The Jews in a Polish Private Town

Hundert, Gershon David

Published by Johns Hopkins University Press

Hundert, Gershon David.

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/71395

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2439481
I missed the opportunity to thank my teachers in print because my doctoral dissertation on seventeenth-century Jewish merchants was never published in book form. As a graduate student in the 1970s, I worked most closely with three men: Zvi Ankori, Andrzej Kamiński, and Jacob Goldberg. All of them have continued to take an active interest in my work. Professor Zvi Ankori, who was my mentor first at Ohio State University and later at Columbia, and who is now at Tel Aviv University, did more than help me to enrich my knowledge and refine my thinking. His confidence in my abilities has constantly buoyed my own, and his friendliness and interest in my personal welfare have continued to be a source of great encouragement.

Professor Andrzej Kamiński directed my dissertation, and we have stayed in close contact ever since. He has always been willing to answer my queries and never tires of trying in a gentle and penetrating way to get me to broaden my thinking. If he has not succeeded, it is not his fault.

I owe more than can be recorded to Professor Jacob Goldberg. His generosity to me in sharing his time and his immense learning has exceeded mere courtesy or the simple fellowship of scholars. He has saved me from innumerable errors and made me aware of all sorts of sources, issues, and other matters that I should have known myself but did not.

Most of the research for this book was carried out in Poland. My stays there might have been lonesome but for the support and encouragement I received from people in Warsaw, Cracow, and Wrocław, some of whom have become good friends and all of whom very generously and hospitably welcomed me. I treasure their kindness and I want to acknowledge their sustaining me through what might have been very lonely times: Barbara Kawalec and Michał Szymański, Rysia Zachariasz, Konstanty and Małgorzata Gebert, Stanisław and Monika Krajewski, Alina Cała, Marek Urbański, Henryk Hał-
Acknowledgments

Kowalski, Jerzy Kichler, Ryszard Czyzewski, Michał Mostowicz. All these wonderful people made a stranger feel welcome and deserve many blessings.

Professor Antoni Maczak, at the time the director of the Historical Institute at the University of Warsaw, not only worried about the technical arrangements for my prolonged stay in Warsaw, he welcomed me into his home and took time out from his hectic schedule in the fall of 1981 to spend hours of discussion with a comparative novice. Similarly, I am greatly indebted to Professor Zenon Guldon, who shared his immense erudition and familiarity with archival materials with me—to my great benefit. The senior historian of the Jews in Poland, Professor Artur Eisenbach, has always welcomed my visits and been willing to answer my questions.

Early drafts of this book were completed during a sabbatical year I spent as a visiting scholar in the Department of Jewish History at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. I want to acknowledge the unfailing courtesy and splendid hospitality of all concerned, including particularly my hosts: professors Yochanan Friedmann of the Faculty of Humanities, Sarah Japhet of the School of Jewish Studies, and Yosef Kaplan of the Department of Jewish History.

A number of colleagues and friends very kindly read various drafts of this work and made valuable suggestions, not all of which I heeded. Although I list their names here in gratitude, they are in no way to be implicated in my mistakes and errors: professors Chimen Abramsky, Jacob Goldberg, Jacqueline Gutwirth, Magdalena Opalski, Antoni Maczak, Joseph Shatzmiller, and Andrzej Wyrobisz. I am deeply grateful to each of these scholars for their help.

I must thank the staff of the libraries and archives where I carried out my research. Particularly in Poland, where I often needed much assistance, I met with invariable courtesy. Thank you to the staff at the Archiwum Główne Akt Dawnych, the library of the Institute of History of Warsaw University, the Biblioteka Narodowa, the library and archive of the Jewish Historical Institute, and the library of the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences, all in Warsaw; the Archiwum Państwowe in its two branches in Cracow and, in the same city, the Czartoryski Library and the archive of the Historical Institute of the Polish Academy of Sciences; and the Ossoliński Library and the library of the University of Wrocław.

In Jerusalem I worked mainly at the Jewish National and Hebrew University Library and also at the Schocken Library and the Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People. Barukh Mordekhai Cohen of the Institute of Hebrew Bibliography permitted me to consult the extensive file of approbations there. At the Central Zionist Archives, Yoram Mayorek was very courteous and agreed to check the as-yet-uncatalogued sections of the Nahum Sokolow collection. Soon enough he called me to say that my guess was cor-
rect and there were indeed a few pages copied from the minute book of the Jewish community of Opatów by Sokolow.

In the United States, I used materials from the collections of YIVO in New York. Officials of the Yale University Library were kind enough to provide a microfilm of the literary diary of Ezra Stiles. In England, I benefited from consulting the Hebrew manuscript collection of the Bodleian Library at Oxford.

I am happy to acknowledge the generous support of my research by the following foundations and institutions: the Memorial Foundation for Jewish Culture; the Interuniversity Centre for European Studies, Montreal; the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, McGill University; and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. Through the last-named grant I was able to employ two assistants for one year; Tami Mak-Salmon of Jerusalem and Hanna Węgrzynek of Warsaw devoted many hours to rather tedious tasks, and I am grateful for the care and diligence with which they carried out their assignments. The maps in this volume were prepared in the MGM Laboratory at McGill University by David Spira.

I will individually and personally thank the members of my family, my parents, my children, and particularly my wife, to whom this book is dedicated. I should, though, apologize to Daniel Leib, Rachel Leah, and Rena Pesl because I did not have the courage to begin the book as they had asked: "Once upon a time . . ."