zeitschrift der Juden in Deutschland " : p. 182. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 50.

¹³ Feiner, "Mendelssohn and "Mendelssohn's Disciples": A Reexamination," p. 75.

siddur into German, entitled *Gebete der Deutsch-Polnischen Juden*, for young Jews who felt more of a linguistic affinity to German than to ancient Hebrew.¹⁴

Euchel and Breslau's role as house tutors brought them into regular contact with Simon and Sanvil Friedländer, their future collaborators, long before they actually published the first volume of *ha-Measef*. Euchel developed a close relationship with Sanvil's wife Rebekka, while tutoring her in her youth. Of the four members, historians consider Isaac Euchel to be the mind behind the project, even though both Euchel and Breslau claimed to be equally in charge of editing and selecting material for each issue. Euchel appeared to have more connections with the Berlin *haskalah* than did Breslau. He also developed deeper, personal ties to the Friedländer family, including David Friedländer in Berlin and his former pupil Michael Friedländer, with whom he later corresponded during his travels to Copenhagen.¹⁵

In *Nachal ha-Besor*, Euchel, Breslau and Simon and Sanvil Friedländer declared their wish to expand both Jewish learning and universal principles and knowledge. The authors declared themselves as "an association of cultured friends whose lives have been devoted both to the study of the Torah and secular sources."¹⁶ The Königsberg society's manifesto became a rallying cry for a new generation of *maskilim*. Like Mendelssohn

¹⁴ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, pp. 50-51. Kanter, one of the top Christian presses in Königsberg, published Euchel's work, whereas Breslau's Hebrew work was published by the Orientalische Buchdruckerei, the Berlin Jewish printing press connected to the Jewish Free school. From this, Kennecke extrapolates that Euchel had more connections and influence outside of the Jewish community in Königsberg.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54. Tsemah Tsamriyon, *ha-Measef: Ketav ha-'et ha-Moderni ha-Rishon ha-'Ivrit* (Tel Aviv: Mif'alim universitayim, 1988), pp. 35-36.

¹⁶ Isaac Euchel et al., "Nachal Habesor," in *Vom Nutzen der Aufklärung: Schriften zur Haskala* ed. Andreas Kennecke (Düsseldorf: Parerga Verlag, 2001), pp. 10-11, 230. M. Waxman translates *Nachal ha-Besor* as "Stream of Good Tidings." Meyer Waxman, *A History of Jewish Literature*, vol. III (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1960), p. 120.

before them, they believed they could inhabit both Jewish and Gentile intellectual worlds and could become equally proficient in both cultural traditions.¹⁷

One of the editors' inspiration for the Hebrew journal was the philosophy of Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725-1805) whose recent pamphlet *Words of Peace and Truth* (*divre shalom ve-emet*) had declared the “knowledge of man” (*torat ha-adam*) and the “knowledge of God” (*torat ha-elohim*) to be intertwined.¹⁸ Earlier in the year, before officially embarking on the project of starting a journal, the Königsberg *maskilim* had written Wessely asking for his moral and practical support. In their correspondence with him, the editors praised Wessely for his role in “raising the Hebrew language from the ashes.” They desired to build on his accomplishment and educate their coreligionists in matters of universal morality.¹⁹ Wessely's almost immediate reply to the young *maskilim* in Königsberg revealed simultaneous excitement about the project and hesitancy regarding the potential for resistance within the Jewish community. With the memory still fresh of how he became so publicly embroiled in controversy just a year earlier because of *Words of Peace and Truth*, Wessely urged the ambitious editors-to-be to exercise restraint when it came to criticizing the rabbinical establishment.²⁰

Euchel and the other editors of *ha-Measef* had observed the proliferation of Enlightenment journals being published in the German lands in the late eighteenth

¹⁷ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 70.

¹⁸ Naphtali Herz Wessely, *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* (Berlin: 1782). A large portion of *Divrei shalom ve-emet* is translated into English in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

¹⁹ They included their letter to Wessely and his response in *Nachal ha-Besor*. Euchel et al., pp. 12, 230. For more on the desire of the editors to revive the Hebrew language, see Moshe Pelli, *Dor ha-Me'asfim be-Shahar ha-Haskalah* (Israel: Hotsa'at ha-Kibuts ha-me'uhad, 2001), pp. 177-94.

²⁰ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 188. . For more on the content of *Words of Peace and Truth*, see Chapter Eight and my discussion of educational reform.

century. In the 1770s, over seven hundred new German publications were printed, mostly in the realm of the arts and literature. By founding a Hebrew journal committed to Enlightenment principles, the editors sought to provide the Jewish public with a comparable medium of self-fulfillment and intellectual growth.²¹ The creation of a Jewish press, however limited in readership and scope, created a Jewish equivalent of the Enlightenment republic of letters that transcended geographical boundaries and engaged intellectuals of various stripes and disciplines. In particular, the editors of *ha-Meassef* modeled the journal after the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* (Berlin Monthly), founded earlier that year.²² This journal actively discussed the status of Jews in German civil society and even welcomed submissions by Jewish authors. Like the *Berlin Monthly*, *ha-Meassef* desired to cover a wide variety of subjects, including philosophy, religion, the arts, and science.²³

The decision to publish the journal in Hebrew was both an ideological and a practical one. While the editors were all well-versed in the German language and could have easily published the monthly in German, their target readership was less able to read the vernacular. By publishing the journal in Hebrew, they hoped to reach anyone who had received an advanced Jewish education. Moreover, they did not want to limit the

²¹ In the 1780s this number rose to over 1,200. Kennecke, "*Hame'assef*: Die erste moderne Zeitschrift der Juden in Deutschland ": pp. 179-80.

²² Julius H. Schoeps, "*Du Doppelgänger, Du Bleicher Geselle...*": *Deutsch-jüdische Erfahrungen im Spiegel Dreier Jahrhunderte, 1700-2000* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 2004), p. 187. Tsamriyon, pp. 33-34. Walter Röll, "The Kassel 'Ha-Meassef' Of 1799: An Unknown Contribution to the Haskalah," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, ed. J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), pp. 32-33. Kennecke argues contrary to this that *ha-Meassef* developed independently of the *Berlinische Monatsschrift*. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 72.

²³ Ulrich Wyrwa, *Juden in der Toskana und in Preussen im Vergleich* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2003), pp. 59-61.

scope of the journal just to the German lands.²⁴ But the more important motivation behind publishing in Hebrew was to the desire to create a sense of historical and religious legitimacy to the project. The renewal of the Hebrew language as a literary language was part of a larger longing for the cultural and social elevation of the Jewish people as a whole.²⁵ In this respect, the *maskilim* saw Hebrew as a tool of modernization and a means by which the Jews could achieve further integration.²⁶ Hebrew was a revered and ancient language that was to be given new legitimacy by fresh Jewish leadership unconnected to the rabbinical establishment.

Much more is known about the intellectual side of *ha-Measef* and its editorial leaders Isaac Euchel and Mendel Breslau than there is about the practical side of printing a Hebrew journal in the 1780s. This is reflected in the almost exclusive focus in secondary literature on the journal's editorial content. More often than not, scholars name only Euchel and Breslau as the founders of *ha-Measef*.²⁷ Simon and Sanvil Friedländer and their financial and practical support of the publication remain an underdeveloped topic. The lack of unpublished, archival sources is partially to blame for

²⁴ Kennecke theorizes that the editors might have also wanted to avoid censorship. Andreas Kennecke, "Der 'Hame'assef' und sein erster Herausgeber Isaac Euchel," in *Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Verfolgung*, ed. M. Nagel (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002), pp. 70-71. For more on *ha-Measef*'s linguistic goals and their use of Hebrew, see Tsamriyon, pp. 72-92. Jutta Strauss, "Aaron Halle-Wolfssohn: Ein Leben in drei Sprachen," in *Musik und Ästhetik im Berlin Moses Mendelssohns*, ed. A. Gerhard (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1999), pp. 69-70.

²⁵ It is important to note that the *maskilim* solely intended Hebrew as a literary language and not a spoken one, unlike the later Zionist proponents of the revival of Hebrew in the late nineteenth century. Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah: Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Enlightenment in Germany*, pp. 86-87. Yaacov Shavit, "A Duty Too Heavy to Bear: Hebrew in the Berlin Haskalah, 1783-1819," in *Hebrew in Ashkenaz: A Language in Exile*, ed. L. Glinert (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), pp. 111-15.

²⁶ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 69. Shavit, p. 119. Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Herr in Preussen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1968), p. 15.

²⁷ See, for example, Nahum Slouschz, *The Renaissance of Hebrew Literature (1743-1885)*, trans. H. Szold (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1909), p. 31.

this, as is the bias within the field of *haskalah* scholarship to privilege intellectual over practical matters.²⁸

Samuel (Sanvil) Friedländer was the official liaison between the society and potential new members and subscribers. He was also in charge of finances. *Nachal ha-Besor* described him as “our confidential secretary.”²⁹ His uncle, Simon Friedländer, helped Sanvil with the practical and financial matters.³⁰ Despite the involvement of two local merchants in the day to day production of the journal, *ha-Measef* rarely discussed economic realities in its pages. Its vision for the future of Jewish education did not touch on practical, vocational matters. Instead it focused on the pursuit of universal principles and knowledge.³¹

Initially conceived of as a monthly, the editors eventually decided to make it a quarterly publication.³² It ended up being more of a sporadic publication. This was most likely due to the realization of how rigorous and expensive the printing of a monthly

²⁸ Shmuel Feiner has sought to correct this imbalance. In *The Jewish Enlightenment*, Feiner points forward to a new focus in *haskalah* studies that integrates what he calls the “new sociocultural history” of the Enlightenment. By moving away from a focus on the philosophy of individuals, this type of history instead looks at collectives and social groups. By asking questions like “Who were the *maskilim*? And in what social circumstances did they meet one another?” Feiner hopes to ground the study of Jewish enlightenment more firmly in historical context. In order to do this, one of the first places Feiner turns to is the city of Königsberg and the aforementioned Society of Friends founded in 1782. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, pp. 186-87.

²⁹ Euchel et al., p. 222. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 64.

³⁰ There has been confusion among historians as to the actual relation between Simon and Samuel Friedländer. In a footnote, *The Jew in the Modern World* incorrectly states that they are brothers. Isaac Euchel, et. al., “The Stream of Besor,” in *The Jew in the Modern World*, ed. M. Meyer (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995), p. 83. This mistake might have come about because they were born in the same year. Simon was Joachim Moses’s youngest son, while Sanvil was born to one of Joachim Moses’s oldest sons in the same year. Feiner correctly states that Simon is Samuel’s uncle. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 192.

³¹ Derek Penslar, *Shylock's Children: Economics and Jewish Identity in Modern Europe* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p. 72.

³² Zinberg, p. 75, note 55.

journal would be. The editors recognized this at the beginning of their journey, and discussed the practical limitations of Hebrew printing in Königsberg in *Nachal*: “For although matters of Torah and worldly knowledge are like a flowing spring [...] nevertheless we cannot publish more than this, for the expenses are very heavy.”³³ In the first edition of the *ha-Measef*, they give no direct publication information and merely say that the journal was published in Königsberg by the “Members of the Society of Friends of the Hebrew Language.” Since no actual Hebrew printing press existed in Königsberg, it was certainly printed at a Christian press. In the eighteenth century Königsberg, larger Christian presses who had secured and sustained royal printing privileges for decades printed Hebrew texts. In the 1780s and 90s, printing in Königsberg was fueled by a rivalry between Gottlieb Lebrecht Hartung (1747-1797) and Johann Jacob Kanter. At that point it became the press center of the region, its influence stretching even farther than East Prussia.³⁴

Hartung and Kanter were not always at odds. In 1756, they co-wrote a letter to Frederick II protesting a Berlin Jew’s proposal to start a printing press in Königsberg.³⁵ Beginning in 1753, Joel Jacob Glogauer, a rabbi and assessor in Berlin, began to send regular requests to Frederick II for permission to establish a new press for Hebrew and Jewish books in Königsberg. Three years passed with no approval from the king, and in January 1756, Glogauer wrote again, this time supposedly on behalf of the Jews in Königsberg. He described the difficulties local Jews had in obtaining Hebrew books.

³³ Euchel, "The Stream of Besor," p. 82.

³⁴ Henryk Rietz, "Die Kultur West- und Ostpreussens in den Jahren 1772 bis 1815," in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), pp. 4-5.

³⁵ GStA II Gen Dir. Abt. 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4479, pp. 13-14.

Jacob tried to convince Frederick II of the need for a dedicated Hebrew press by suggesting the potential profits that could be made from the creation of a new Hebrew book trade with Poland.³⁶

Glogauer's request caused a stir in many places. The local War and Domains Board in Königsberg wrote in November 1756 to remind the king that the city already had four Christian presses, all of which were able to print Hebrew books. The board also capitalized on Frederick II's fear of an increase in foreign Jews in his domains by suggesting that a Jewish printing press in Königsberg would lead to an influx of Jews from Poland and elsewhere. The writer exaggerates the scope of the proposed enterprise, imagining hordes of Jewish printers and editors coming to Königsberg to work.³⁷

Resistance to a Jewish printing press in Königsberg came not only from outside of the Jewish community, but also from within. In 1756, Israel Moses Friedländer (1694-1773), son-in-law to Bendix Jeremias, wrote the crown to protest a Jewish printing press in Königsberg. As a local linen merchant and bookseller, Friedländer was afraid that a Jewish printing press would affect his profits. Friedländer reiterated the War and Domain Board's reasoning, namely that any of the other four printing presses in Königsberg could already print Hebrew books. It appears as if Friedländer knew that Frederick II would be unlikely to accept Glogauer's request. Nonetheless, Friedländer decided to hedge his bets and suggest that if the king chose to establish an exclusive Hebrew printer in Königsberg that he rather than Glogauer would be the rational choice to run it. The current

³⁶ GStA II Gen Dir. Abt. 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4479, p. 5.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 8-12.

synagogue inspector, Georg David Kypke, attached a letter of support to Friedländer's royal plea.³⁸

Very little had changed in Hebrew printing in Königsberg in the almost forty years since Glogauer's request. The editors of *ha-Measef* still had to rely on a Christian presses to print their material that had outdated and mismatched Hebrew types. They discussed this reality in *Nachal ha-Besor*:

This is particularly true in our area where there are no Hebrew type-setters and the printers raise their prices at whim. Also the font of type we have is not attractive and properly arranged, and we have been obliged to bring new type from Berlin in order to put out a work of finished craftsmanship.³⁹

In tangible realities, as in matters of inspiration, the Königsberg editors of *ha-Measef* sought assistance from Berlin. The self-perception of the Königsberg *haskalah* was that they were dependent on the larger movement in Berlin for material and moral support.

Early on the editors of *ha-Measef* knew that the community of likeminded Jews in Königsberg was not large enough to sustain enough subscriptions for even a modest journal. In order for the publication to break even, it needed around two hundred subscribers. To be financially profitable, a subscription base of around five hundred was preferable.⁴⁰ Living in a Jewish community with less than a thousand members, the editors knew that it was imperative for them to cooperate with fellow *maskilim* in other cities. Euchel used his travels to Copenhagen via Berlin in 1784 to gather more subscriptions for *ha-Measef*.⁴¹

³⁸ GStA II Gen Dir. Abt. 7 Ostpreussen und Litauen II Materien Nr. 4479, pp. 16-21.

³⁹ Translated into English in Euchel, "The Stream of Besor," p. 82.

⁴⁰Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 193. Kennecke, "*Hame'assef*: Die erste moderne Zeitschrift der Juden in Deutschland "; pp. 180-81. See also Röhl, p. 35.

Ha-Measef found a small number of subscribers outside of the European Jewish community. The fact that the journal was in Hebrew limited greatly the number of Christians who could read the publication, primarily to Protestant theologians, but some Christians nonetheless subscribed to *ha-Measef*. Included in this list was Euchel's friend and professor Johann Bernhard Köhler and his colleague Johann Gottfried Hasse (1759-1806). Both were professors of Oriental Languages and Evangelical Theology at the Albertina in Königsberg. Euchel and the other editors sought the readership of such Christian scholars. In addition to providing a voice for the progressive members of the German Jewish community, the editors of *ha-Measef* desired to reach out to learned Christians and show them the intellectual progress and rational capacity of the Jews. Furthermore, they wished to reveal the beauty of the ancient Jewish tongue not only to other Jews but to European society at large. A language also revered by Christian society, the *maskilim* saw the revival of the Hebrew language as a way to gain the respect of the wider theological community.⁴²

Another Christian subscriber to the journal was Johann David Michaelis (1717-91), the outspoken opponent of Christian Wilhelm von Dohm and his call for Jewish citizenship.⁴³ The Göttingen professor was unimpressed by the effort of the Jewish enlighteners in Königsberg. In a theological journal, Michaelis criticized the Hebrew used in *ha-Measef* and considered it a stilted mix of Biblical and rabbinical Hebrew.⁴⁴ In fact, the type of Hebrew that the *maskilim* sought to emulate was not rabbinical but a

⁴¹ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 106.

⁴² Shavit, p. 116.

⁴³ Röhl, p. 35. For more on Michaelis, see Edward Breuer, *The Limits of Enlightenment: Jews, Germans, and the Eighteenth-Century Study of Scripture* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).

⁴⁴ Breuer, pp. 130. Quoted in Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 74.

rather a mixture of Biblical and medieval Hebrew. Michaelis' critique of the journal's Hebrew most likely stung the writers and editors of *ha-Measef* because of their desire to impress Christian theologians and their concomitant wish to distance themselves from rabbinical Judaism. In 1784, the Berlin Jew Mordecai Gumpel Schnaber (1729-1797), an occasional writer for *ha-Measef*, revealed a preoccupation with what Christians would think of the Jews' linguistic abilities: "What will the peoples among whom we dwell say when they become convinced that they are more competent in the Hebrew language than we Jews are?"⁴⁵ The desire of the *maskilim* to have more interaction with the Gentile intellectual world made them more aware of the decreased knowledge of Hebrew within the wider Jewish community.

While Michaelis' own prejudices guided his critique of *ha-Measef*, he nonetheless did pick up on the awkwardness of the Hebrew in the journal. The attempt on the part of the editors to return to the pure Hebrew of the Bible, free from Talmudic influence, was artificial and ultimately unsuccessful.⁴⁶ The scholarly consensus is that the enduring importance of the journal does not rest in its dubious literary merit but rather the way in which it brought together *maskilim* from all over Central Europe and created a medium for open contribution.⁴⁷ This was the beginning of a Jewish press which flourished later in the nineteenth century. The writers of the Dessau journal *Sulamith* (1806-1843), the first German language journal devoted solely to Jewish issues, imitated the structure and

⁴⁵ Quoted in Zinberg, p. 82. Schnaber, also known by the name George Levinson, was a doctor born in Berlin who eventually moved to England.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

⁴⁷ Slouschz, pp. 32-33. Abraham Solomon Waldstein, *The Evolution of Modern Hebrew Literature, 1850-1912* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), pp. 4-5.

content of *ha-Measef*.⁴⁸ Although most later Jewish journals did not follow *ha-Measef*'s lead and publish in Hebrew, they were still indebted to the journal for modeling how a Jewish journal could be marketed and become successful.⁴⁹

Other Christian reviews of *ha-Measef* were more positive. Theology professor Georg Christoph Pisanski (1725-1790) mentioned the *ha-Measef* in his *Preussische Literargeschichte* (1790), an exhaustive intellectual history of Prussian literature.⁵⁰ An anonymous reviewer in a Königsberg theological journal praised the local *Chevrat Dorshe Leshon Ever* and their efforts to enlighten their co-religionists.⁵¹ Unlike Michaelis, this Christian reader of the journal found the Hebrew to be acceptable. The writers of *ha-Measef* used “pure Hebrew” whenever possible. They only resorted to “Chaldaic, Talmudic, [and] rabbinical expressions” when absolutely necessary. The reviewer also praised the purity of the editors’ German, presumably free from Yiddish pronunciation or grammar. This was something which he saw as a rarity among the local Königsberg Jewish community. Despite his positive impression of the project, however, the anonymous reviewer recognized that the large majority of Christian readers of Hebrew would find it difficult to read *ha-Measef* and would most likely skip over it.⁵²

⁴⁸ David Sorkin, "Preacher, Teacher, Publicist: Joseph Wolf and the Ideology of Emancipation," in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1850*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 119. Simone Lässig, "How German Jewry Turned Bourgeois: Religion, Culture and Social Mobility in the Age of Emancipation," *GHI Bulletin* 37 (2005): p. 64.

⁴⁹ Joseph Chotzner called *ha-Measef* the “progenitor of modern Hebrew journalism.” Joseph Chotzner, *Hebrew Humour and Other Essays* (London: Luzac & Co., 1905), p. 175.

⁵⁰ Georg Christoph Pisanski, *Entwurf einer Preussischen Literargeschichte in Vier Büchern* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1886), pp. 640-41.

⁵¹ Anon., "Hameasseph d.i. der Sammler. Eine jüdische Monatsschrift in Hebräischer Sprache.," *Magazin für die biblisch-orientalische Litteratur und gesammte Philologie* 1, no. 3 (1789): pp. 197-98.

⁵² *Ibid.*: p. 201.

This positive review was most likely either written by Johann Gottfried Hasse or by Johann Bernhard Köhler. Since Köhler was an acquaintance of Isaac Euchel's, it is probable that he was the anonymous author. To have such a positive review come from a member of the local scholarly community in Königsberg was gratifying to the four editors and revealed the inroads that Euchel in particular had made at the Albertina. Euchel's academic success at the university, however, would ultimately be limited by being a Jew and would precipitate his eventual move away from Königsberg.

Move to Berlin

Two years into the publication of *ha-Measef*, Isaac Euchel learned that Johann Bernhard Köhler (1742-1802), Full Professor of Oriental Languages at the university, was soon to retire. Euchel approached Immanuel Kant about the possibility of being considered for the vacant position. Kant's backing would hold weight, especially considering he was currently on the university board of trustees. In February 1786, Kant wrote to the Philosophical faculty and urged them to consider Euchel for the position. He referred to the fact that Euchel was most known in the community as the author of a Hebrew periodical. Kant described Euchel as a "clever young man" and a very good linguist. Although he desired Euchel to be considered for the position, he clearly stated that it would be an interim appointment until the university could find a long term replacement.⁵³

Kant later retracted his support for Euchel, citing the practical necessity that a university lecturer needed a Masters degree to teach. The faculty seemed to be willing to

⁵³ Immanuel Kant, *Correspondence*, trans. Arnold Zweig (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), pp. 241-42. See also Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), pp.634-35. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 5.

grant this degree to Euchel, but commencement included a Christian oath, which, as a Jew, Euchel would be unable to make. A May 1786 letter to Euchel from the rector of the university explained that the refusal was not due to any question of his mastery of the Hebrew language but rather because of the longstanding university policy regarding the necessity for a Christian oath.⁵⁴ Although this was presented as the justification for the board's decision, the underlying reason for rejecting Euchel for the position was a larger discomfort with having a Jew teach Christians in a theology department.⁵⁵ Despite Euchel's insistence that he would not include any form of exegesis in his language instruction, Kant and the rest of the board were unwilling to change the status quo.

Euchel was quite disappointed by this turn of events. To teach at the university would have provided him with a steady and necessary income. Shortly after this, Euchel received an offer to run the Oriental Printing Press, a new Hebrew printing house in Berlin connected to the Jewish Free School.⁵⁶ He promptly accepted the offer and made plans to move to the Prussian capital in 1787. While financial necessity played a large role in Euchel's move, his disillusionment with Königsberg and restlessness for a larger city undoubtedly also factored into his decision to accept the directorship at the publishing house. The fact that *ha-Measef* could be published there under his supervision also did not hurt.

⁵⁴ Immanuel Kant, *Briefe* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1970), pp. 122-23. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 58. Steffen Dietzsch, "Kant, die Juden und das akademische Bürgerrecht in Königsberg," in *Königsberg: Beiträge zu einem besonderen Kapitel der deutschen Geistesgeschichte des 18. Jahrhunderts*, ed. J. Kohnen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1994), pp. 123-24.

⁵⁵ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, pp. 225-26. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, pp. 86-90.

⁵⁶ Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 244. For more on the Oriental Printing Press, see Moritz Stern, "Gutachten und Briefe David Friedländers," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, no. 2 (1936): pp. 168-71.

Euchel shared the overall perception of Jews in Königsberg that Berlin was where the future of progressive Jewish thought and action lay. A move to Berlin offered Euchel more opportunities not only to interact with more *maskilim* but also with more Christian intellectuals. Berlin's reputation among the *maskilim* of a place where certain Jewish intellectuals rubbed shoulders with prominent German philosophers and thinkers was well deserved. As Jacob Katz writes of Berlin in the 1760s and 1770s, "Here Jews and Gentiles mingled as though the barriers separating the two societies had already been torn down."⁵⁷ Mendelssohn's lifelong friendship with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729-1781) developed in a city in which Jews and Christians regularly interacted at literary societies and clubs. The lack of a university in the city spurred on its intellectually minded inhabitants to seek out social spaces where they could share ideas. It is in this context that Mendelssohn and other Jews first began to engage in both casual and organized social interactions with Gentiles that did not center around commercial exchange.

The open intellectual world of Berlin in the late eighteenth century was somewhat unusual. Königsberg never achieved the same open environment in which Jews were able to interact socially on a regular basis with Christians separate from business transactions. During his visit to Königsberg in 1777, Moses Mendelssohn noticed the lesser degree of intellectual rapport between Jews and Christians. In a letter to his wife, Mendelssohn remarked on how little contact he had with Gentiles in the city: "I have not yet made any acquaintances among the Christians, and I am unlikely to in the future. [...] There might

⁵⁷ Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Syracuse Syracuse University Press, 1998), p. 47.

be honest and clever people here, but thankfully I can find better in Berlin.”⁵⁸ In many respects, Euchel felt the same way ten years later when he moved from Königsberg to Berlin in 1787. His tenure as tutor to Meyer Friedländer’s elder children had ended, as had his chances of employment at the Albertina. These circumstances, along with the job offer to run the Oriental Printing Press, made the decision to leave Königsberg relatively easy.

Despite the move to Berlin of Euchel and *ha-Measef* in 1787, the *Chevrat Dorshe Leshon Ever* remained in existence in Königsberg. The name of the literary group, however, changed to “The Society for the Advancement of Goodness and Virtue (*Chevrat Shocharei ha-Tov veha-Toschia*).⁵⁹ The transformation in name signified an ideological shift as both the journal and the society moved away from more traditional topics and more towards radical interpretations and subjects. The specific goal of the society to advance knowledge of the Hebrew language was replaced with more lofty and universalistic pursuits. It signified a movement away from a local community of like-minded individuals committed to the revival of the Hebrew language to a purely philosophical focus.⁶⁰

After its name change, the new society was only of short duration. It was supplanted by the founding in Königsberg of a branch of the Society of Friends

⁵⁸ Quoted in Engelhard Weigl, *Schauplätze der deutschen Aufklärung: ein Städterundgang* (Hamburg: Rowohlt Taschenbuch Verlag GmbH, 1997), p. 171.

⁵⁹ Jacob Katz, *Tradition and Crisis: Jewish Society at the End of the Middle Ages*, trans. B.D. Cooperman (New York: New York University Press, 1993), p. 228. In German the new name for the society was *Gesellschaft zur Beförderung des Guten und Edlen*. Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 51.

⁶⁰ When the journal moved away from Königsberg and gained new leadership, *ha-Measef* also abandoned Wessely’s advice to avoid religious controversy. See Waxman, p. 121. Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 97.

(*Gesellschaft der Freunde*). Started in Berlin in 1792, the society quickly developed branches in Königsberg and Breslau. With a more practical goal of supporting the Jewish infirm and poor, the Society of Friends had broader appeal in the German Jewish community. In Königsberg, it remained active until the early nineteenth century.⁶¹

In Berlin, the publication of *ha-Measef* continued semi-regularly for another two years. In 1790, it abruptly ceased publication for four years, largely because of financial difficulties. At this juncture, Isaac Euchel distanced himself from his literary creation.⁶² Years later, he would bemoan the decline of Hebrew among German Jewry and the way in which the younger generation of *maskilim* had abandoned their linguistic heritage.⁶³ In 1797, he wrote in *ha-Measef* that the journal should switch to writing in German with Hebrew characters, since so many Jews did not have a proper knowledge of Hebrew to read the journal anymore. German in Hebrew characters would still shield the publication from the eyes of many Christians but would open up the audience to more Jews.⁶⁴

Indeed, the failure of *ha-Measef* to maintain its readership was primarily because its target audience had largely stopped studying Hebrew.⁶⁵ Euchel was face to face with

⁶¹ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 60. Carsten Fecker, "Eintragungen im Königsberger Judenbürgerbuch 1808-1818," *Altpreuussische Geschlechterkunde* 35, no. 53 (2005): pp. 28-29.

⁶² Kennecke, "Der "Hame'assef" und sein erster Herausgeber Isaac Euchel," pp. 71-72.

⁶³ Shavit, p. 113.

⁶⁴ *Ha-Measef* 7: 361-362. See also Jeremy Dauber, *Antonio's Devils: Writers of the Jewish Enlightenment and the Birth of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish Literature* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 178-79.

⁶⁵ Shavit correctly points out that in the early nineteenth century German became the competing language of culture for the Jews: "[German Jews] now lived amidst a culture which ascribed prestigious weight to its own language and literature and which, by its successes and pulling power, had come to symbolize modern culture at its very best. To ignore its influence was an impossibility, and there was scant desire to do so." Shavit, p. 120.

the irony of *ha-Measef*'s vision for the religious and educational future of German Jews. The editors' position on the importance of a secular education for Jews ultimately led to the demise of the journal. As more and more Jews in the German lands heeded the advice of the *maskilim* to avail themselves of a secular education, the number of Hebrew readers dropped dramatically.⁶⁶

During the 1790s, publication of *ha-Measef* became more sporadic. From 1790 to 1794, the journal was not published at all. In 1794, Aaron Halle-Wolfsohn and Joel Brill became editors, but it was not very successful. They ceased the publication of *ha-Measef* in 1797, mainly because they had less than one hundred and fifty subscriptions.⁶⁷ Four years later in 1799, Shalom Hacoheh (1773-1845) approached Euchel about reviving the journal for a second time. Euchel's responded to the younger Polish *maskil*'s zeal with resignation and cynicism: "You have a precious gem in your hand that no one wants. [...] The days of love have passed, gone are the days of the covenant between me and the sons of Israel, when the buds of wisdom were seen and the Hebrew language flowered in glorification."⁶⁸ Hacoheh eventually tried to publish *ha-Measef* a few years later after Euchel's death in 1804, but he gave up after a few years of only lukewarm interest.

The decline of *ha-Measef* was simultaneous to the financial decline of the Jewish economic elite in Berlin and elsewhere. Many members of the Itzig family in Berlin became bankrupt. They were no longer able to fund intellectual pursuits to the degree

⁶⁶ Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, pp. 100-01. David Sorkin writes that *Ha-Measef* was "too enlightened for the religious, too religious for the enlightened." D. Sorkin, *German Haskalah*, p.40.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 101. Dauber, p. 168.

⁶⁸ Quoted and translated in Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, pp. 295-96.

they used to.⁶⁹ By the 1780s, the textiles industry in Prussia, particularly the silk and cotton industries, were in decline. This affected the wealth of the Friedländer family in Königsberg, who had made their fortune in silk and other textiles.⁷⁰

The rapprochement between *maskil* and merchant that developed in the late eighteenth century largely ended both for financial reasons and for a widening gap between the two groups' goals. The maskilic vision of the profound change of Jewish cultural life from within was gradually replaced by the growing interest among Jews in more political goals.⁷¹

⁶⁹ Lowenstein, *The Jewishness of David Friedländer and the Crisis of Berlin Jewry*, p. 20. In the 1790s, Isaac Itzig became bankrupt when the French government did not pay him for 10,000 horses. Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, p. 92.

⁷⁰ Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830*, p. 90.

⁷¹ Sorkin, *The Religious Enlightenment : Protestants, Jews, and Catholics from London to Vienna*, p. 211.

Chapter Eight
Maskil vs. Rabbi:
Jewish Education and Communal Conflict

In an 1812 letter to his fellow Jews in Königsberg, City Councilor Samuel “Sanvil” Wulff Friedländer expressed frustration with how language and religion had become so intertwined in Judaism: “If Jewish boys want to learn Hebrew, that is all well and good. But why not also Greek and Latin? Religion is not contained by language. God hears my prayer whether it is in German or Polish, Greek or Hebrew, as long as my heart is in it.”¹ Samuel Wulff, son of local reformer Wulff Joachim Friedländer and nephew of Berlin *maskil* David Friedländer, urged the community to expand its horizons and provide its youth with a broader education. His plea to the elders of his Jewish community came at a time when the Prussian state was more actively seeking to control the education of all of its citizens, including minority populations like the Jews who had traditionally been able to instruct their children as they saw fit.

Unlike other Jewish communities in comparable Prussian cities, the Jews of Königsberg did not establish a modern Jewish school inspired by the Free School in Berlin. This is especially poignant, since the Free School’s founder, David Friedländer, was originally from Königsberg and his siblings remained influential and active members of the community. Isaac Euchel’s call for such a school in 1782 was not heeded, and the hiring of the young reformer Isaac Francolm as communal religious teacher forty years later in 1820 ended with his forced resignation after only six years of employment. The sustained resistance of the rabbinical establishment in Königsberg, coupled with the Prussian state’s lack of cohesive educational policy, hindered any significant Jewish

¹ Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People (CAHJP) D/KO1 453, p. 21.

educational reform in the East Prussian capital during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

A survey of the Jewish educational debate from the early 1780s to the 1820s in Königsberg reveals the extent to which the ideals of the German Enlightenment inspired the *maskilim*. Local *maskilim* such as Isaac Euchel and communal leaders like Samuel Wulff Friedländer readily adopted the vocabulary of the German Enlightenment regarding the higher goals of *Erziehung* (education) and *Bildung* (self-cultivation). Christian Wilhelm von Dohm's linkage of regeneration with civic equality for the Jews influenced the way in which the *maskilim* framed the issue of reform. Education became a tool for the eventual political emancipation of Jewry as a whole.

Influence, however, was not just one-sided. *Maskilim* and their negative perception of *hadarim* and the methods of traditional Jewish education influenced Prussian state views. They came to agree that the the Polish *melamed* (teacher) was ignorant and ill-qualified to teach "true religion", defined as an enlightened religion devoted to larger moral truths rather than specific ritual laws and doctrine. Like the *maskilim*, the Prussian state saw the primary focus of Jewish education on religious texts as too narrow to instill in Jewish youth a proper view of the world. In both their eyes, Talmudic learning left Jewish children ill-equipped to function in larger German society and to garner the necessary respect from Christian society for them to accept Jewish citizenship.

The history of educational reform in Prussia and in Königsberg closely follows emancipation efforts. Indeed, in the philosophy of the German and Jewish Enlightenments, they were theoretically intertwined. Throughout the late eighteenth and

early nineteenth centuries, certain Prussian bureaucrats gradually applied these principles to state reform policies. Actual change, however, was slow to come. It would take the Prussian state over forty years to actually draw up specific guidelines for Jewish educators and to make the education of Jews in state sanctioned institutions compulsory.

Early Stages of Educational Reform

In 1781, state bureaucrat Christian Wilhelm von Dohm (1751-1820) initiated a public debate in Prussia about the potential for Jewish citizenship.² In his work, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (On the Civic Betterment of the Jews), Dohm advocated that Prussian Jews, in addition to being allowed to create their own institutions, should be permitted to attend Christian schools without fear of being “weaned from the faith of their fathers.”³ Dohm created a link between the modernization of Jewish education and the emancipation of the Jews. The integration of secular subjects of study into Jewish education was an integral part of the implicit trade-off of Jewish emancipation.⁴ Jews received full access to the civil and cultural life of the state in exchange for the self-removal of those aspects of Jewish particularity that state theorists judged incompatible with national citizenship.⁵ This entailed the end of the speaking of all Jewish vernaculars, including the oft-maligned “Jewish German”

² Christian Wilhelm von Dohm, *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Berlin: Friedrich Nicolai, 1781). Dohm wrote a second part to this book two years later in 1783. Sorkin writes that Dohm “inaugurated the era of Jewish emancipation in Germany.” David Sorkin, *The Transformation of German Jewry, 1780-1840* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 23.

³ Quoted in Max Kohler, "Educational Reforms in Europe and Their Relation to Jewish Emancipation, 1778-1878," *The Jewish Forum* (1919): pp. 10-11.

⁴ Werner E. Mosse, "From "Schutzjuden" To "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens": The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. P. Birnbaum and I. Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 78.

⁵ Reinhard Rürup, "Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* (1969): pp. 71-72.

(*Judendeutsch*) or Yiddish. The state and the *maskilim* alike saw Yiddish as a language devoid of beauty and more importantly the capacity to express reasoned discourse.⁶ Dohm embraced the Enlightenment confidence in the absolute ability to shape the character of a human being through education and applied this principle directly to the Jews.⁷ Proper instruction had the ability to alter those aspects of Jewish belief and behavior that European society considered unacceptable. Like so many Enlightened bureaucrats of his age, Dohm had utmost certainty in the modern state to transform society.⁸

The decision of Emperor Joseph II to issue several Edicts of Toleration (*Toleranzpatent*) in 1781 and 1782 towards the Jews in his realm partially inspired Dohm's call for Jewish inclusion in the life of the Prussian state. In the spring of 1781, Joseph II had begun circulating among his royal staff various drafts of a proposed edict directed at the Jews. In an effort to harness the economic utility of the Jews, Joseph II pushed for the improved education of the Jews, particularly in the sciences and the arts. The Emperor allowed Jewish enrollment at Christian primary and secondary schools, as well as the creation of parochial Jewish schools. These sanctioned primary schools would have to submit their curriculum to the local superintendent. Joseph II eventually

⁶ Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay, "The Ideology of the Berlin Haskalah," *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 25 (1956): pp. 25-26. Jacob Katz, *Out of the Ghetto: The Social Background of Jewish Emancipation, 1770-1870* (Syracuse Syracuse University Press, 1998), pp. 64-65.

⁷ Katz, pp. 64-65.

⁸ Reinhard Rürup writes of the late eighteenth century trend in the German lands towards "a seemingly unbounded confidence in the capacities of the state as initiator and guide of all social change, as an instrument of reason in a world that appeared to be unreasonably designed." Rürup: p. 70.

issued numerous edicts which applied separately to Bohemia, Lower Austria, Moravia, Hungary, and later on to Galicia.⁹

Despite the theoretical linkage by certain bureaucrats of Jewish emancipation and the reform of their education, no concrete state reform of parochial Jewish education took place in Prussia in the late eighteenth century. Although touted as a model of reform, Joseph II's *Toleranzpatents* did not motivate similar measures in Prussia.¹⁰ Wealthy Jewish children in Brandenburg and elsewhere continued to be educated at home by private tutors. The rest attended a *heder* (plural *hadarim*), a private Jewish school for children up to the age of thirteen, or a *talmud torah*, an institution run by the community and attended primarily by the poor.¹¹ *Hadarim* were usually located in a room in the house of the teacher (*melamed*). They did not teach secular subjects such as arithmetic or non-Jewish literature, and learning was limited exclusively to Jewish religious and liturgical texts. Children learned in succession the Jewish prayer book (*siddur*), the Pentateuch and finally the Talmud.¹² Since the teachers at *hadarim* were mostly from Poland and not German speakers, the language of instruction tended to be a complicated mixture of Hebrew and Yiddish. The method of teaching was mostly mnemonic and

⁹ The *Toleranzpatent* for Vienna and Lower Austria reprinted and translated into English in Paul Mendes-Flohr and Jehuda Reinharz, eds., *The Jew in the Modern World: A Documentary History*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), pp. 36-40.

¹⁰ Andreas Brämer, *Leistung und Gegenleistung: Zur Geschichte jüdischer Religions- und Elementarlehrer in Preussen 1823/24 bis 1872* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2006), p. 44. Rürup: p. 74.

¹¹ Mordechai Eliav, *Jüdische Erziehung in Deutschland im Zeitalter der Aufklärung und der Emanzipation*, trans. M. Strobel (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), p. 19. Steven Lowenstein, "The Beginning of Integration: 1780-1870," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany, 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 118-20.

¹² *Encyclopedia Judaica*, ed. Michael Berenbaum and Fred Skolnik, 2nd ed., vol. 1 (Detroit Macmillan Reference USA, 2007), p. 752. See also Robert Liberles, "On the Threshold of Modernity: 1618-1780," in *Jewish Daily Life in Germany: 1618-1945*, ed. Marion Kaplan (Oxford Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 47-49.

focused on the memorization of large passages of scripture.¹³ Those students in the *hadarim* who demonstrated a particular aptitude or who had the financial means, continued on in their education at the *yeshivah* at the age of thirteen.

While the Prussian state did not ultimately institute any concrete changes or react directly to Dohm's call for change or Emperor Joseph II's step towards civic improvement, Prussian Jews responded eagerly and quickly to these outside impetuses. Within the world of the Prussian *haskalah*, those voices desirous of reforming Jewish education from the inside were becoming louder. In early 1782, Isaac Euchel anonymously wrote a short letter in Hebrew entitled *Sefat Emet (The Language of Truth)* advocating the founding of a new Jewish school in Königsberg governed by Enlightenment principles.¹⁴

As we learned in Chapter Seven, Euchel originally came to Königsberg to be a tutor in the house of Meyer Friedländer. Euchel enjoyed a close relationship with the children he tutored, so much so that he dedicated his 1786 German translation of portions of the *Siddur* to Rebekka Friedländer (1770-1838), one of his pupils.¹⁵ Unlike other tutors in Jewish homes who their employers considered members of the service staff, the Friedländer family treated Euchel as an intellectual and social equal. The later support of

¹³ Jorg H. Fehrs, "Die Erziehung jüdischer Kinder in Ost- und Westpreussen im 19. Jahrhundert," in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Brocke, M. Heitmann, and H. Lordick (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002), p. 240. Monika Richarz, *Der Eintritt der Juden in die Akademischen Berufe* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1974), p. 3.

¹⁴ Isaac Euchel, *Sefat Emet* (Königsberg: 1781). *Sefat Emet* is reprinted in the original Hebrew and translated into German in Ingrid Lohmann, ed., *Chevrat Chinuch Nearim: Die jüdische Freischule in Berlin (1778-1825)*, vol. 1 (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), pp. 154-62. Moshe Pelli, *The Age of Haskalah: Studies in Hebrew Literature of the Enlightenment in Germany* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1979), p. 227. Eliav, p. 374.

¹⁵ Ajzensztejn writes that Euchel was in love with his young pupil, who married her cousin Samuel Wulff Friedländer the same year that Euchel published *Gebete der hochdeutschen und polnischen Juden*. Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), p. 407.

many branches of the Friedländer family for Euchel's fledgling journal *ha-Measef* reveals the extent to which the wealthy merchants admired him.¹⁶

Around the same time that Euchel wrote *Sefat Emet*, he also matriculated at the Albertina for the first time in the winter semester of 1781-82. Euchel chose to focus his studies in philosophy and Semitic languages. He attended several lectures of Immanuel Kant and developed a particularly close academic relationship with Johann Bernhard Köhler (1742-1802), a professor of Oriental Languages.¹⁷ His exposure to philosophy and enlightenment principles at the university likely fueled a growing interest in improving the educational opportunities of his coreligionists.¹⁸ Euchel wished to expand the boundaries of his didactic influence further than the private confines of the Meyer Friedländer home and his seven children. He had a larger vision of how education could transform the entire Jewish community in Königsberg and beyond, regardless of one's financial status. As one of the many private tutors in the city, Euchel had regular exposure to those children whose parents would be interested in seeing a school open in their city. A school devoted to educating the poor needed wealthy patrons to fund the effort. Euchel's employers, the Friedländer family, were part of small but significant group of upper class Jews that emerged in Prussia and elsewhere in the middle of the

¹⁶ Andreas Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2007), pp. 43-44.

¹⁷ Andreas Kennecke, "Der "Hame'assef" und Sein Erster Herausgeber Isaac Euchel," in *Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Verfolgung*, ed. M. Nagel (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2002), p. 74.

¹⁸ Monika Richarz sees a clear link between the trajectories of certain *maskilim* and their time at the university. Euchel is one of her primary examples of this phenomenon. Many *maskilim*, however, followed the example of Moses Mendelssohn and become autodidacts. Richarz, pp. 13-14. See also Shmuel Feiner, "Isaak Euchel - Der Gründer der jüdischen Aufklärungsbewegung," in *Reb Hennoch, Oder: Woss Tut Me Damit*, ed. M. Aptroot and R. Gruschka (Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 2004), pp. 4-5.

eighteenth century.¹⁹ Their communal influence extended well beyond the economic and reached into the cultural and religious life of the community.

The Jewish Free School in Berlin served as Euchel's model for a future Jewish school in Königsberg. Founded in 1778 by David Friedländer, the brother of Euchel's employer, the school sought to provide a well-rounded education to all Jews. Wealthy Jews had already been receiving such an education through private tutors for decades. The larger goal was to provide formal instruction to poorer Jews.²⁰ Euchel longed for a similar type of institution in Königsberg. Such schools were one of the first ways in which the *maskilim* put their progressive ideas into practice.²¹ The Free School and other Jewish schools that were to follow in the next few decades provided those Jewish children who attended exposure not only to secular subjects but also to elements of religious reform. Schools conducted progressive services that would not have been allowed in the synagogue.²² The reader that David Friedländer had written in Berlin in 1770 served as a model for the type of text that should be incorporated into Jewish education throughout Prussia. Written in German, Friedländer's textbook included various religious sources and devotions. While he included Jewish sources like

¹⁹ Reinhard Rürup calls them a "cultural Jewish upper stratum." Rürup: pp. 69-70.

²⁰ Shmuel Feiner, "Erziehungsprogramme und Gesellschaftliche Ideale im Wandel: Die Freischule in Berlin, 1778-1825," in *Jüdische Erziehung und aufklärerische Schulreform*, ed. B. Behm, U. Lohmann, and I. Lohmann (Münster Waxmann, 2002), pp. 71-72. Euchel did not even need to look as far as Berlin and the Jewish Free School for inspiration. He had a model for his project right in Königsberg. Founded in 1701 with royal approval, the Collegium Fredericianum, sought to educate poor boys in the city. Fritz Gause, *Die Geschichte der Stadt Königsberg in Preussen*, 3 vols., vol. 2 (Cologne: Böhlau Verlag, 1968), p. 12. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, pp. 59-60.

²¹ David Sorkin, "Preacher, Teacher, Publicist: Joseph Wolf and the Ideology of Emancipation," in *From East and West: Jews in a Changing Europe, 1750-1850*, ed. F. Malino and D. Sorkin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1990), p. 116.

²² David Philipson, *The Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1907), pp. 18-19. Michael A. Meyer, "Jewish Communities in Transition," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), pp. 114-15.

Maimonides' Thirteen Principles, the overall goal of the work was to stress universal principles of belief common to Jews and Christians alike.²³

Very few children from Königsberg relocated to attend the Free School in Berlin.²⁴ The reason for this is most likely not a lack of interest among Jews of the city but rather the distance between Königsberg and the Prussian capital. Moreover, the wealthy of the city still preferred to hire live-in instructors like Euchel to educate their children in religious and secular matters. The decision to educate their children in secular subjects was as much practical as it was philosophical. The financial success of certain Jewish families necessitated that their children be able to communicate effectively with non-Jews. The mastery of High German and other European languages was absolutely essential to business. Moreover, it was a sign of their growing social status.²⁵

Sefat Emet, a reference to Proverbs 12:19 ("True speech abides forever"), declared a new age of Jewish education that would do away with centuries of stilted and limited opportunities for learning among the Jews.²⁶ Euchel bemoaned the current standards of Jewish learning in Königsberg. He maintained that most children were not properly taught the intricacies of the Hebrew language, nor the historical background to rabbinical sources. Since most Jews finished their formal education by the age of thirteen, whatever information they gained was quickly lost in "hustle and bustle" of

²³ Shmuel Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, trans. C. Naor (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 2004), p. 109. For the connection between *Sefat Emet* and Friedländer's textbook, see Andrea Ajzensztejn, "Isaak Abraham Euchel: Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Königsberg," in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Heitmann M. Brocke, and H. Lordick (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), p. 409.

²⁴ In 1804, only one student from Königsberg named Heimann M. Heimann is listed. Lohmann, ed., pp. 420-21.

²⁵ Richarz, p. 6. Simone Lässig, "How German Jewry Turned Bourgeois: Religion, Culture and Social Mobility in the Age of Emancipation," *GHI Bulletin* 37 (2005): pp. 63-64.

²⁶ Proverbs 12:19: "Truthful speech abides forever" (*Sefat emet tikon la'ad*).

daily life and the “needs of the body.”²⁷ In his plea, Euchel laid out his general vision for the future of religious education in Königsberg. It was ultimately a moderate plan which stressed the need for a more individualized approach to a child’s education that took into account both religious and practical matters. The maskilic vision of Jewish education sought to nurture their coreligionists both as Jews, human beings, and as active citizens within a national context.²⁸

Euchel’s 1786 translation of Jewish prayers into Hebrew was one practical attempt by the *maskil* to provide a means for Jewish youth to better access Jewish tradition. Euchel opened *Gebete der hochdeutschen und polnischen Juden* (Prayers of the German and Polish Jews) with a letter to his former pupil Rebekka Friedländer, reminiscing of the sense of rapture they used to feel when reciting Jewish prayers. This delight was predicated on an understanding of the ancient language of their prayers, something that many of their coreligionists did not have. Euchel’s desire for the translation was for younger Jews would use the translated text as a way to draw themselves back to Hebrew and to Jewish tradition.²⁹

Ultimately, the financial influence of Euchel’s employer and the overall support of the Friedländer family were not enough for the creation of an enlightened Jewish school to gain approval in Königsberg. The conservative voices in the community outnumbered those who desired change. Samuel Wigdor, communal rabbi in Königsberg

²⁷ Euchel. Reprinted in both Hebrew and German translation in Isaac Euchel, *Vom Nutzen der Aufklärung: Schriften zur Haskala* (Düsseldorf: Parerga Verlag, 2001).

²⁸ Shmuel Feiner sees *Sefat Emet* as one of the founding texts of modern Jewish education. Feiner, "Erziehungsprogramme und Gesellschaftliche Ideale im Wandel: Die Freischule in Berlin, 1778-1825," pp. 73-76. Feiner, "Isaak Euchel - Der Gründer der jüdischen Aufklärungsbewegung," pp. 1-3.

²⁹ Isaac Euchel, *Gebete der hochdeutschen und polnischen Juden* (Königsberg: Kanter, 1786). Letter to Rebekka Friedländer reprinted in Ernst Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Hamburg: Comm. Vlg. Lucas Gräfe, 1913), pp. 29-30.

since 1777, was the most outspoken opponent of Euchel's school plan. Wigdor did not want to entrust the education of the Königsberg Jewish youth to Euchel or any other *maskil* who challenged the didactic methods of the traditional *heder*. In addition, Euchel most likely offended Wigdor by writing an open letter to the community at large rather than directly addressing local religious leadership.³⁰

By not responding to Euchel's call for reform in *Sefat Emet*, the Königsberg Jewish community was not numbered among those cities whose Jews founded progressive schools in the 1780s and 1790s. These included Breslau (1791), Halberstadt (1795), Hanover (1798), and Dessau (1799).³¹ This burgeoning center of Jewish Enlightenment was unable or unwilling to accomplish what so many other cities could. The success that David Friedländer found in Berlin with the Jewish Free School was not matched by his relatives in Königsberg. Wigdor and the rabbinical establishment in Königsberg were able to squash any chance of reform.

Euchel's failure to gather up enough internal support to start a reformed school in Königsberg marked the beginning of a protracted struggle in the city between the more progressive members of the community and the conventional religious authorities, particularly the head rabbi.³² The conflict between the two groups became so heated that in 1792, the *maskilim* in Königsberg created a new branch of the local burial society

³⁰ Lohmann, ed., p. 1423, Moritz Stern, "Euchels Plan zur Errichtung eines jüdischen Erziehungsinstituts und Lehrerseminars 1784," *Israelitische Monatsschrift* 52, no. 12 (1900): p. 45. See also Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung*, pp. 106-07. Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 227. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 204.

³¹ For more on the modern Jewish schools of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century see Moritz Güdemann, "Jüdisches Erziehungs- und Unterrichtswesen in Deutschland," in *Encyklopädisches Handbuch der Pädagogik*, ed. Wilhelm Rein (Langensalza: Hermann Beyer und Söhne, 1906), pp. 721-23. Sorkin, "Preacher, Teacher, Publicist: Joseph Wolf and the Ideology of Emancipation," p. 114.

³² Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), pp. 99-100. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 60.

called the *Wohltätige Gesellschaft*. Intended as a counterweight to the *Chevrah Kaddishah*, the new society was connected to the local branch of the *Gesellschaft der Freunde*.³³ The large Friedländer family led the push towards reform. With wealth and a secular education, they had the necessary tools and connections to motivate local leaders to support their endeavors. But resistance from local rabbinical authorities was apparently too strong to overcome.³⁴

In a short autobiography from 1784, Euchel did not portray the local reception of *Sefat Emet* in a negative light. He rather presented the communal response in Königsberg to the pamphlet as primarily positive and credited further opportunities given to him to this initial public statement.³⁵ Despite his positive words in his biography, however, Euchel did not try again to start a school in Königsberg. Instead, he requested of the Danish crown in 1784 that they consider the creation of an Institute for Education in Kiel. This plea was framed by Euchel as a personal quest on behalf of his home country. Driven by patriotism, Euchel longed for Jewish subjects who benefited from the “fatherly care” of the Danish king to also be freed from the “chains of stupidity” (*Fesseln der Dummheit*) in which they currently found themselves.³⁶

³³ Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 190. Hermann Vogelstein, *Zur Feier des Hundertjährigen Bestehens der Wohltätigen Gesellschaft zu Königsberg I.Pr.* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1909), pp. 6-7.

³⁴ The lack of archival sources on the rabbinical response to Euchel’s pamphlet in Königsberg (on account of the synagogue fire in 1811) makes it difficult to be more specific about how Wigdor managed to block the creation of the school.

³⁵ Isaac Euchel, "Lebensbeschreibung " in *Chevrat Chinuch Nearim*, ed. I. Lohmann (Münster Waxmann, 2001), p. 243.

³⁶ Isaac Euchel, "Schreiben an den Dänischen König, October 21, 1784," in *Chevrat Chinuch Nearim*, ed. I Lohmann (Münster: Waxmann, 2000), p. 236. Also printed in Euchel, *Vom Nutzen der Aufklärung: Schriften zur Haskala*, pp. 45-58.

While a contentious letter locally in Königsberg, *Sefat Emet* did not receive much attention outside of East Prussia. Another, more controversial pamphlet on the reform of Jewish education by Naphtali Herz Wessely (1725-1805) overshadowed Euchel's plea.³⁷ In response to Joseph II's Edict of Toleration, Wessely wrote *Words of Peace and Truth* (*Divrei shalom ve'emet*) in 1782 and encouraged the Jews of Austria to heed the emperor's call to educate themselves. Wessely broke up learning into two categories – human knowledge (*torat ha-adam*) and heavenly knowledge (*torat ha-elohim*). This division was not in itself problematic; it was rather Wessely's assertion that human knowledge, defined as "the ways of morality and good character, civility and clear, graceful expression," was necessary in order to properly comprehend a more exalted knowledge of God.³⁸ To many readers of Wessely's pamphlet, the order of learning Wessely suggested implied a blasphemous hierarchy of knowledge. Human knowledge appeared to supercede biblical learning. This assumption led to a general outcry within rabbinical circles throughout the German lands and Poland and increased debate among the *maskilim* regarding the future of Jewish education.³⁹

The German Philanthropinists (*Philanthropin*), in particular Johann Bernhard Basedow (1723-1790), inspired the educational philosophy of Wessely and other Jewish

³⁷ Moshe Pelli points out how the radical tone of Wessely's *Words of Peace and Truth* compared to Euchel's more moderate *Language of Truth* is surprising in light of the future work of both *maskilim*. Euchel ultimately became much more extreme than the older and more traditionalist Wessely, as the opening anecdote from Chapter Seven reveals. Pelli, p. 228.

³⁸ Naphtali Herz Wessely, *Divrei Shalom Ve'emet* (Berlin: 1782). Selected chapters are reprinted and translated into English in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz, eds., pp. 70-74. David Friedländer translated Wessely's pamphlet into German and changed some of the content to reflect his own radical views. See Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, p. 110.

³⁹ For more on the Jewish reception of *Divrei shalom ve'emet*, see Edward Breuer, "Naphtali Herz Wessely and the Cultural Dislocations of an Eighteenth-Century Maskil," in *New Perspectives on the Haskalah*, ed. S. Feiner and D. Sorkin (Portland: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2001), p. 36-41. See also Feiner, *The Jewish Enlightenment*, pp. 87-104. Israel Zinberg, *A History of Jewish Literature*, trans. B. Martin, vol. 8 (Cincinnati Hebrew Union College Press, 1976), pp. 71-74.

reformers like Isaac Euchel.⁴⁰ Basedow's non-sectarian school, founded in Dessau in 1774, was a model for a successful secular institution. Their stress on universal religion and on doing away with traditional aspects of school curriculum appealed to the *maskilim*. It was so popular with Prussian Jews that, at Mendelssohn's behest, some Jews even contributed a relatively large sum (518 Thaler) to the Dessau school.⁴¹ A progressive education could be the means by which the ideals of the Enlightenment would have a broad influence on society. Initially both the *haskalah* and the wider German Enlightenment only affected the intellectual elite; by founding schools based on its principles, however, society at large would be transformed.⁴² The Philanthropinists had managed to do this in a way that *maskilim* desired to emulate. Their educational philosophy also sought to end the singular focus in Latin schools on the minutia of grammar and the dry memorization of religious catechisms.⁴³ Such criticism resonated with the *maskilim* who saw a similar rigidity in *hadarim* that quelled individual initiative or any type of free-thinking in students.

The negative responses to Euchel's *Sefat Emet* and Wessely's *Divrei shalom ve'emet* revealed the fault lines within the Prussian Jewish community regarding the

⁴⁰ Philanthropinism was a pedagogical reform movement that began in 1770s. It was named after Basedow's school in Dessau. Its adherents rebelled against the traditional educational focus on grammar and memorization. In addition to cerebral activities, the Philanthropinists stressed physical activity. The school day often included nature hikes and even gardening. S. Chester Parker, *A Textbook in the History of Modern Elementary Education* (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1912), pp. 211-14. Joachim Knoll and Horst Siebert, *Wilhelm von Humboldt: Politician and Educationist* (Bad Godesberg: Inter Nationes, 1967), p. 28.

⁴¹ Kohler: pp. 8-9. S. Chester Parker, "Experimental Schools in Germany in the Eighteenth Century," *The Elementary School Teacher* 12, no. 5 (1912): pp. 216-17. Zohar Shavit, "Literary Interference between German and Jewish-Hebrew Children's Literature During the Enlightenment: The Case of Campe " *Poetics Today* 13, no. 1 (1992): pp. 43-44.

⁴² Andreas Kennecke, "*Hame'assef*: Die erste moderne Zeitschrift der Juden in Deutschland " *Das Achtzehnte Jahrhundert* 23, no. 2 (1999): p. 177.

⁴³ Knoll and Siebert, p. 28.

future of Jewish education and the overarching issue of religious modernization. While a high-profile and outspoken group, the *maskilim* were by no means in the majority. The eighteenth century battle over Jewish education quickly became a battle between the rabbinical establishment and those Jews who identified with the ideals of the European Enlightenment.⁴⁴ Both sides, however, had to confront the growing intrusion of the Prussian state into the daily lives of its subjects. While the separateness of Jewish education had remained intact for centuries, the state's desire for centralization led to a gradual reevaluation of the Jewish community's autonomy in educational matters.

State Reform of Jewish Education

On February 22, 1787, the Prussian state centralized the supervision of most educational institutions under one office called the Superior State Board of Education (*Oberschulkollegium*). Karl Abraham von Zedlitz headed up the board, along with other government officials and university professors.⁴⁵ The board had all schools under their authority except for "schools of the Jewish nation", those of the "French colony" (i.e. Huguenots), and military institutions. The stated reason for these exclusions was that these three types of schools already had other guidelines.⁴⁶ The underlying reason was the ongoing autonomy that the state granted these minorities, a freedom which the state

⁴⁴ Ajzensztejn, "Isaak Abraham Euchel: Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Königsberg," p. 409. Güdemann, p. 721.

⁴⁵ See Chapter Two for a biography of Zedlitz. Mylius, *Novum corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (NCCM), Band VIII, pp. 617-18. The members of the OSK included von Zedlitz, Johann Christoph Wöllner (1732-1800), Gotthelf Samuel Steinbart (1738-1809), and Johann H.L. Meierotto (1742-1800).

⁴⁶ Mylius, *Novum corpus constitutionum marchicarum* (NCCM), Band VIII, p. 619. See also Peter Dietrich, "Die Rolle des Preussischen Staates bei der Reform des jüdischen Schulwesens," in *Jüdische Erziehung und aufklärerische Schulreform*, ed. B. Behm, U. Lohmann, and I. Lohmann (Münster: Waxmann, 2002), p. 177. Eliav, p. 231.

was hesitant to curtail. In large part, the resistance was because of the financial effect a change might have. By taking control of the education of these previously exempt groups, the state would have to take on at least part of the financing for future state-run schools.

The goal of a new state run board of education was to further wrench educational control away from the church and bring it into the hands of the crown. Up until this point, the church was in charge of most educational supervision in Prussia.⁴⁷ To gather information, Zedlitz and the new school board asked all of the provinces in Prussia to evaluate education in their region. The reports that arrived in the next few months were not encouraging. Instructors were woefully unprepared, and many schools were under attended.⁴⁸

The revised codification of Prussian law in 1794 reinforced the Board of Education's assertion that the state should be in charge of its citizens' education. The General Legal Code (*Allgemeine Landrecht*) declared all schools and universities in Prussia "organs of the state" which should only be established "with the state's foreknowledge and sanction."⁴⁹ The code protected religious minorities from prejudice

⁴⁷ Horst Kenkel, *Schulen und Lehrer in Regierungsbezirk Königsberg* (Marburg: J.G. Herder-Institut, 1982), p. XXII. Thomas Alexander, *The Prussian Elementary Schools* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1919), p. 22. R.H. Samuel and R. Hinton Thomas, *Education and Society in Modern Germany* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1971), p. 91.

⁴⁸ Zedlitz's tenure as general director of the OSK was short lived. In 1788, Frederick William II replaced him with the controversial statesman Johann Christoph Wöllner (1732-1800). As a member of the educational board since its inception, Wöllner had openly criticized his superior's liberal policies, referring on several occasions to Zedlitz as a godless man. He was the guiding force behind the July 6, 1788 Religious Edict that banned all forms of Jewish or sectarian Christian proselytizing and censored teachers and university professors. Karl A. Schleunes, *Schooling and Society: The Politics of Education in Prussia and Bavaria, 1750-1900* (New York: Berg, 1989), pp. 39-43. Guy Stanton Ford, "Wöllner and the Prussian Religious Edict of 1788, I," *American Historical Review* 15, no. 2 (1910): pp. 274-75. Jurgen Herbst, "Nineteenth-Century Schools between Community and State: The Cases of Prussia and the United States," *History of Education Quarterly* 42, no. 3 (2002): pp. 322-23.

by forbidding public schools from discriminating against pupils based on religious affiliation. Children of a different religion who attended a parochial school could opt out of any religious curriculum if they so chose.⁵⁰ Christian Wilhelm von Dohm's earlier desire expressed in *On the Civic Improvement of the Jews* (1781) to not see education become a mechanism for conversion had been realized in Prussia, at least on paper.

In East Prussia, the *Oberschulkollegium* (OSK), headed by pedagogue Johann H.L. Meierotto (1742-1800), created a special commission in 1787 to evaluate the state of education in the province.⁵¹ As the reports gradually came in from around East Prussia, the great need for reform became all too clear to the committee in Königsberg. Even in their own city at the celebrated *Collegium Fredericianum*, the commission saw room for improvement, in particular an increase in the number of hours of weekly German instruction. They also urged the teachers to teach "more religion than theology and to deal more with the mind (*Verstand*) and the heart than with memory and ecclesiastical terminology." A new school plan for the *Collegium* drafted by reformed pastor William Crichton (1732-1805) expressed that "the memorization of sentences and formulas" will never adequately engage the mind and the heart of a student, nor should "blind faith" ever be encouraged.⁵² This disdain for memorization mirrored that of Jewish reformers, who desired the study of scripture to move beyond passive recollection.

⁴⁹ "Die Schulartikel des Preussischen Allgemeinen Landrechts von 1794," in *Quellen zur deutschen Schulgeschichte seit 1800*, ed. Gerhardt Giese (Göttingen: Musterschmidt Verlag, 1961), p. 61.

⁵⁰ Parker, "Experimental Schools in Germany in the Eighteenth Century," p. 223.

⁵¹ Paul Schwartz, "Die Schulen der Provinz Ostpreußen unter dem Oberschulkollegium 1787-1806 : I " *Zeitschrift für Geschichte der Erziehung und des Unterrichts* 1 (1931): pp. 60-61.

⁵² Both quoted in *Ibid.*: pp. 73-75.

Jewish schools in East Prussia fell not under the authority of the OSK but instead under the Financial Department (*Finanz-Ressort*).⁵³ While the OSK had initially stayed away from regulating Jewish education officially, this did not mean that regular discussion on the possibility did not occur. The state's desire to reform Jewish education was evident as early as the 1790s. A reform plan drafted by the General Directory from January 24, 1792 stressed that no more foreign (i.e. Polish) teachers should be allowed to instruct the Jewish youth of Prussia. Instead, the General Directory wanted schools like the newly founded Free School in Berlin to render Polish teachers unnecessary. Jewish children were to be taught "pure German, free from rabbinical expressions."⁵⁴

This sentiment was in line with that of the *maskilim*, who also wished for the responsibility of educating the Jewish youth to no longer be in the hands of Jews from Eastern Europe.⁵⁵ Proponents of the *haskalah* often caricatured these teachers, mostly from Poland and Lithuania, as dirty and ignorant men unable to properly teach Biblical subjects, let alone the practical matters that the German Jewish youth needed to function in modern society.⁵⁶ Enlightened Germans adopted a similar attitude towards the Polish Jewish teachers in Prussia. In an 1809 edition of the *New Berlin Monthly*, Friedrich Nicolai described tutors from Poland as "wretched beings" whose knowledge of Hebrew grammar and style was suspect:

⁵³ Ibid.: p. 55.

⁵⁴ "Der Reformplan des General-Direktoriums, January 24, 1792," in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), p. 78.

⁵⁵ Feiner, "Erziehungsprogramme und Gesellschaftliche Ideale im Wandel: Die Freischule in Berlin, 1778-1825," pp. 73-75.

⁵⁶ Eliav, pp. 185-89. Shulamit Volkov, "Die Verbürgerlichung der Juden in Deutschland: Eigenart und Paradigma," in *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert: Verbürglichung, Recht und Politik*, ed. Jürgen Kocka (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1995), p. 125.

These squalid Poles have nothing in the head but the driest Talmudic minutia [...] together with blind fervor for the trivial study of ceremonial laws, and rabid bigotry against every Jew who dare to distance themselves even a small amount from their supposed Orthodoxy.⁵⁷

Nicolai was most likely influenced by his friend David Friedländer, whose antipathy for Polish Jewish tutors was well-established. Friedländer wrote of how Jewish parents no longer wanted to entrust the education of their children to Polish teachers, who focused on “Talmudic minutiae, that did not give the slightest advantage [to Jews] in commercial life.”⁵⁸

Other Jewish reformers had been equally vocal about their disdain for Polish teachers (*melamedim*). As early as 1772, Joseph Lewin, the Jewish school master (*Judenschulmeister*) in Potsdam, called for the removal of Polish Jewish teachers throughout Prussia.⁵⁹ In his dramas in the 1790s, Aaron Wolfsohn-Halle, a former editor of *ha-Measef*, derided Polish *melamedim*, portraying them as a corrupt and dishonest lot.⁶⁰ Salomon Maimon’s account of his traditional Talmudic education, revealed a degree of distaste for his fellow Poles. In his autobiography, Maimon described the Talmudic study of his youth as “a hunt for shadows.”⁶¹

⁵⁷ Friedrich Nicolai, "Jüdische Talmudisten in Berlin," *Neue Berlinische Monatschrift* (1809): p. 355. Secondary literature often reflects this same viewpoint. In the early twentieth century, David Philipson wrote that *melamedim* were “for the most part uncouth Poles, devoid of all pedagogical ability.” The *hadarim* were “synonymous with disorder.” Philipson, p. 17.

⁵⁸ David Friedländer, *Moses Mendelssohn: Fragmente von ihm und über ihn* (Berlin: Friedrich Enslin, 1819), p. 35.

⁵⁹ Eisenstein-Barzilay: p. 34.

⁶⁰ Isaac Eisenstein-Barzilay, "The Treatment of the Jewish Religion in the Literature of the Berlin Haskalah " *Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research* 24 (1955): pp. 66-67.

⁶¹ Solomon Maimon, *An Autobiography*, trans. J. Clark Murray (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2001), p. 121.

On numerous occasions, the editors of *ha-Measef* demonstrated a negative view of Polish teachers. In *Nachal ha-Besor* (River of Good News), the opening manifesto for *ha-Measef* discussed in the previous chapter, Euchel and his fellow editors referred to Polish teachers as “the dull schoolmasters of our people.”⁶² In order to express their disdain for traditional Jewish schools, *maskilim* sometimes used the Prussian state term *Winkelschule* to refer to *hadarim*.⁶³ This gave the schools the connotation of being hidden and backwater, something that both the Jewish establishment and the state should seek to close. In 1823, local magistrates in Königsberg attempted to shut down all Jewish *Winkelschulen* and send those children to public schools. The main problem the city officials had with schools were that the instructors were not approved by the state. By this point, the call to reform education extended not only to public schools but also to private institutions and their instructors.⁶⁴ Jewish teachers had to pass state exams and demonstrate their competency and pedagogical abilities. These exams were oftentimes given by Christian clergy. “Corner schools” managed to bypass this control.⁶⁵

Recent historiography has challenged the maskilic view of *hadarim* and traditional Jewish education as exaggerated and overly critical.⁶⁶ Foreign teachers in Prussia often had a difficult and transitory existence, since the state usually only allowed them to stay for a three year period. Such limitations made it difficult to recruit quality

⁶² Isaac Euchel et al., "Nachal Habesor," in *Vom Nutzen der Aufklärung: Schriften zur Haskala* ed. Andreas Kennecke (Düsseldorf: Parerga Verlag, 2001), pp. 9, 231.

⁶³ Julius H. Schoeps, *"Du Doppelgänger, Du Bleicher Geselle...": Deutsch-jüdische Erfahrungen im Spiegel Dreier Jahrhunderte, 1700-2000* (Berlin: Philo Verlag, 2004), p. 182.

⁶⁴ Fehrs, p. 243. Herbst: p. 322.

⁶⁵ Meyer, pp. 115-16.

⁶⁶ See, for example, Brämer, pp. 41-42. Liberles, pp. 48-51.

religious instructors. The low pay of schoolteachers also necessitated additional side jobs, which meant that they could not devote all their time to education. Some *melamedim* were either a cantor or the town's ritual slaughterer.⁶⁷ They were also not all as conservative as their opponents would have the public believe. Several *maskilim* and Jewish intellectuals of the eighteenth century were first exposed to a secular education by their Polish schoolmasters.⁶⁸

For the *maskilim*, Polish teachers symbolized all that was bad about traditional Jewish education. Both the *maskilim* and representatives of the Prussian state increasingly began to see Polish *melamedim* as unwanted, non-German outsiders. Putting education into the hands of German Jewish educators was part of the overall strategy of reform.

Later Reform and the Edict of 1812

After the Treaty of Tilsit in 1808 and Napoleon's triumph, the exiled Prussian government dissolved the OSK and placed educational matters in the Ministry for Religious and Educational Affairs (*Ministerium für Geistliche- und Unterrichtsangelegenheiten*) within the Ministry of the Interior.⁶⁹ Wilhelm von Humboldt (1767-1835) headed up this new commission. Under Humboldt's leadership, the Enlightenment concepts of *Bildung* (self-cultivation) and *Sittlichkeit* (morality or respectability) guided the movement of pedagogical reform. Humboldt also saw them as

⁶⁷ Some Jewish schoolteachers taught for as little as 10 Thaler a year. Kohler: p. 8. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 29. Liberles, p. 50. Lowenstein, pp. 119, 24.

⁶⁸ Selma Stern mentions two: Aron Solomon Gumperts (1723-?) in Berlin and Ephraim Kuh (1731-?) in Breslau. Selma Stern, "The First Generation of Emancipated Jews," *Leo Baeck Yearbook XV* (1970): pp. 10, 32.

⁶⁹ Kenkel, p. XXIII. Alexander, p. 55.

the litmus test for citizenship and as the characteristics needed for proper civil servants. The process of self-actualization was to take place in an environment of equality. Nobles, the middle classes, and the poor alike were to attend the same primary schools.⁷⁰ For reformers like Humboldt, formal education was not only meant to enrich the individual and provide him or her with the necessary tools for self-fulfillment, it was the means by which the state created useful citizens. Education was as political as it was personal.⁷¹

The importance for the state to reform Jewish education was not lost on other German pedagogues. In 1824, Johann Christoph Kröger (1792-1874) linked the overall improvement of the Jewish condition in the German lands to the reform of Jewish schools, particularly their elementary institutions, and to the fostering of more effective instructors. Kröger urged those who saw conversion as a worthy goal to reconsider; it was rather the “diversity of religions” that would raise “more useful citizens for the state and better individuals for the world.”⁷²

Königsberg played a key role in many of the governmental reforms of the Napoleonic period, including the reevaluation of the state’s school system in 1809. As temporary capital from 1806 to 1809, the city witnessed and took part in the early stages of educational reform. The provincial head of East Prussia, Friedrich Leopold von

⁷⁰ George L. Mosse, "Jewish Emancipation: Between *Bildung* and Respectability," in *The Jewish Response to German Culture*, ed. J. Reinharz and W. Schatzberg (Hanover: University Press of New England, 1985), p. 3. David Sorkin, "Wilhelm von Humboldt: The Theory and Practice of Self-Formation (*Bildung*), 1791-1810," *Journal of the History of Ideas* 44, no. 1 (1983): pp. 62-63. Keith Pickus, *Constructing Modern Identities: Jewish University Students in Germany, 1815-1914* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999), pp. 31-32.

⁷¹ Franzjörg Baumgart, *Zwischen Reform und Reaktion: Preussische Schulpolitik, 1806-1859* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1990), pp. 49-53.

⁷² J.C. Kröger, "Ueber die Bildung der Jüdischen Jugend," *Freimüthige Jahrbücher der allgemeinen Deutschen Volksschulen* 2 (1824): p. 100.

Schroetter (1743-1815) addressed the question of Jewish education in an 1808 reform plan, which will be discussed in depth in Chapter Nine. He proposed that religious instruction should be conducted by rabbis under the direct supervision of the state. Jews could either be educated at home by private tutors or in regular public schools. Schroetter was strongly against the creation of exclusively Jewish schools.⁷³

Humboldt became Prussian minister of education in 1809 and proceeded to develop much of his early plans for the future of German education in Königsberg. His *School Plan for Königsberg* from 1809 called for the creation of upper secondary schools in Königsberg for students who would then take an exam that would serve as a university entrance exam. For this reason, the Königsberg school plan is often considered by historians as the blueprint for the future *Gymnasium*. A year later, the first state *Gymnasium* in Königsberg opened in 1810 and replaced the *Collegium Fridericianum*.⁷⁴ Humboldt envisioned an institution which would provide students with an “all-round human education.” This included Jews, who were to become part of the *Bildungsbürgertum*, a new educated middle class. Each individual citizen’s personal pursuit of knowledge and understanding would benefit the state. The ultimate goal of Humboldt’s plan for Jewish education and integration into German society was full assimilation and disappearance of any Jewish particularity.⁷⁵

⁷³ “Der Schroetter’she Entwurf,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 236.

⁷⁴ See for example, Baumgart, Knoll and Siebert, p. 38. Schleunes, pp. 11-12. Henryk Rietz, “Die Kultur West- und Ostpreussens in den Jahren 1772 bis 1815,” in *Königsberg und Riga*, ed. H. Ischreyt (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer Verlag, 1995), p. 4.

⁷⁵ Quoted in Knoll and Siebert, pp. 36-37. In this report, Humboldt declared the schools in Königsberg to be some of the worst in all of Prussia. Wilhelm von Humboldt, *Werke*, vol. 4 (Stuttgart J.G. Cotta'sche Buchhandlung, 1964), p. 164. Jürgen Rohlfes, “Judenemanzipation in Preussen: das 'Edikt betreffend die bürgerlichen Verhältnisse der Juden in dem Preussischen Staate' Vom 11. März 1812,” *Geschichte in*

Three years after Humboldt's *School Plan*, the Prussian state established partial citizenship for the Jews in the Edict of 1812. Even though it opened up many new avenues for the Jews to integrate into Germany society, the March edict tabled the issue of Jewish educational reform.⁷⁶ In May of the same year, the School Commission headed by Minister Schuckmann called on each provincial government to provide them with a list of the number of school-age (*schulfähig*) Jewish children in their area and a description of the "method of instruction and the personality of the instructor."⁷⁷

The Jews of Königsberg produced this list in July 1812. In that year, one hundred and seven Jewish children in the city fit that description, sixty five boys and forty two girls.⁷⁸ Several members of the Berlin Jewish community responded to Schuckmann's inquiry, including Vice Oberlandesrabbiner Meyer Simon Weyl, Free School director Lazarus Bendavid, and David Friedländer. Friedländer disavowed the need for particular Jewish schools at all, an interesting stance for the man who founded the Jewish Free School twenty years earlier. Friedländer claimed that any specific religious instruction that Jews needed could be gained on the Sabbath in a separate class connected directly to the synagogue. For other subjects, there was no reason why Jewish students could not learn alongside Christians at the state public schools. In contrast to Friedländer, Rabbi

Wissenschaft und Unterricht 51, no. 5-6 (2000): p. 341. Frank J. Goodnow, "Local Government in Prussia, I," *Political Science Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1889): p. 27.

⁷⁶ Mosse, "From "Schutzjuden" To "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens": The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," p. 70.

⁷⁷ Reprinted in Moritz Stern, "Gutachten und Briefe David Friedländers," *Zeitschrift für die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, no. 2 (1936): p. 113. See also, Eliav, p. 240.

⁷⁸ CAHJP D/KO1 453, p. 3. The list sub-divided these children by gender into two groups: those between four and eight and between eight and sixteen. As a point of comparison, in the same month, Berlin compiled a list of 286 Jewish children (120 boys and 166 girls). This report is reprinted in Lohmann, ed., pp. 697-705.

Weyl urged Prussian authorities to retain parochial Jewish schools and to continue the teaching of Hebrew and Talmudic study.⁷⁹

The March Edict of 1812 corresponded to the election of a more reform minded Board of Elders in Königsberg.⁸⁰ If there were ever a time to reform Jewish education in the city it would be now. State leadership had expressed a desire for change, and the new elders were in a position to finally see a Jewish primary school founded in Königsberg.

In a June 1812 letter to the Jewish elders in Königsberg, the East Prussian Provincial Board for Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education (*Geistliche Schuldeputation*) inquired after a recommendation of “virtuous men” who could teach at a proposed Jewish primary school.⁸¹ The letter from the Provincial Board wanted the Jewish elders to report back the number of Jews in Königsberg who were currently educated at home and those who attended local Christian schools. They also surmised that the lack of a Jewish school in Königsberg on par with the Jewish Free School in Berlin had led to the neglect of religious instruction among the Jewish youth of the city. The Ministry sought the preference of the local Jewish community – would they prefer to continue to attend Christian schools and receive their religious instruction separately, or would they rather start a school at their own expense?⁸² The letter underscored to the Jewish community in

⁷⁹ Letter reprinted in Stern, "Gutachten und Briefe David Friedländers," pp. 114-18. Eliav, p. 82.

⁸⁰ Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung*, p. 238.

⁸¹ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 1-2. In 1808, educational leadership in East Prussia had been centralized under the Provincial Board for Ecclesiastical Affairs and Education within the Ministry of the Interior. Robert M. Bigler, "The Rise of Political Protestantism in Nineteenth Century Germany: The Awakening of Political Consciousness and the Beginning of Political Activity in the Protestant Clergy of Pre-March Prussia " *Church History* 34, no. 4 (1965): p. 429. In Breslau twenty years earlier, the authorities used the term “reasonable” (*vernünftig*) to describe the type of man they desired to be a teacher of the Jews. In addition to religious custom, this man would teach the Jewish children under his care “pure morals and human kindness.” Quoted in Dietrich, p. 191.

Königsberg that their recommendation for a Jewish primary school in the city did not mean that the state would take on the financial burden of its creation. Rather, the community would need to fund their own educational reform.

The letter was signed by Ludwig Borowski (1740-1831), *Consistorial Rat* (General Superintendent) for the East Prussian government. A native of Königsberg, Borowski had demonstrated an interest in Jewish matters twenty years earlier when he published a source volume on the *Aleinu* controversy.⁸³ In order to answer the questions of Borowski and the Provincial Board, the Jewish Elders in Königsberg formed a committee of five men, including Samuel Wulff Friedländer and Dr. David Assur, who was a prominent physician in Königsberg related to the Lewald family.⁸⁴

In a decree from November 2, 1812 to East Prussia and other municipalities, representatives underscored the need to reform the education of the Jews. Two members of the Ecclesiastical and School Board of Prussia, Kaspar Schuckmann and Ludwig Nicolovius, signed the ruling that declared Jewish schools to contain “much that was unsuitable”. The community’s educational methods were “faulty and incomplete”, as were the individuals entrusted with the education of the community.⁸⁵ Schuckmann and Nicolovius recognized that it would be best to involve the Jews in their own

⁸² CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 1-2.

⁸³ Borowski also wrote a biography of Immanuel Kant. He eventually became archbishop of the Evangelical Church in Prussia. Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Moses Mendelssohns und Georg David Kypkes Aufsätze über jüdische Gebete und Festfeiern: Aus Archivalischen Akten* (Königsberg: Hartung, 1791). Ludwig Ernst Borowski, *Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kants* (Königsberg: F. Nicolovius, 1804). *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, vol. 37 (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1894), pp. 177-78.

⁸⁴ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 1-2. Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1861), p. 10. This Dr. David Assur was not the David Assur referred to in Chapter Five, who later converted to Christianity and changed his name to Assing. They were, however, related. Lewald refers to the Dr. Assur here as “the Elder” and David Assing as “the Younger.”

⁸⁵ Dietrich, pp. 200-01.

transformation. By giving them direct control over the reform process, this would also justify the decision to make them fully financially responsible. Within the decree one can notice a hesitancy to create an interim concession for Jewish education, out of fear that it would complicate matters when longstanding policies were set.

Many Jewish parents in Königsberg were against the creation of a separate Jewish school in their city. One reason was financial. They would have had to pay for the private Jewish school as well as pay taxes for the public school.⁸⁶ Another reason was social snobbery. Well-off Jewish parents preferred to send their child to Christian schools. In this environment, Jewish children might be a religious minority, but they were still with those of the same class. The prospect of studying in Jewish schools alongside the Jewish poor was more distasteful to some of the wealthy Jewish elite than having their children be influenced by Christian culture.⁸⁷ This tendency mirrored the Jewish community in Vienna in the 1770s. The local governmental authorities had approached the Jewish community about founding a separate Jewish school in the city, but the Jews there turned down their request. Instead, the Jews continued to enroll their children in the public schools already in existence.⁸⁸

Class differences within the Jewish community did not appear to be the reason why Samuel Wulff Friedländer (1764-1837), one of the founders of *ha-Measef*, seemed ambivalent about the creation of such a school in Königsberg. In a letter addressed to the Jewish elders of Königsberg, dated October 1812, S. W. Friedländer weighed in on the

⁸⁶ Hans-Jürgen Krüger, *Die Judenschaft von Königsberg in Preussen, 1700-1812* (Marburg: Johann Gottfried Herder-Institut, 1966), p. 55.

⁸⁷ Eliav, pp. 401-02. Meyer, p. 116.

⁸⁸ Kohler: pp. 15-16.

issue. He declared that the question of a proper Jewish education could not be answered until the Jews first reformed the outdated aspects of their faith:

The future instruction of Jewish children is intricately connected to the future worship of the Jews. We should only address one if we are willing to resolve the other. If the [believers of] the Jewish faith are either not capable of making changes or improvements or do not allow them [...], then the suggestions of the [school] commission and its members are futile and pointless. One remains as one was, tied to one's old habits (*Schlendrian*), leaving everything how it always has been. We continue to define a religious Jew or person solely as someone whose prayers are immoral and babbling, whose sermons are gibberish, who does not eat forbidden dishes, who does not desecrate the Sabbath. But if changes and improvements were allowed, the beautiful jewel of the true and authentic Judaism, cleansed from all rules, toxins and outdated interpretations would be brought to light and illuminate.⁸⁹

Samuel Wulff regarded many of the traditional practices of Judaism to be relics of the past that the Jews should leave behind. His description of Jewish prayer as “babbling” (*geplappten*) and its service as “gobbledegook” (*Kauderwelsch*) left the elders reading the letter no doubt as to the Jewish city councilor's feelings about Judaism in its current state. S.W. Friedländer urged the elders to seek out “learned and insightful men [capable of] clearing away piles of rubble to uncover the gleaming gem [of true Judaism].”⁹⁰

Samuel Wulff's lack of support for local Jewish educational efforts in Königsberg mirrored the growing disillusionment of his uncle David Friedländer in Berlin. Only six years after the founding of the Free School, David began to distance himself from the school he once founded. A letter to Leopold Zunz from 1825 indicated that he was disappointed with the lack of progress at the Free School towards his original goals. The equilibrium that he had sought between universal principles and particular Jewish knowledge seemed increasingly more difficult to achieve.⁹¹ Samuel Wulff also had a

⁸⁹ CAHJP D/KO1 453, p. 20.

⁹⁰ Ibid.

practical stake in blocking the opening of a Jewish grade school in Königsberg. His wife, Rebekka Friedländer, had opened a private school in their home in 1812, shortly after he had lost the large majority of their fortune in a failed silk endeavor.⁹² A public Jewish school might have taken away potential students from their private endeavor. Moreover, Samuel Wulff and Rebekka had chosen to send their own children to the premier Christian academy in Königsberg. Their eldest son David Joachim Friedländer (1769-1840?) was the first Jewish graduate of the Pietistic Friedrichs-Collegium. David Joachim eventually became a professor of Political Science at the University of Dorpat (Tartu, Estonia).⁹³

Dr. David Assur also rejected the idea that Königsberg would need a separate Jewish school to educate their youth. Jews in the city were already attending Christian schools, and Assur saw this as advantageous both for Jewish and Christian youth, since it would foster a “close bringing together of the two nations” that would eventually lead to “mutual trust and love” between them.⁹⁴ Assur saw no reason why Jewish boys and girls should learn separately, except for in the study of Hebrew language and the Bible. He thought Jewish girls had no need to learn any more than the basics of Hebrew, while Jewish boys still needed an advanced knowledge of Hebrew, not only for liturgical reasons but also for future business transactions with more traditional Jews from

⁹¹ Feiner, "Erziehungsprogramme und Gesellschaftliche Ideale im Wandel: Die Freischule in Berlin, 1778-1825," p. 83.

⁹² Friedländer, *Das Handlungshaus Joachim Moses Friedländer et Söhne zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 51. Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), p. 632.

⁹³ Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und Judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 12. Politician and 1848 revolutionary Johann Jacoby also enrolled at the Friedrich-Collegium in 1815. Adolf Kober, "Jews in the Revolution of 1848 in Germany," *Jewish Social Studies* X (1948): pp. 138-39.

⁹⁴ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 9-10.

Poland.⁹⁵ Twice in his letter, Assur made obscure references to the writings of the Apostle Paul in the New Testament. These references would have made more sense if his response was directly to Borowski and the Provincial Board, but this memo was internal to the Jewish community. Such offhand comments reveal the extent to which Assur and other integrated Jews in Königsberg had embraced wider German and thereby Christian culture even by the early nineteenth century.⁹⁶

Rabbi Josua Beer Herzfeld took a more cautious approach to the reform of Jewish education. Herzfeld came to Königsberg in 1799 during a period of upheaval and strife within the community. The head position of rabbi in Königsberg had been vacant since Samuel Wigdor left in 1791, in large part because the reformers and the more traditional members of the community could not agree on a replacement. Herzfeld was actually a compromise that neither side preferred. Caught between two warring factions, Herzfeld was never able to gain much support, especially on the issue of educational reform.⁹⁷ His letter to the Jewish committee dated April 13, 1812, reaffirmed his belief in Jewish ceremonial law and that theoretical knowledge of Judaism is meaningless if not combined with the external following of the law. Herzfeld appeared resigned to his lack of power in the community and even stated at the end of his letter that his “hands were tied.”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 10-14.

⁹⁶ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 8, 11. The first was from 1 Thessalonians 5:21: “Prüft aber alles und das Gute behaltet.” (Prove all things, hold fast to what is good.). Assur’s second reference was to 1 Corinthians 13:9: “Denn unser Wissen ist Stückwerk” (For we only know in part).

⁹⁷ Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung*, p. 107.

⁹⁸ CAHJP D/KO1 453, pp. 17-19. See also Hermann Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.* (Königsberg: 1903), pp. 71-73.

The 1812 discussion of whether or not to create a Jewish grade school in Königsberg came at the end of a long period of internal Jewish educational reform that began with Mendelssohn and his contemporaries in the late eighteenth century. It also signified the end of an era.⁹⁹ That the discussion never led to any action showed the disagreements and hesitancy within the small committee. Some like Samuel Wulff Friedländer outright opposed a parochial Jewish school; others disagreed as to the content of the curriculum. While Samuel Wulff might have had ulterior motives for being against a Jewish primary school, other prominent members of the community did not embrace the cause either. By 1812, the moment for exclusive Jewish education had passed.

As previously mentioned, one practical reason why a Jewish school never developed in Königsberg was because many Jews in the city had private tutors to teach their children. A population table from 1785 lists each Protected Jew and his family and household staff, including teachers. Most of the Protected Jews had a school teacher listed under their care.¹⁰⁰ Also by this point, many Jewish students were already attending Christian schools in Königsberg. For her formal education in the 1820s, Fanny Lewald attended the Ulrich school, a private Pietistic institution ran by a Mr. and Mrs. Ulrich. The school was located in a home on the Kneiphof near the Cathedral Square. It was a coeducational school, but the classes were divided by gender.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ M. Eliav saw 1815 as the end of this period Jewish educational reform. Eliav, p. 208.

¹⁰⁰ See Selma Stern, *Der Preussische Staat und die Juden: Dritter Teil/ Die Zeit Friedrichs des Grossen. Zweite Abteilung: Akten* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1971), pp. 1116-39. Kennecke, *Isaac Euchel: Architekt der Haskala*, p. 42.

¹⁰¹ Lewald, pp. 98-100.

Poor Jews, whose public education was subsidized by communal offerings and scholarships, also attended Christian schools. Elsewhere in East Prussia, the number of school-age Jewish children was so small that most had no choice but to attend the public schools.¹⁰² Any religious instruction they received took place outside of a formal school setting. This separation of secular and religious education led the community to try a new approach to Jewish education.

Preacher and Teacher

In 1820, the Jewish community in Königsberg once again sought a religious teacher for their youth. Like in 1812, it was the Prussian state's prodding that led to action.¹⁰³ This person would work alongside the communal rabbi, sharing in the responsibility of spiritually guiding the community. One goal of hiring a new teacher was to encourage the education of both Jewish boys and girls. His official title would be "preacher". Implicit in the use of the title "preacher" was the fact that his sermons would be in the German vernacular.¹⁰⁴ The concept of a Jewish preacher was relatively new. The Hamburg Temple first hired two preachers in 1818. The Temple Society in Karlsruhe brought in a preacher a year later.¹⁰⁵ The reformed preacher/teacher was intended as a counterweight to the authority of the rabbi.

¹⁰² Fehrs, pp. 242, 50.

¹⁰³ Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, pp. 9-10, 17-18.

¹⁰⁴ Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung*, p. 239, Jolowicz, pp. 130-31.

¹⁰⁵ Richarz, p. 196. See also Philipson, p. 35.

In early 1820, Moses Elias Beer, the chief elder of the community (*Ober-Vorsteher*), wrote to Baruch Lindau (1759-1849), a friend of his in Berlin, to ask for a recommendation for the position. In the past, Lindau had been a regular contributor to *ha-Measef*. Beer wrote that the position would have a fixed salary of 1000 Thaler, along with free lodging. The future teacher in Königsberg could also count on additional income from his teaching responsibilities, as those families who were able would most certainly pay him extra for tutoring their children.¹⁰⁶ Lindau suggested a young scholar in Berlin named Leopold Zunz (1794-1886). On March 24, 1820, Zunz sent to Beer in Königsberg a letter expressing that he would be ready “to devote all of his strengths, however faulty, to the Jewish community in Königsberg.”¹⁰⁷

In 1820, the twenty six year old Zunz was in the early stages of formulating his philosophy of Jewish scholarship. A year before, Zunz had been among the founders of the Society for the Culture and Science of Judaism (*Verein für die Kultur und Wissenschaft des Judentums*). The group of seven Jews met in Berlin weekly to discuss, among other things, matters relating to Jewish integration into German intellectual culture.¹⁰⁸ The Jewish elders in Königsberg evidently did not fully trust Baruch Lindau’s recommendation, since on April 4th they wrote to Simon Weyl, assistant rabbi in Berlin,

¹⁰⁶ Reprinted in Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, pp. 10-11. Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung*, p. 239.

¹⁰⁷ Printed in S. Maybaum, "Aus dem Leben von Leopold Zunz," in *Zwölfter Bericht über die Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums in Berlin* (Berlin: 1894), pp. 5-7. The letter that Baruch Lindau wrote to Beer is not extant, but Zunz wrote Lindau on March 17, 1820, and provided him with a description of what he had previously written to the Königsberg community. Maybaum reprinted this letter in full (pp. 5-6). The Zunz incident is also mentioned in the Lewandowski papers. LBI AR 7027; AR 1923, Blatt 1.

¹⁰⁸ For more on the *Verein*, see Ismar Schorsch, *From Text to Context: The Turn to History in Modern Judaism* (Brandeis: Brandeis University Press, 1994), pp. 205-28. Gustav Karpeles, "Leopold Zunz," in *Jewish Literature and Other Essays* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society of America, 1911), pp. 324-25.

to ask his opinion of the young Leopold Zunz. While Weyl's response to the Königsberg Jewish community is not extant, in light of Weyl's later strained relationship with Zunz, it is unlikely that he recommended the young scholar for the position.¹⁰⁹

Breslau native Isaac Ascher Francolm (1788-1849) eventually received the position of religious teacher and preacher in Königsberg over Zunz. He resigned from his current position as head of the *Wilhelmsschule* in Breslau to come to Königsberg in October 1820. Founded in 1791, the Jewish school in Breslau quickly surpassed the success of the *Freischule* in Berlin and became the largest modern Jewish school. In 1792, it had one hundred and twenty students.¹¹⁰ Shortly after Francolm arrived in Königsberg, he had to take a state exam to be certified by the government.¹¹¹

The initial excitement at Francolm's arrival in Königsberg was great, so much so that a local supporter in Königsberg took it upon himself to write a report to *Sulamith* in November 1820. The anonymous report spoke glowingly of Francolm's ability to educate the community in matters of religion. It is doubtful, however, that the writer was correct in reporting to *Sulamith* that the decision to hire Francolm was unanimous, nor was the entire Jewish community in Königsberg "fully confident" that the Breslau teacher would lead the Jewish youth of the city to a better knowledge of their religion.¹¹² Early in

¹⁰⁹ Michael A. Meyer, *The Origins of the Modern Jew: Jewish Identity and European Culture in Germany, 1749-1824* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1967), pp. 153-54. Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, pp. 16-17.

¹¹⁰ Richarz, p. 8. The *Wilhelmsschule* was spearheaded by the Silesian governor Karl Heinrich von Hoym. For more on the *Wilhelmsschule*, see Andreas Reinke, "Zwischen Tradition, Aufklärung und Assimilation: die Königliche Wilhelmsschule in Breslau, 1791-1848," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 43, no. 3 (1991). Feiner, "Erziehungsprogramme und Gesellschaftliche Ideale im Wandel: Die Freischule in Berlin, 1778-1825," p. 88. Eliav, pp. 103-13.

¹¹¹ Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 20.

¹¹² "Nachrichten," *Sulamith* 16, no. 1 (1820): p. 228.

Francolm's tenure, signs already existed that certain members of the community were displeased with some of his religious innovations.

The most controversial change that Francolm instituted was the confirmation of Jewish youth, particularly girls. A practice that dates back to the early nineteenth century, Jewish confirmation was a ceremony which drew from the Christian notion of confirmation as an introduction into the spiritual life of the church. It involved a public recitation of the article's of faith. Controversial even among *maskilim*, Jewish confirmation at the age of thirteen became a substitute for the *bar mitzvah*.¹¹³ On June 5, 1821, Königsberg became the first community in Prussia to confirm Jewish girls. A letter to Francolm dated June 12, 1821 from the elders praised his efforts at change and reform: "We are doubly grateful to you, worthy sir. First for the precious seeds that you have planted in the delicate minds [of our children], that will no doubt become beneficial fruits, and second because the high authorities of the royal government have looked on with approval."¹¹⁴

In the span of six years, Francolm confirmed fifty two Jewish girls. While the upper leadership of the community might have supported Francolm's confirmations, many other communal members complained vehemently. They protested Francolm's presence in Königsberg by pulling their children out of his classes. The number of children enrolled in his religious instruction sank precipitously during 1821 and 1822.

¹¹³ Michael A. Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1988), pp. 39-40.

¹¹⁴ Quoted in Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 27.

By 1824, the “preacher and teacher” in Königsberg was in the awkward and unusual position of having no students whatsoever.¹¹⁵

Alarmed by Francolm’s bold confirmation of Jewish girls, his opponents saw a potential ally in the Prussian state. Instead of keeping the dispute over Francolm’s reforms internal to the Jewish community, they chose to involve the government. To have the secular authorities mitigate an internal religious dispute ran counter to longstanding Jewish tradition. Halakhic literature from the Middle Ages admonished Jews who informed Gentile authorities of any Jewish infractions or quarrels. Yet, despite this, Jews in conflict nonetheless routinely used external leadership to gain the upper hand in internal matters.¹¹⁶ In the summer of 1821, some members of the Königsberg community complained to the government that Francolm was taking on the role in the synagogue similar to that of a Christian preacher and that he was even dressing like a Christian.¹¹⁷ In April 1824, certain members against Francolm’s appointment stepped up their criticisms and complained to the authorities about the new elements that Francolm was adding to the Jewish liturgy. Not only was he confirming boys and girls, a practice “wholly unknown to us”, he was also preaching in German and singing German songs.¹¹⁸

Such suggestions would have concerned the Prussian authorities. Since the Edict of 1812, the government, desirous of Jewish integration, began to deny any form of

¹¹⁵ Jorg H. Fehrs, "Königsberg: Ein Zentrum der Aufklärung," in *Deutsch-jüdische Passagen*, ed. W. Jasper (Hamburg: Hoffmann und Campe, 1996), pp. 218-19. See also Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Die Jüdische Minderheit in Königsberg/Preussen, 1871-1945* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), p. 34. Eliav, pp. 418-19. Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 41.

¹¹⁶ For more on this trend in Poland Lithuania, see Eli Lederhendler, *The Road to Modern Jewish Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 12-14, 28-30, 88.

¹¹⁷ Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, p. 30.

¹¹⁸ Letter transcribed in *Ibid.*, pp. 37-38.

Jewish religious innovation. This worked in the favor of those Jews in Königsberg who wished for Francolm's dismissal. In general, Frederick William III was not behind Jewish religious reform, particularly the use of the German language in Jewish services or any form of alteration to the Hebrew liturgy. The primary reason for this was because the state wanted Judaism to remain a relic in a modern age. By remaining the same, the king hoped that this would motivate an increasing number of Jews to abandon their faith and ultimately convert to Christianity.¹¹⁹

Despite numerous complaints from the Königsberg Jewish community, local authorities upheld Francolm's appointment for six years. One reason for this was because at one point the community had voted on whether to keep the teacher and preacher. One hundred and twenty one individuals wished to retain him in his position; only sixteen voted against it.¹²⁰ Moreover, Francolm had developed close ties with the Friedländer family in Königsberg. Two years after arriving in the city, Francolm cemented his relationship with the reform-minded family by marrying one of his students, Henriette Friedländer.¹²¹ Despite Francolm's connections to certain prominent members in the community, he recognized how precarious his position in the Königsberg community was. In April 1824, he wrote an open letter to the communal elders that revealed his frustration with the current situation: "Indeed, when I look back to the

¹¹⁹ Meyer, *Response to Modernity: A History of the Reform Movement in Judaism* p. 109.

¹²⁰ Fehrs, "Die Erziehung jüdischer Kinder in Ost- und Westpreussen im 19. Jahrhundert," p. 250. This vote is surprising in light of evidence that many parents had pulled their children out of Francolm's classes.

¹²¹ Jolowicz, p. 134, note 1. Andrea Ajzensztejn, "Der Aufstieg der jüdischen Familie Friedländer in Königsberg," in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Heitmann M. Brocke, and H. Lordick (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), p. 384.

amount of effort and zeal the community put into my appointment, it seems impossible to me [...] that in this time the ethos of the community has changed so much.”¹²²

It became clear that the Prussian state supported educational reform that would make Jews more useful citizens, but it did not support any changes to the Jewish faith. The local authorities only called for Francolm’s resignation when Berlin started to put a halt to wider Jewish religious reform. The state had originally approved of Francolm’s appointment, but that was before he began his radical plan to reform Jewish religious practice in Königsberg. A state cabinet order from March 29, 1826, stated that “the Jewish service in the synagogue [in Königsberg] could only be conducted according to the old rituals without any new elements.” It went on further to mention Francolm specifically.¹²³ While the cabinet order did not dismiss Francolm from his position, it made any type of continuation of his work along the same lines impossible. Because of this, shortly thereafter, Francolm decided that he no longer wished to retain his position.

Isaac Francolm’s decision to not continue on in Königsberg as religious teacher marked another triumph of the rabbinical establishment in the city over the small contingent of reformers desirous of educational innovation. Francolm left Königsberg in November 1826 and returned to his home town of Breslau where he took over the running of the *Wilhelmsschule*. In Königsberg, the post-Francolm backlash against reform was so strong that for a time the community even forbade the use of German on

¹²² Vogelstein transcribed the entire letter from Francolm to the communal elders. Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, pp. 42-43.

¹²³ Fehrs, "Die Erziehung jüdischer Kinder in Ost- und Westpreussen im 19. Jahrhundert," p. 250. See also Martin Philippon, *Neueste Geschichte des jüdischen Volkes*, vol. 1 (Leipzig: Gustav Fock, 1907), p. 116.

Jewish tombstones.¹²⁴ The community remained without a religious teacher until 1835 when they hired Joseph Levin Saalschütz.

As a leading center of the *haskalah* in the late eighteenth century, alongside Berlin and Breslau, it is surprising that Königsberg was not able to achieve what other Jewish communities did. This was in large part because of the large number of Jews in the city who actively partnered with the Prussian government to maintain the religious status quo.¹²⁵ These Jews often complained to the Prussia state and urged them to intervene in internal matters. They capitalized on the Prussian state's increasing desire to leave Jewish belief and practice unchanged.

A decree from May 15, 1824, made school attendance mandatory for the first time for Jewish children in Prussia. The institution of compulsory Jewish education in Prussia in 1824 was late compared to other German states. Baden did so in 1809, Bavaria in 1813. Only Württemberg (1825), Saxony (1837), and Hanover (1837) did so later than Prussia.¹²⁶ Even after the 1824 ruling, however, the Prussian bureaucracy's struggle with religious confessional education continued. The state remained hesitant to pay for any type of Jewish religious education, in large part because they thought that the Jews could afford to pay for it themselves.¹²⁷ Because the Prussian state was unwilling to contribute the funds necessary for a complete overhaul of Jewish education, at least not in the first

¹²⁴ Fehrs, "Königsberg: Ein Zentrum der Aufklärung," pp. 218-19. Vogelstein, *Beiträge zur Geschichte des Unterrichtswesens in der jüdischen Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr.*, pp. 61-62.

¹²⁵ Eliav, p. 417. Fehrs, "Die Erziehung jüdischer Kinder in Ost- und Westpreussen im 19. Jahrhundert," p. 249.

¹²⁶ Mosse, "From "Schutzjuden" To "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens": The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," p. 78.

¹²⁷ Samuel and Thomas, p. 99. Dietrich, p. 188. See also Michael A. Meyer, "The Freischule as a Mirror of Attitudes," in *Die jüdische Freischule in Berlin 1778-1825*, ed. I. Lohmann (Münster: Waxmann, 2001), p. 3. An exception to this rule was in Breslau in the 1790s. Here the state did contribute funds to maintain the largely secular *Wilhelmsschule*. Dietrich, pp. 196-97.

half of the nineteenth century, each region was able to dictate its own type of school. Religious education, therefore, remained in the hands of each local Jewish community, rather than the centralized government in Berlin.¹²⁸

¹²⁸ Herbst: pp. 328-30. Fehrs, "Die Erziehung jüdischer Kinder in Ost- und Westpreussen im 19. Jahrhundert," p. 242.

Chapter Nine The Edict of 1812

Regarding the process of political change in Central Europe, historian Lois Dubin writes that “we need to stop holding our breaths waiting for the French revolution to erupt.”¹ The French model of a dramatic and immediate granting of Jewish emancipation did not occur in Prussia, nor did it in most of the German lands. In most territories leading up to 1871, emancipation was a piecemeal process of gradual concessions followed oftentimes by quick reversals.² In the case of Prussia, it took decades of stop and go negotiations within the bureaucratic chambers of government to reach the partial emancipation of the Edict of 1812.

Throughout this dissertation, I have analyzed the various ways in which the local government in Königsberg and the Prussian crown in Berlin influenced Jewish life in the East Prussian city. The deliberations leading up to the March Edict of 1812 constitutes one moment in Prussian history when the forces of local and national government combined for a short time in Königsberg. In 1809, Frederick William III called upon East Prussian Minister Friedrich Leopold von Schroetter (1743-1815) to reevaluate the political and economic status of the Jews in his realm. Schroetter’s initial proposals began the deliberations that eventually led to the Edict of 1812.

¹ Lois C. Dubin, "Between Toleration and "Equalities" - Jewish Status and Community in Pre-Revolutionary Europe," *Simon Dubnow Institute Yearbook 1* (2002): p. 221.

² Werner E. Mosse, "From "Schutzjuden" to "Deutsche Staatsbürger Jüdischen Glaubens": The Long and Bumpy Road of Jewish Emancipation in Germany," in *Paths of Emancipation: Jews, States, and Citizenship*, ed. P. Birnbaum and I. Katznelson (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), p. 59. Reinhard Rürup, "Jewish Emancipation and Bourgeois Society," *Leo Baeck Yearbook* (1969): pp. 67-91. Christopher Clark, "German Jews," in *The Emancipation of Catholics, Jews and Protestants: Minorities and the Nation State in nineteenth-century Europe*, ed. R. Liedtke and S. Wendehorst (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), p. 123. For challenges to previous conceptions of French vs. German emancipation, see M. Brenner, V. Caron, and U. Kaufmann, eds., *Jewish Emancipation Reconsidered: the French and German Models* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 2003).

The Reform Era and the “Schroetter Plan”

The Napoleonic wars devastated the countryside of East Prussia. During this time, the population of East Prussia diminished by fourteen percent. French soldiers destroyed and pillaged dozens of villages.³ For the city of Königsberg, however, the war was not without its benefits. Prussia’s military defeat in 1806 at the hands of Napoleon had necessitated the removal of the Prussian government from the capital. While the French occupied Berlin from 1806-1808, the fleeing government first went to Memel and then to Königsberg.

Utterly humiliated by the defeat at Jena and the Treaty of Tilsit, in which Prussia lost half of its territory, the state began anew the process of widespread structural change and reform. The degree of debt and devastation experienced at the hands of Napoleon motivated the Prussian state to seek reform.⁴ The Stein Government of 1807-1808, headed by Karl Freiherr von Stein (1770-1840), sought to modernize Prussia’s bureaucracy and to replace a cabinet based government with one of appointed ministers. As the temporary capital of Prussia, Königsberg took center stage in the early reform efforts of the Stein ministry.⁵

³ J. Wilder, pp. 19-20.

⁴ Katherine Aaslestad and Karen Hagemann, "1806 and Its Aftermath: Revisiting the Period of the Napoleonic Wars in German Central European Historiography," *Central European History* 39, no. 4 (2006): pp. 550-551.

⁵ Frank J. Goodnow, "Local Government in Prussia, I," *Political Science Quarterly* 4, no. 4 (1889): p. 650. Walter Simon, "Variations in Nationalism during the Great Reform Period in Prussia," *American Historical Review* 59, no. 2 (1954): p. 305. Marion W. Gray, "Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism versus Middle-Class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808," *Central European History* VI, no. 1 (1973): pp. 63-65. Jürgen Manthey, *Königsberg: Geschichte einer Weltbürgerrepublik* (Munich: Carl Hanser Verlag, 2005), pp 304-313. Klaus-Eberhard Murawski, "Grundzüge der staatlichen Entwicklung in Ost- und Westpreussen," in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, ed. M. Heitmann M. Brocke, and H. Lordick (New York: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), pp. 28-29.

Napoleon's occupation of Prussia forced the issue of Jewish reform. One significant reform of the Stein era that affected the Jews was the reassertion of local power and governance in The City Government Act (*Städteordnung*) of November 19, 1808. This act gave Protected Jews who owned property the ability to apply for citizenship, along with the right to vote and hold local municipal offices. In order to qualify, a Jew and any other eligible Christian resident had to demonstrate ownership of property and also a yearly salary of 200 Thaler or more.⁶

The Act, however, only granted Jews local citizenship; in other words, Prussian Jews became municipal citizens (*Stadtbürger*) but not state citizens (*Staatsbürger*).⁷ The declaration of "citizen" under the ordinance was more symbolic than anything. The high financial requirements not only meant that few Jews could avail themselves of citizenship; it also guaranteed that the upper classes retained political control. This and other attempted reforms from 1808 still maintained the political and cultural status quo of Prussian society.⁸ The most significant result of the City Government Act was that it further chipped away at the power of traditional, corporate organization. One's local identity was individual rather than defined by membership in a guild or other corporate body.⁹

⁶ Marion W. Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 76, no. 1 (1986): pp. 106-107. Stefi Jersch-Wenzel, "Legal Status and Emancipation," in *German-Jewish History in Modern Times*, ed. Michael A. Meyer (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), p. 25.

⁷ Horst Fischer, *Judentum, Staat und Herr in Preussen im frühen 19. Jahrhundert* (Tübingen: J.C.B. Mohr, 1968), p. 22. Simon Dubnov, *History of the Jews*, trans. M. Spiegel, vol. IV (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, 1971), p. 607. C.W. Crawley, ed., *The New Cambridge Modern History*, vol. IX (Cambridge: University Press, 1965), pp. 379-380.

⁸ Gray, "Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism versus Middle-Class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808," p. 60. See also Walter Simon, *The Failure of the Prussian Reform Movement, 1807-1819* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1955).

Shortly after the City Government Act, Frederick William III assigned Friedrich Leopold von Schroetter, the Provincial Head of East Prussia and the Governor of New East Prussia since 1796, to tackle once more the question of Jewish legal status in Prussia. Despite being aristocratic and therefore often perceived by his contemporaries as a conservative voice, Schroetter actually had a history of liberal thought and action. Opposed to any form of slavery, the aristocrat helped to abolish serfdom on Prussian royal lands in 1804. Previous to his appointment in 1808, he had also been committed to ending the exclusive privileges of the East Prussian guilds.¹⁰

While many of his wider state policies were progressive, Schroetter's views on the Jews were known to be harsh and discriminatory.¹¹ In 1791, he had suggested in a letter to fellow Königsberg resident Theodor Gottlieb von Hippel that one solution to the increasing Jewish population would be the transportation of Prussian Jews en masse to a penal colony in Botany Bay, Australia.¹² During the years leading up to his official assignment to address Jewish reform, Schroetter wrote several briefs about the Jews. In these reports he overestimated the amount of influence that Jews had on local commerce

⁹ Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," p. 107. Jersch-Wenzel, pp. 24-25.

¹⁰ Gray, "Schroetter, Schön, and Society: Aristocratic Liberalism *versus* Middle-Class Liberalism in Prussia, 1808," pp. 62-63, 80.

¹¹ Steven Lowenstein writes that Schroetter had come to be known in Jewish circles the "Haman of the Jews", but he provides no reference for this. I am guessing he draws this from Jolowicz, who described Schroetter this way. I was unable to find a primary source that labeled him as such. Steven Lowenstein, *The Berlin Jewish Community: Enlightenment, Family, and Crisis, 1770-1830* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 84. Heimann Jolowicz, *Geschichte der Juden in Königsberg i. Pr.* (Posen: Joseph Jolowicz, 1867), p. 119.

¹² Hamilton H.H. Beck, "Neither Goshen nor Botany Bay: Hippel and the Debate on Improving The Civic Status of the Jews," *Lessing Yearbook XXVII* (1996): p. 80. For a broader discussion of Jews and eighteenth century ideas of colonization, see Jonathan Hess, "Sugar Island Jews? Jewish Colonialism and the Rhetoric of "Civic Improvement" in Eighteenth-Century Germany," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 32, no. 1 (1998): pp. 92-100.

in Königsberg. One such brief from April 24, 1804, expressed the degree to which he thought the Jews in Königsberg had managed to take over local business and trade: “A foreigner [who comes to the city] could with good reason conclude from the Hebrew plaques that hang out front of so many residences that he has arrived in a new Jerusalem.”¹³ Schroetter appeared to be acutely afraid of the Jews ruining Christian trade and profits. He revealed this uneasiness in a letter to Karl Friedrich Beyme dated November 12, 1803: “I certainly do not hate the Jews as people and always treat them fairly in other circumstances. But when I think of their tremendous increase as petty usurers, I doubt they have a future [here].”¹⁴

Between 1799 and 1803, Schroetter attempted to establish several Jewish agricultural colonies either in the countryside of New East Prussia or in Posen. The colonization project was an attempt not only to capitalize on Prussia’s newly acquired territories but also a way to redirect Jews from commerce. The projects failed due to resistance both from Jews and non-Jews and an overall lukewarm reception to his ideas in Berlin.¹⁵ As late as 1807, Schroetter and the Jewish community in Königsberg had an adversarial relationship. In that year, he had tried to have all Jews without a *Schutzbrief* or some sort of *Geleitbrief* expelled from East Prussia entirely.¹⁶

¹³ “Votum Schroetters über die Ansetzung der zweiten Kinder, April 24, 1804,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 177.

¹⁴ Quoted in Albert A. Breuer, *Geschichte der Juden in Preussen (1750-1820)* (Frankfurt: Campus Verlag, 1991), p. 271.

¹⁵ Arnold Springer, "Enlightened Absolutism and Jewish Reform: Prussia, Austria and Russia," *California Slavic Studies* 11 (1980): pp. 250-251.

¹⁶ Hans Brandt, *Der Staat und die Juden* (Königsberg: Königsberger Hartungsche Zeitung und Verlagsdruckerei, 1928), p. 10. Jolowicz, pp. 119-120.

By 1808, however, Schroetter's views on the Jews had become more conciliatory. During his time in Königsberg with the exiled Berlin government, he began to reach out to the local Jewish community in the city. In particular, Schroetter became acquainted with one of the elders of the Jewish community by the name of Isaac Caspar. Both a banker and a tailor, Caspar was an important Jewish communal leader in Königsberg in the early nineteenth century. He was also one of the founding members of the branch of the Society of Friends in Königsberg.¹⁷ In October 1808, Caspar took it upon himself to send Schroetter a recent edition of the Jewish journal *Sulamith*, which included a story about Jewish soldiers in other areas of Europe. Caspar maintained that this article would reveal to the Minister that "Jews are not only soldiers, they are excellent soldiers."¹⁸

Caspar's letter to Schroetter appeared to have the desired effect, since only a month later Schroetter wrote Frederick William III and broached the topic of Jewish conscription into the Prussian army and whether or not the state should consider Jewish military service in the future. Schroetter cited several examples of wars in which Jews had fought, including the American Revolutionary War (1775-1783) and recent Napoleonic Wars in Europe. The Minister went on to justify why he thought Jews would be good Prussian soldiers: "The Jew has an Oriental, fiery blood [in him] and a lively imagination. All evidence points to a manly potency, when used properly."¹⁹ He went

¹⁷ Ismar Freund, *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Gesetzes von 11. März 1812*, vol. 1 (Berlin: M. Poppelauer, 1912), p. 209. Breuer, p. 274. Andrea Ajzensztejn, *Die jüdische Gemeinschaft in Königsberg von der Niederlassung bis zur rechtlichen Gleichstellung* (Hamburg: Verlag Dr. Kovac, 2004), p. 97. Gerhard Kessler, *Judentaufen und judenchristliche Familien in Ostpreussen* (Leipzig: Zentralstelle für Deutsche Personen- und Familiengeschichte, 1938), p. 7.

¹⁸ "Schreiben des Bankiers Caspar zu Königsberg an Schroetter, October 31, 1808," in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 207.

¹⁹ "Immediatvorlage Schroetters an den König, November 20, 1808," in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 210.

on to speculate that the present cowardice of the Jews comes from years of slavery and oppression, and that if their circumstances changed, the Jews of Prussia could rise to the occasion with the proper degree of manliness and bravery. Schroetter mentioned the common comparison of Jews and females as both being by nature timid and weak. Despite this, Schroetter nevertheless urged the king to see the way in which women have proven to be brave in the past: “[If women can do this], how much more can one expect from Jewish men under similar circumstances?”²⁰ The king acknowledged Schroetter’s report but did not appear to take it under any serious advisement.

Schroetter’s interactions with the Jews of Königsberg, coupled with a growing sense as a politician that the legal status of the Jews in Prussia had to be changed, led him to eventually soften his views somewhat on the Jews.²¹ This comes out most clearly in his lengthy plan from December 22, 1808. The so-called “Schroetter Plan” (*Der Schroetter’sche Entwurf*) was one of the many outlines of Jewish reform that Frederick William III received in late 1808. Another one was from Criminal Councilor Friedrich Brand, who also served as a legal consultant to the mercantile guilds.²²

Schroetter opened his plan with a personal address to the king: “Because I am so well acquainted with the Jewish Nation, I am sincerely and faithfully convinced that your Royal Majesty cannot leave things as they currently are without damaging your own

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Beck: pp. 92-93.

²² “Der Brand’sche Entwurf, October 29, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 221-224. For more on Brand, see Gray, “Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808,” pp. 105-108. Alfred Stern, *Abhandlungen und Aktenstücke zur Geschichte der preussischen Reformzeit, 1807-1815* (Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1885), pp. 229-232.

interests, as well as those of the nation and of humanity as a whole.”²³ He goes on to say that it would be better for the king to expel the Jews outright than to let them develop into a “state within a state.” Schroetter maintained that the current approach of the Prussian state to the Jews was detrimental to the overall welfare of society. Instead of keeping the Jews separate and creating multiple levels of seemingly arbitrary sanctions, it would be better for the Jews to become citizens and merge into society as a whole.

Schroetter divided his plan into four parts, each of which dealt with a certain aspect of the Jewish life in Prussia. The first part, entitled “General Circumstances of the Jews” has received the most attention in historical accounts. Schroetter proposed that all Jews with *Schutzbriefe* and or any other concession should be considered “native Jews” and citizens (*Staats-Bürger*). The controversial aspect of this was the qualifications that Schroetter imposed upon this granting of citizenship. Prussian Jews had to adopt surnames, change their appearance to look more German, and begin to conduct their business transactions in the German language *and* in the German or Latin script. By the early nineteenth century, some Jews had already started to write business notes in German, but most still used the Hebrew script to write German. The change in appearance Schroetter suggested included not only a change of wardrobe to include “German clothing.” He also asserted that Jewish men should have to shave their beards. Regarding the possibility of Jews in Prussia becoming public servants, he declared emphatically, “not in this generation!”²⁴

²³ “Immediatantrag Schroetters, December 22, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 227.

²⁴ “Der Schroetter’she Entwurf,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 228. For a discussion of Schroetter’s plan, see Dietz Bering, *The Stigma of Names: Antisemitism in German Daily Life, 1812-1933* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992), pp. 29-30. See also Wilhelm Treue, *Wirtschafts- und Technik-Geschichte*

Schroetter made several suggestions to the king about how the Prussian state should legislate marriage and the overall religious lives of the Jews. He wanted the state to force Jewish males to wait until at least twenty one to marry, Jewish women until sixteen. Schroetter appeared to have no problem with intermarriage between Jews and Christians and even suggested that the offspring of such a marriage should not automatically be declared Christian but rather should adopt the religion of the father. In his explanation of his brief, he wrote that intermarriage was “the fortunate consequence of a closer association of Christians with Jews.”²⁵

Regarding the appointment of rabbis, the East Prussian minister left that up to each individual Jewish community, but each rabbi in Prussia needed not only to be a Prussian citizen, he also had to have proof that he had spent at least three years at a university “at which he trained in philosophy and in Oriental Languages.”²⁶ In general, most of the limitations Schroetter placed on Jewish religious leadership were the same standards by which Prussian churches had to abide. Such religious control would come as a shock to the Jews of Prussia who had managed to maintain their religious autonomy longer, but it was part and parcel of what an absolutist state demanded of its citizens.

Written governmental responses (*Gutachten*) to Schroetter’s lengthy plan took over six months to reach the desk of Count Alexander of Dohna (1771-1832), the current head of the Ministry of the Interior.²⁷ The responses came from various quarters,

Preussens, Historische Kommission zu Berlin, vol. 56 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), pp. 269-270. Jersch-Wenzel, p.25.

²⁵ “Der Schroetter’she Entwurf,” p. 246.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 233-235.

²⁷ For more on Dohna, see *Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie*, Vol. 5 (Leipzig: Dunckler & Humblot, 1877), pp. 299-302. Breuer, pp. 277-279.

including the General Police Department, the Department of Public Instruction, and the Tax Department in the Financial Ministry. Some like State Councilor (*Staatsrat*) Koehler supported most of Schroetter's suggestions, while others like Wilhelm von Humboldt found Schroetter's plan too restrictive and antithetical to true citizenship.²⁸ Humboldt and other members of the Ministry of Education thought Schroetter tied Jewish citizenship too closely with individual regeneration. While they ultimately desired the alteration of certain Jewish practices, in their minds citizenship was an inherent state right. Reform was desirable but should not be seen as a prerequisite for rights. In particular, they did not see the alteration of Jewish appearance as an aspect of life the state had authority to regulate.²⁹ Only one reply by that of State Councilor Heinrich von Beguelin (1765-1818) rejected Schroetter's plan outright. Beguelin blamed the Jews entirely for their current circumstances: "Neither the oppression nor the contempt under which a Jew lives has made him bad, but rather his singular character and the laws that he follows." In his report, Beguelin displayed a surprising degree of ignorance of Jews and their internal life: "What has a Jew ever really accomplished? Can one find within this tribe a great painter, a famous composer, sculptor, etc.?"³⁰

Shortly after Schroetter wrote his Jewish plan, Dohna dismissed the statesman from his position in the General Directory because of internal reorganization and the

²⁸ Freund, pp. 141-147.

²⁹ Ismar Elbogen, *Die Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main: Europäische Verlagsanstalt, 1966), p. 179. Lowenstein, p. 84. Stern, p. 235.

³⁰ "Gutachten der Abgaben-Sektion des Finanzministeriums, January 24, 1810," in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 298-300. Beguelin was a close associate and friend of Hardenberg, who often attended the Berlin salon of Beguelin's wife Amalie von Beguelin (1778-1849). Petra Wilhelmy-Dollinger, *Die Berliner Salons* (New York: de Gruyter, 2000), pp. 115-117.

dissolution of the East Prussian Provincial Department.³¹ The “Schroetter Plan”, however, was not without effect. In addition to stimulating multiple responses from various quarters of government, the brief also provided the state with a structure for the future Edict. The final result resembles the “Schroetter Plan” in its organization. In particular, the opening declaration of citizenship of the March 1812 Edict retains the same syntax and layout as Schroetter’s brief. Moreover, the East Prussian Minister’s suggestion of obligatory surnames and the exclusive use of German in written commercial transactions both made their way into the Edict of 1812. Hardenberg also heeded the advice to not allow Jews the right to hold public office or entry into the Prussian state bureaucracy.

Königsberg Jewish Appeals

In 1808, the Jewish elders in Königsberg were the first Prussian Jewish communal leaders to broach the issue of reform with the new Stein administration. The presence of the Prussian government in the East Prussian capital during Napoleonic occupation gave the Jews of the city exposure to the nascent reform movement. They also were able to respond directly to Schroetter’s suggested reforms, since he was in the city at the time.³² On November 10, 1808, the Jewish elders of the Königsberg community wrote letters addressed both to Frederick William III and to Schroetter. In their opening to the king, the six elders reflected on the policies of past Prussian kings. They declared the Charters of 1730 and 1750 as “perhaps appropriate” for past times, but “in the spirit of the current

³¹ Gray, "Prussia in Transition: Society and Politics under the Stein Reform Ministry of 1808," pp. 62-63. Freund, p. 140. Breuer, pp.275-276.

³² Ajzensztejn, p. 158. Brandt, p. 11. Freund, p. 209.

age [...] our fate should be reconsidered.”³³ The Königsberg elders focused on the current commercial and marriage restrictions that the Jews of Prussia had to endure. Their letter to Schroetter written on the same day underscored that the limitations on trade that the Jews of Prussia experienced were “suffocating” and that the key to encouraging Jewish integration was to change this.³⁴

After Schroetter’s dismissal in late November 1808, the Jews of Königsberg promptly wrote to Dohna in mid-December. They underscored to the minister it was not the “content of their character as much as a byproduct of oppression” that led to any shortcomings in the Jews of Prussia.³⁵ In his December 15, 1808, Dohna assured the Jews of Königsberg that the crown and the state were in agreement with them that reform was necessary and that they were already in the process of discussing legal changes.³⁶

Another letter to Frederick William III dated February 12, 1809 addressed the City Ordinance from November 1808. The Jewish elders of Königsberg praised the crown for this step forward: “After having obtained our proof of local citizenship (*Bürgerbriefe*) and executed the citizens’ oath with the most sacred and truest of intents, we cherish completely the honor of calling ourselves citizens.”³⁷ The Jews of Königsberg

³³ “Schreiben der Juden-Gemeinde zu Königsberg i. Pr. an den König, November 25, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p.401. Those who signed the letter were Levin Isaac, Assur Levi, Salomon Meyer, Isaac Caspar, Samuel Wulff Friedländer, David Levinson, Abraham Alexander, and Simon Joachim Friedländer.

³⁴ “Schreiben der Judengemeinde zu Königsberg an Schroetter, November 25, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 403-404.

³⁵ “Schreiben der Judengemeinde zu Königsberg an Dohna, December 13, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 405.

³⁶ “Antwort Dohnas, December 15, 1808,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 405-406.

³⁷ “Schreiben der Judengemeinde zu Königsberg an den König, February 12, 1809,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 406.

showed the sincerity of this statement in the years following by registering in large numbers for local citizenship. In 1809 alone, sixty eight Jews took advantage of the City Ordinance and became local citizens. Königsberg's Jews availed themselves of this opportunity at a much higher rate than Christians in Königsberg.³⁸

The king replied to the February 12th letter from the Königsberg Jewish community that this was merely the “first step” to making the Jews full Prussian citizens.³⁹ The correspondence between the Jews of Königsberg and the Prussian government ended temporarily on this hopeful note. Nine months passed before the community revisited the issue of reform with Dohna.⁴⁰ In November 1809, Königsberg's Jews expressed to Dohna the initial excitement they had felt when Frederick William III had declared the City Ordinance merely a “first step.” But as the months went by, the ongoing uncertainty of their fate became clear to them. They urged Dohna and the government in general to end their “precarious situation.”⁴¹ Dohna's prompt response to the Jews of Königsberg called for patience and underscored that deliberations between multiple branches of the Prussian bureaucracy took time.⁴²

³⁸ Between the November 19th ordinance and the end of 1808, fourteen Jews had promptly registered. By 1817, more than a quarter of the entire Königsberg Jewish community had applied for city citizenship. Stefan Hartmann, "Das Generalverzeichnis der Königsberger Juden vom 24. März 1812 als familien- und sozialgeschichtliche Quelle," *Preussenland* 29, no. 3 (1991): p. 37. Breuer, pp. 267-268.

³⁹ “Bescheid des Königs, February 15, 1809,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 407.

⁴⁰ During that time, David Friedländer wrote a letter to State Councilor Wilhelm Anton von Klewitz (1760-1838), a new member of the Stein government currently residing in Königsberg, but his requests were less about the overall status of the Jews in Prussia and more about the poor conditions in Berlin during Napoleonic occupation and how they were adversely affecting the Jews. “Schreiben Friedländers an den Geh. Staatsrat von Klewitz, July 27, 1809,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 407-410.

⁴¹ “Eingabe der Judengemeinde zu Königsberg an Dohna, November 10, 1809,” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 411-412.

In December 1809, the Prussian government left Königsberg and returned to Berlin. At this point, the Jewish elders in Berlin took over the role of public intercessors for the Prussian Jewish community. The move back to Berlin also corresponded to the new appointment of Karl August Hardenberg (1750-1822) as Prime Minister (*Staatskanzler*).⁴³ Hardenberg would be the one who ultimately drafted the Edict of 1812. The initial role of the Jewish community Königsberg in the reform attempts leading up to the Edict of 1812 was both pivotal and strategic. Prussian Jewry utilized those leaders geographically closest to those officials in charge of drafting reforms. The shift in public voice away from Königsberg to Berlin was not a sign of the East Prussian community's failure to get results but rather a tactical shift.

Under the leadership of David Friedländer, the Jews of Berlin continued to write the crown and Hardenberg throughout 1810 and early 1811. They spent most of their time writing Hardenberg, because they had recognized in him a valuable ally in their fight for emancipation.⁴⁴ By early 1811, Jewish leaders from other parts of Prussia began to send letters to Berlin as well. In February, the elders of the Jewish community in Breslau petitioned for reform. In addition, Israel Jacobson (1768-1828) from Braunschweig had a longstanding acquaintance with Hardenberg and used this connection to request reform on behalf of his co-religionists.⁴⁵ Jacobson first wrote

⁴² "Antwort Dohnas, November 12, 1809." in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 412.

⁴³ Lowenstein, p. 84. For more on Hardenberg, see James Sheehan, *German History, 1770-1866* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), pp. 303-310. Fischer, pp. 21-22. Breuer, pp. 289-296.

⁴⁴ See *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 413-422. For an analysis of the Berlin Jewish correspondence, see Freund, pp. 212-220.

⁴⁵ Fischer, p. 23. Some scholars have pinpointed Hardenberg's relationship with Israel Jacobson as proof that the Prussian Minister owed many Jewish creditors and that this debt influenced his development of the

Hardenberg on February 14, 1811, expressing how incomprehensible the Prussian state's treatment of the Jews was in light of their role as champions of the Enlightenment.⁴⁶

These collaborated efforts continued up until the eventual announcement of that the crown had finally produced revised statement of the status of the Jews in the four main provinces of Prussia.⁴⁷

The Edict of 1812

On March 11, 1812, the same day of the promulgation of the edict, Hardenberg wrote a letter to the Jewish elders in Berlin, Breslau, and Königsberg, the three Jewish communities that had demonstrated the most leadership and public interest in reforming the legal status of the Jews in Prussia. He wrote of the Edict codified that day:

It is with great pleasure that I make aware to you today the news that our all merciful royal majesty has condescended today to decree an edict regarding the civic relationship of the Jews to the Prussian state. [...] It is my hope that this will more than fulfill the object of your expressed wishes.⁴⁸

In simple terms, the Edict of 1812 declared Jews full citizens of the kingdom of Prussia. In longhand, however, the story of what the March edict did for the Jews of Prussia was much more complicated and ultimately more ambiguous. Paragraph one

Edict of 1812. See See Thomas Stamm-Kuhlmann, "Der Staatskanzler von Hardenberg, die Bankiers und die Judenemanzipation in Preussen," *Vierteljahrschrift für Sozial- und Wirtschaftsgeschichte* 83, no. 3 (1996): p. 344. Breuer, pp. 300-301.

⁴⁶ *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 1, p. 221.

⁴⁷ *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 423-444. The Jews of Brieg in Silesia also wrote Hardenberg in January 1812. Freund, pp. 449-450.

⁴⁸ "Schreiben Hardenbergs an die Aeltesten der Gemeinde in Berlin, Breslau, Königsberg, March 11, 1812," in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, p. 451.

declared all Jews in Prussia with General Privileges, Patents of Naturalization, and Letters of Protection or other concessions to be “natives and Prussian citizens” (*Einländer und Preussische Staatsbürger*). The following paragraph, however, qualified this citizenship. Not only would they have to adopt surnames within six months, a Jewish citizen had to conduct all his business transactions in German or “another living language” that used the Latin script.⁴⁹ In becoming Prussian citizens, Jews now had access to school and university teaching positions and most other privileges that Christian citizens enjoyed.

Traditionally, Jews did not have any type of last name. If needed, the father’s name functioned as a last name. By 1812, however, the adoption of surnames was not really problematic for most Prussian Jews who were eligible for citizenship. In fact, many of them had already created last names for themselves. For those who had not, the new name became a symbol of their civic equality. Some chose to adopt entirely new family names, while others opted to officially declare their father’s first name to be their surname.⁵⁰

In the Edict, the government tabled two important aspects of public life. Paragraph eight left the question of Jewish employment in the Prussian civil service for later consideration. In paragraph sixteen, the crown granted Jews entry into the military, but the state postponed the “manner of this requirement’s application.”⁵¹ Both of these

⁴⁹ “Edikt vom 11. März 1812” in *Die Emanzipation der Juden in Preussen*, ed. Ismar Freund (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2004), vol. 2, pp. 455-459.

⁵⁰ Bering, p. 32. Breuer, pp. 337-338.

⁵¹ Paragraph 8: “In wie fern die Juden zu andern öffentlichen Bedienungen und Staatsämtern zugelassen werden können, behalten Wir Uns vor, in der Folge der Zeit, gesetzlich zu bestimmen.” Paragraph 16: “Der Militair-Konskription oder Kantonpflichtigkeit, und den damit in Verbindung stehenden besondern gesetzlichen Vorschriften sind die einländischen Juden gleichfalls unterworfen. Die Art und Weise der

delays pointed to the degree to which the Prussian state and larger society were ultimately still uncomfortable with Jewish equality.⁵² One practical reason why the Prussian government denied Jews entry into the civil service in 1812 was an acute job shortage in the state bureaucracy. By the early nineteenth century, Prussia already had a glut of university educated citizens desirous of entering the civil service. The middle class had heeded the state's call en masse to become more educated and useful to the state. As the numbers of qualified citizens increased, the number of positions in the higher civil service actually declined. They did not even have enough positions for Prussian Christians, let alone the Jewish middle class.⁵³

While the reaction of the elders of the largest Jewish communities in Prussia to the edict was jubilation and praise, those Jews in Prussia who did not have the requisite documents for citizenship reacted to the bill with panic and fear. Would citizenship for the privileged lead to the expulsion of everyone else? Eventually in May 1812, Hardenberg clarified that those Jews who did not have the required papers would not be forcefully expelled or even asked to leave Prussia.⁵⁴ One new aspect of the Edict of 1812 was that it applied to all four provinces in Prussia: Brandenburg, Pomerania, Silesia and East Prussia. Before this, edicts usually just applied to certain areas of the kingdom.

Anwendung dieser Verpflichtung auf sie, wird durch die Verordnung wegen der Militär-Konskription näher bestimmt werden." Freund, pp. 456-457.

⁵² Fischer, p. 25.

⁵³ Hans-Eberhard Mueller, *Bureaucracy, Education, and Monopoly: Civil Service Reforms in Prussia and England* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 165-166.

⁵⁴ Breuer, p. 298.

Ultimately, however, the edict did not measure up to Hardenberg's hopes, because it was never extended beyond the core of Prussia.⁵⁵

The March Edict was an economic success for the Jews of Prussia but largely a political failure. By not allowing Jews to hold governmental offices, the Prussian state denied them full access to the political process. Economically they could survive, but they were left out of any employment which could create or sustain political power.⁵⁶ Regardless of its faults, however, the edict redefined the relationship between the Jews and the Prussian state. No longer were they subjects; instead they were citizens, a term still in flux but nonetheless significant.⁵⁷

Throughout the 1820s and 1830s, the Prussian state began to qualify or diminish the rights granted by the Edict of 1812. Gradually the Jews lost access to certain professions. In 1820, they could no longer be surveyors based on the stipulation that this was actually a position of the Prussian civil service. In 1822, the Prussian state amended the law to ban Jews from teaching at the university. In 1823, they were no longer allowed to become provincial representatives. A legislative order from August 30, 1830, stated that the Edict of 1812 would not be valid in any newly acquired or re-acquired

⁵⁵ Clark, p. 128. Henry Wassermann, "Jewish history as observed from a Prussian registrar's office," *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte* 10 (1981): p. 188.

⁵⁶ Christopher Clark, "The Limits of the Confessional State: Conversions to Judaism in Prussia, 1814-1843," *Past and Present*, no. 147 (1995): pp. 159-160. Jürgen Rohlfes, "Judenemanzipation in Preussen: das 'Edikt betreffend die bürgerlichen Verhältnisse der Juden in dem Preussischen Staate' vom 11. März 1812," *Geschichte in Wissenschaft und Unterricht* 51, no. 5-6 (2000): p. 342. Peter Pulzer writes that the Edict of 1812 made Jews "economic but not political citizens." Peter Pulzer, *Jews and the German State: The Political History of a Minority, 1848-1933* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), p. 75. Salo Baron makes the distinction between *bürgerliche Gleichberechtigung* (civil equality) and *privatbürgerliche Gleichberechtigung*. In the Edict of 1812, the Jews of Prussia were granted the latter but not the former, since they were still denied access to the civil service. Salo W. Baron, "Civil Versus Political Emancipation," in *Studies in Jewish Religious and Intellectual History*, ed. S. Stein and R. Loewe (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1979), pp. 30-31.

⁵⁷ Christopher Clark, "The "Christian" State and the "Jewish Citizen" in Nineteenth-Century Prussia," in *Protestants, Catholics and Jews in Germany, 1800-1914*, ed. H.W. Smith (New York: Berg, 2001), p. 76.

territories, which meant that citizenship did not apply to Jews in the vast majority of greater Prussia.⁵⁸

The state's retreat from emancipation revealed the extent to which Christians were still uncomfortable with the idea of Jews occupying any positions of political or social power in Prussia. Even the demand in the 1812 edict for Jews to create proper surnames became problematic, since certain Jews opted to choose less Jewish sounding names. For instance, a Jew by the name of "Moses" might have changed his name to "Moritz." In general, government officials appeared to accept such changes, but many expressed their disapproval.⁵⁹ The prevalence of this trend was something that the Prussian state did not necessarily foresee, and the negative reactions exposed an underlying unease with the collapse of certain boundaries between Jews and Christians. In particular, Frederick William III was bothered by the choice of some Jews to adopt the king's name. The king expressed to State Minister Friedrich von Schuckmann that "I cannot give my name to any Jewish child who has not been baptized." By the end of 1816, he banned the use by Jews of "Friedrich Wilhelm" entirely.⁶⁰

The back-pedaling of the crown and the Prussian government on so many rulings should be seen as a sign of the edict's success rather than any indication of its failure. In many respects, the change in Jews for which the state had hoped was happening too

⁵⁸Breuer, pp. 334-336. Bering, p. 45. Jersch-Wenzel, pp. 39-40. Reinhard Rürup, *Emanzipation und Antisemitismus* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1975), p. 22.

⁵⁹ Breuer, p. 338.

⁶⁰ The first request to use the king's name came in August 1816 from Markus Lilie from Gardelegen, who wanted to name his sixth son Friedrich Wilhelm. Quoted in Bering, pp. 58-59. In July 1836, he went a step further and forbade the Jewish use of any names that were too exclusively Christian. Presumably this included the names of the Apostles and leaders of the early Church. Jorg H. Fehrs, "Zwischen Antijudaismus und Antisemitismus: Die Preussische Judengesetzgebung im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert," in *Antijudaismus, Antisemitismus, Fremdenfeindlichkeit: Aspekte der Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland und Mecklenburg*, ed. Verein für jüdische Geschichte und Kultur in Mecklenburg und Vorpommern (Schwerin: Turo Print GmbH, 1998), p. 37.

quickly. The Edict of 1812 was *too* successful for a state and administration that clearly had second thoughts about reform and change. The concerted efforts of the Jews of Prussia and elsewhere to petition their respective governments for reform and their subsequent zeal to prove their loyalty caused the state and wider German society to retreat back into itself and re-assert longstanding prejudice.⁶¹

The violence of the Hep-Hep riots of 1819, which began in the Bavarian town of Würzburg in August and spread throughout the German lands, came as a surprise to German Jews who thought the tide of public opinion towards them had turned. Despite the commonly held notion that it was only a riot of the rabble, prominent citizens were involved, in some cases even government employees. The Hep-Hep riots in Prussia were mild compared to other German lands. In September 1819, State Councilor Friedrich August von Staegemann wrote, "Our Jews heard little Hep-Hep."⁶² Fanny Lewald wrote of the local persecution of the Jews in Königsberg in 1819 and the strong impression that such confrontations made on her as a young child. She sensed the growing uneasiness of her parents and their Jewish friends in Königsberg who had heard of the violence perpetrated against Jews in Bavaria and elsewhere. Despite the attempts of Lewald's parents to shelter her from knowledge of the spreading violence, Fanny learned that someone had smashed the windows of a Jewish home in the Kneiphof. The reality of violence struck her acutely when her mother told her to stop sitting on the window ledge at her aunt's house. Despite this, Lewald maintained that the degree of hostility in

⁶¹ Aaslestad and Hagemann: p. 567.

⁶² Quoted in Eleonore O. Sterling, "Anti-Jewish Riots in Germany in 1819: A Displacement of Social Protest," *Historia Judaica* XII, no. 2 (1950): pp. 132-133. Deborah Hertz, *How Jews became Germans: the History of Conversion and Assimilation in Berlin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), p. 160.

Königsberg towards Jews in the wake of the Hep-Hep riots was relatively mild.⁶³ The neighboring port of Danzig, however, did experience more riots and aggression towards Jews. In October 1819, the violence in Danzig escalated to the point that the Prussian army decided to intervene.⁶⁴

Ultimately the Edict of 1812 was not an attainment of complete Jewish citizenship but rather one more example of the same type of back and forth policy shifts of the Prussian crown and government through most of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Historians often speak of the quid pro quo bargain of German Jewish emancipation, namely that in exchange for citizenship Jews would shed aspects of their behavior and even their religion in order to gain civic equality.⁶⁵ The use of the metaphor of shedding skin is appropriate, because it was an outward removal that the state hoped would signify an inner change. But the Jewish shedding of difference left doubts in the minds of non-Jews. Had they truly changed? Was their altered appearance really indicative of inner transformation? And if the “regeneration of the Jews” was a success, was German society really ready to fully accept Jews as equal Prussian citizens? Such evident doubts and second thoughts revealed the cracks in the facade of Prussian Jewish emancipation and the boundaries that the Jews still faced in their pursuit of equal rights.

⁶³ Fanny Lewald, *Meine Lebensgeschichte*, vol. 1 (Berlin: Otto Janke, 1861), pp. 180-181.

⁶⁴ Sterling: p. 133. The historical interpretations of the anti-Jewish violence of 1819 are varied. Some scholars point to the political and social upheavals of the post-Congress of Vienna world. Others blame the European wide famine of 1817 that led many Germans to focus their frustrations on the Jewish minority in their midst. See, for example, Stefan Rohrbacher, "The "Hep Hep" Riots of 1819: Anti-Jewish Ideology, Agitation, and Violence," in *Exclusionary Violence: Antisemitic Riots in Modern German History*, ed. C. Hoffmann, W. Bergmann, and H.W. Smith (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2002), pp. 23-31. Rürup, *Emancipation und Antisemitismus*, pp. 20-22.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Simone Lässig, "How German Jewry Turned Bourgeois: Religion, Culture and Social Mobility in the Age of Emancipation," *GHI Bulletin* 37 (2005): pp. 59-62.

Conclusion

In May 1837, the *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* began its long run under the leadership of reform rabbi Ludwig Philippson. Devoted to the “quest for both external and internal emancipation”, the Leipzig weekly sought to have broad circulation and appeal.¹ Its byline declared it to be an “impartial organ for [the discussion] of all Jewish topics”, and one aspect of this open-minded dialogue was the correspondence section of each issue. Jews throughout Europe sent reports to the editors on Jewish activities in their cities and provinces. In its inaugural year, a six month long debate ensued in this section of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* between a Königsberg Jewish merchant and a Jewish professor from the Albertina.

The first letter, dated August 8, 1837, was from a man who identified himself only as “J.L.” He complained of the limited interest in the religious and intellectual life of the community among the younger generation of Jews in Königsberg. By the writer’s estimation, the local Jewish youth were cutting ties from a religious and social community they perceived as constrictive and archaic.² In later letters, we learn the letter’s author was Julius Lebegott, a self-described humble merchant from Königsberg reliant on periodicals like the *Allgemeine Zeitung* for intellectual nourishment.

A month later, Moritz Freystadt wrote the *Allgemeine Zeitung* to respond to Lebegott’s slanted perceptions of the Königsberg Jewish community’s “underbelly.” Freystadt was one of the first Jews granted a doctorate in philosophy at the Albertina in

¹ *Allgemeine Zeitung des Judentums* (AZJ), August 5, 1837, p. 185.

² AZJ, August 8, 1837, p. 192.

1832.³ Describing the merchant's perspective as outdated and superficial, Dr. Freistadt expressed his pleasure with the direction in which the Königsberg Jewish community seemed to be moving in the 1830s. Freistadt praised the ongoing efforts of the Jewish hospital and orphanage, and the diversity of social organizations and philanthropy in place, in addition to the reforms of local Jewish education and synagogue worship. All in all, Freistadt thought Lebegott had greatly misled the readership of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* about the state of their local Jewish community.⁴

“To which Königsberg are you referring?” replied Lebegott in the October 26th edition of the *Allgemeine Zeitung*. The Königsberg he knew from Jewish circles was quite different from the one Freistadt related. Because of his “practical position” in the world, Lebegott claimed to be able to know better the actual state of Jewish learning. Lebegott reminded Freistadt of the dismissal of the “preacher and teacher” Francolm a decade earlier and the ongoing struggle of the community to secure a teacher who would satisfy both the Prussian state and the Jewish community. Two years earlier in 1835, Joseph Levin Saalschütz returned to his hometown of Königsberg to take over Francolm's position, but according to Lebegott this was only *after* the Prussian state threatened the Königsberg community with a fine if they did not hire a proper religious teacher. The fact that the Königsberg Jewish community had the requisite philanthropic support network that even small Jewish communities managed did not impress the local merchant at all. He urged Freistadt not to sugarcoat their lives in the East Prussian

³ His dissertation was in Latin. Moritz Freystadt, *Philosophia Cabbalistica et Pantheismus* (Königsberg: Borntraeger, 1832). See also Manfred Komorowski, “Studenten, Doktoren, und Professoren der Königsberger Universität” in *Zur Geschichte und Kultur der Juden in Ost- und Westpreussen*, eds. M. Brocke, M. Heitmann, and H. Lordick (Hildesheim: Georg Olms Verlag, 2000), pp. 425-444.

⁴ *AZJ*, September 23, 1837, pp. 295-296.

capital and rather to be honest with the wider Jewish public about Königsberg's struggles.⁵

The protracted public interaction between Lebegott and Freystadt in the pages of the *Allgemeine Zeitung* in 1837 provides us with a closing glimpse of the Königsberg Jewish community at a pivotal point in the history of German Jewry. Their debate took place on the verge of the religious reform movement and a decade before political revolution. From their heated exchange, it is evident that the Jews of Königsberg continued to struggle with how to properly educate their youth. Moreover, the tension between merchant and intellectual is palpable. On the surface, the debate between Lebegott and Freistadt appears to be a personal conflict between two strong-willed men battling it out in print, and this was certainly the case. When looked at more closely, however, the correspondence also points to a larger discrepancy between two types of Jews within the community. Who really could access the climate of learning and education among Königsberg's Jews? Was it the trained scholar caught up in a world of lofty ideals? Or was it the merchant in daily contact with Jews and non-Jews who earned their livelihood by producing and selling goods or raw materials? These questions had particular resonance for a community that had demonstrated leadership in both commercial and cultural pursuits.

Based on Freistadt and Lebegott's vastly different perceptions of the community in which they lived, one could conclude that they inhabited entirely different worlds. Yet, the Jewish community in Königsberg was not large enough for merchants and intellectuals to live entirely separate lives, and we have seen ways in which the two groups collaborated during the eighteenth century. Their partnership in creating the

⁵ *AZJ*, October 26, 1837, pp. 355-356.

literary society *Chevrat Dorsho Leshon Ever* and its journal *ha-Measef* ushered in a new era in the German *haskalah*, one in which *maskilim* organized and worked as a collective rather than individually. The Friedländer family were part of a larger movement of Jewish mercantile elite who used their financial resources to seek internal Jewish transformation. We have seen the economic realities of cultural production and the ways in which the practical issues of money and geography can shape their creation.

A look at the Königsberg Jewish community in the eighteenth century underscores the simultaneous conflict and dependence of merchant and scholar and how both were integral to Jewish culture and exchange. Even before the emergence of the German Jewish *haskalah*, merchants and scholars had a dependent and mutually beneficial relationship. The large majority of Jewish intellectuals, rabbis, and teachers relied on wealthy Jews in the local community for financial support. Their patronage was not without benefit to themselves. Jews engaged in commerce depended on these individuals to maintain and nourish the Jewish community.

One hundred and twenty years is a significant amount of time in the life of any community, enough time to chart and mark turning points and changes, both large and small. Relating the history of a place and a community over a long period requires one to engage in multiple narratives and layers. The above account of Jewish mercantile and intellectual rapprochement did not take place in a vacuum but was in countless ways impacted by the larger political context in which the Jews of Königsberg lived. The relationship of the Jews of Königsberg to the crown and state was at times both dynamic and static. Years would go by without reform or change. Jewish letters and pleas to the crown would go unanswered.

Yet, the Jews of East Prussia in the eighteenth century also witnessed dramatic reversals in their financial and communal futures. At the beginning of our period, the state considered the Jews mainly as temporary residents with individual privileges. But during the reign of Frederick William I (1713-1740), Jews became a corporate tax entity that hearkened back to pre-modern forms of organization. This transition backwards, coupled with the ascension of Frederick II (1740-1786), who in policy did not live up to his nickname “the Great”, ushered in decades of commercial restraints and capricious rulings towards the Jews as a collective. By the late eighteenth century and the reign of Frederick William III (1797-1840), the Jews witnessed a shift in state policy towards individual citizenship and loyalty. This culminated in an Edict which gave them near citizenship, which the state proceeded to qualify and diminish over the next few decades.

How this played out on a local level in Königsberg reveals the varying degrees to which royal and municipal leadership in Prussia could impact Jewish life. Local voices in Königsberg, ranging from the guilds to the various and complicated variety of city officials, were remarkably consistent in their wish to suppress Jewish economic success and to limit Jewish settlement within the city center. The policies and privileges emanating from the crown in Berlin, however, vacillated and were oftentimes difficult to predict. This capriciousness did not stop the Jews of Königsberg from adhering to the longstanding Jewish tradition of allying with the highest authorities. The sheer volume of letters from Jews to the Prussian crown are a testimony to how this trend continued through successive generations.

The eighteenth century was a transitional time in Prussian history when the crown struggled to assert its dominance. Our story started with a state on the verge of power,

with a king who desired absolute control but had to contend with a centuries long system of vested privileges and layer upon layer of local government and regional tradition. Moreover, what it meant to be Prussian was yet undetermined, and the state had to create order and a fixed political identity out of ethnic and social diversity. In the case of the Jews, the road to integration and the creation of Jews into Prussians was particularly wrought with tension and oftentimes about faces. Even after the Edict of 1812, the Prussian state ended up backpedaling on many of the rights granted to the Jews. In the midst of reform and modernization, there emerged a resurgence of anti-Jewish prejudice, a “Hep Hep” of protest against a small minority who swelled in importance and numbers in the minds of those who feared their integration.

The Jews of Königsberg, as in the rest of Prussia, had to face the power and weight of a growing police state that often intruded upon their lives. No doubt seventy years of relatively intimate surveillance of their weekly religious lives was something that shaped the perceptions of Königsberg’s Jews towards their city and more specifically towards the local Christian theological faculty at the Albertina. By eagerly seeking out the position of synagogue inspector, the professors initiated and sustained an unusual degree of religious intrusion, even for an absolutist state. Such surveillance not seen elsewhere in Prussia most certainly influenced Jewish perceptions of their place in the local political and social landscape of East Prussia. Their ongoing attempts to ally themselves with the crown in Berlin takes on a new meaning when looked at from the perspective of the local history of *Aleinu* edict of 1703.

But politics alone did not impact the trajectory of the local Jewish community. We have seen the ways in which the city of Königsberg’s position on the margins of

Prussia shaped both the perceptions and the reality of its citizens' lives. The Jews of Königsberg lived in a part of Prussia that itself was politically stable but was surrounded by a shifting and complex political geography. The territories adjacent to East Prussia changed hands and names multiple times during the province's existence. Royal Prussia became West Prussia, Masovia became New East Prussia, etc. – all of these shifting territories had their influence not only on the perceptions of East Prussia but also its direct history. The considerable number of Jews from Eastern Europe who came to Königsberg continued well after our period. Up to the twentieth century, Jews from the Russian Empire regularly came to Königsberg.⁶

Within the confines of their relative weakness and subjection, the Jews of Königsberg were nonetheless able to exert a degree of power and influence, primarily in the economic realm. This is part of what David Biale describes as the simultaneous “power and powerlessness” of Jews throughout history.⁷ An overview of Jewish commercial life in Königsberg brings into focus the degree of influence that Jews could exert over their own destinies. The financial connections of certain Jews to the Polish nobility enabled them to receive concessions and early entry into the city. Successful Jews could no doubt use to their advantage the fears of Fiscal Advocate Karl Friedrich Lau and other government officials that commercial restrictions would lead Jews to conduct trade in rival port cities. Toleration of Jews at all was an indication of their value to the crown, and the Jews were able to use this knowledge to secure not only individual concessions but also communal rights and ongoing self-government.

⁶ In the early twentieth century, the university even had a “Society for Jewish Students from Russia,” and in 1913, Russian Jews made up eleven percent of the entire student body Yoram K. Jacoby, *Jüdisches Leben in Königsberg/Pr. im 20. Jahrhundert* (Würzburg: Holzner Verlag, 1983), p. 40.

⁷ David Biale, *Power and Powerlessness in Jewish History* (New York: Schocken Books, 1986).

Eventually, Jewish citizenship came at the expense of communal religious and juridical autonomy. By that point, however, many of Königsberg's Jews saw this as a worthy trade off. What they lost in communal independence they would gain in individual freedoms. The age of the German *haskalah* gave way to the age of emancipation. The maskilic focus on internal Jewish transformation held less resonance as the Jews of Prussia sensed a shift in governmental policy and set their sights on a new generation of German bureaucrats more sympathetic to Jewish reform. We have seen the ways in which the Jews of Königsberg first embraced social and cultural integration. They studied at the Albertina and participated in the wider life of the city to the extent that the Königsberg public welcomed them. This movement into the German social sphere pointed to their growing sense of belonging and the wish to traverse the boundaries between Jew and non-Jew. Underlying this desire was always the aspiration of political equality. By the early nineteenth century, the voices of Jewish leadership in Berlin, Königsberg, and Breslau grew louder and more focused in their efforts to attain equal rights.

This dissertation ends at an ambiguous time in Prussian Jewish history. The Jews gained citizenship in name but not in practice, and the backlash against the Edict of 1812 was disillusioning to most Jews. Twenty one years later, Johann Jacoby reflected on the Edict of 1812, which was passed during his childhood in Königsberg. He declared it a ruling that “loosened the chains binding Prussian Jewry but in no way broke them.” Jacoby also wrote that the Jews of Europe still lived “as pariahs on a civilized continent in an enlightened century.”⁸ Jacoby's sense of outrage about the treatment of his fellow

⁸ Johann Jacoby, "Ueber das Verhältniss des Herrn von Streckfuss zur Emancipation der Juden, 1833," in *Gesammelte Schriften und Reden* (Hamburg: Otto Meissner, 1872), pp. 6, 27.

Jews fueled his later political radicalism in 1848. Moreover, it speaks to the degree to which the political label of “Prussian citizen” did not translate into true acceptance or integration.

Ultimately the things that shape the collective history of a community are as varied as the lives of its members. The neighborhood, the city, the province, the region – each of these spatial units played a part in the formation and development of the Jews of Königsberg in the eighteenth century. In addition, the multiple layers of Prussian royal and provincial government had direct and indirect influence on the fortunes of Königsberg’s Jews. Individual Jews themselves exerted control over their community and shaped its future. At some points, they spearheaded change and sometimes they squashed it. All of these variables played a part in forming their collective history.

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