

Stefan Gąsiorowski, *Chrześcijanie i Żydzi w Żółkwi w XVII i XVIII wieku (Christians and Jews in the Town of Żółkiew in the 17th and 18th cc.)*, Kraków 2001, Wydawnictwo Polskiej Akademii Umiejętności, 293 pp.

The monograph under discussion is another item in the series: *Works of the Commission for the History and Culture of Jews*, which has been appearing in Cracow for the last few years. Its author, an experienced researcher into the communities of pre-partition Red Ruthenia<sup>1</sup>, has set himself an ambitious task: to present a comprehensive picture of relations between the Christian population of Żółkiew — a borderland private town — and the local Jews, in the economic and religious domain. He is especially interested in the mechanism of the shaping and functioning of mutual relations between various social, ethnic and religious groups of this town. On the other hand, he has deliberately given up the analysis of the very complex attitude of the local gentry to the Jewish population, since it escapes unequivocal evaluation.

Chronologically, the dissertation embraces the 17th and 18th cc.; in order to show the origin of the phenomena under his analysis, the researcher also reaches back to earlier periods, especially the 16th c. He tries to present the situation of early-modern Żółkiew against the background of what happened at that time in other towns of Red Ruthenia, in Lwów, Przemyśl and Brody<sup>2</sup>. It should be regretted, however, that he refrains from comparisons with private and royal urban centres of Great Poland, Mazovia and Lithuania, or the towns of Western and Central-Eastern Europe.

The study has an imposing source basis. It consists of *sculteti*-aldermen's books of Żółkiew from 1613–1772, documents and privileges issued for the inhabitants of this town and its guilds by monarchs and successive owners,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. among others S. Gąsiorowski, *Stan badań nad dziejami gmin żydowskich na ziemi lwowskiej w XVII i XVIII wieku (The State of Research into the 17th and 18th c. History of Jewish Communities in the Lwów Region)*, in: *Żydzi i judaizm we współczesnych badaniach polskich. Materiały z konferencji, Kraków 21–23 XI 1995*, ed. by K. Piliarczyk, Kraków 1997; *idem*, *Tatarscy niewolnicy w służbie panów Żółkwi w XVII wieku (The Tartar Slaves in the Service of the Lords of Żółkiew in the 17th c.)*, "Studia Historyczne" Y, XXXVIII, 1995, fasc. 4; *idem*, *Walka chrześcijańskich cechów z konkurencją żydowską w Żółkwi w świetle przywilejów z XVII i pierwszej połowy XVIII wieku (The Struggle of Christian Guilds Against Jewish Competition in Żółkiew in the Light of 17th and the First Half of the 18th c. Privileges)*, in: *Studia historyczno-demograficzne. Pamięci dr hab. Szyi Bronszteina profesora Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego*, ed. by T. Jurek and K. Matwijowski, "Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis" N° 1876: 1996, Prawo 251; *idem*, *Żydzi w Żółkwi i ich kontakty z tamtejszymi dominikanami w XVII i pierwszej połowie XVIII wieku (Jews in Żółkiew and Their Contacts with the Local Dominican Friars in the 17th and the First Half of the 18th c.)*, "Biuletyn Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego", 1993, N° 1/2.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. e.g. J. Krochmal, *Krzyż i menora. Żydzi i chrześcijanie w Przemyślu w latach 1559–1772 (The Cross and the Menorah. Jews and Christians in Przemyśl in 1559–1772)*, Przemyśl 1996.

documents of the castle chancery, town accounts, tax tariffs and inventories, books of contracts, records of the bishops' visitations, inspections of the Żółkiew estates, memoirs (including a valuable manuscript diary of Prince Michał Kazimierz Radziwiłł from 1702–1761), town and monastic chronicles, correspondence, records of guilds, brotherhoods, churches and monasteries, ephemeral publications, registers of births, marriages and deaths, and iconography.

Because the majority of the records of the Jewish Community in Żółkiew have disappeared, S. Gašiorowski had to reach for the works of 19th c. historians and lovers of history who had known and analysed the sources of *kahal*, as well as for printed archival materials.

To collect these dispersed and diverse documents the author was bound to conduct extensive research in the Central Archives of Historical Records in Warsaw (Aleksander Czołowski's Files, Radziwiłł Archives), the State Central Historical Archives of the Ukraine in Lviv, the Archives of the Polish Province of the Dominican Friars in Cracow, the Archives of the Lwów Archdiocese in Cracow (Lubaczów), the Central Archives of the Basilian Monks in Lviv, the State Archives in Cracow, Poznań, Gdańsk and Wrocław, the Ivan Franko University Library in Lviv, the Vasiliiy Stefanyk National Library of the Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine in Lviv, the Czartoryski Library in Cracow, the State Library of the Academy of Learning and the Polish Academy of Sciences in Cracow, the Jagiellonian Library in Cracow, the National Library in Warsaw and the Ossoliński National Institute Library in Wrocław.

S. Gašiorowski's work consists of an extensive introduction, five chapters arranged in accordance with chronology and subject-matter, as well as a short conclusion. In the initial part he takes his stand on the earlier literature on the subject, and discusses the achievements of Polish, Ukrainian and Jewish historiography. He draws attention to the definitely one-sided character, especially of older works, whose authors focussed on the life and activity of only one part of the urban community, representing either one nationality (Poles, Ruthenians, Jews, Armenians), or one religion (Christianity, Judaism). In the researcher's opinion such an approach does not render fully the life in borderland towns, where various cultures were in contact, and may result in creating the picture of relations between various groups of inhabitants exclusively as a scene of constant conflicts. Only recently works have arisen that present a comprehensive treatment of the relations between Christians and Jews at the local level. Even if we go along with the author's opinions, we have to note, on the other hand, that he himself has not made sufficient use of the works of authors writing in Hebrew.

S. Gašiorowski's study opens with a bulky Chapter I, entitled: *The Origin and Development of the Town in the 17th and 18th Centuries* (pp. 26–104), which in fact is a chronicle of events, from the rise of the medieval service settlement of Winniki near Lwów, up till 1784 when Żółkiew gained the status of an Austrian district town. In subsequent passages the author discusses the stages in Żółkiew's development and the role played by its successive owners, beginning with the actual creator of this town, Great Crown Hetman Stanisław Żółkiewski, through the Daniłowicz and Sobieski families, up till Michał Kazimierz and Karol Radziwiłł — the last lords of Żółkiew in the pre-partition Commonwealth. S. Gašiorowski has shown the special services to this process of King John III Sobieski, who issued or confirmed many privileges for the inhabitants of Żółkiew, was interested in the redevelopment of the local castle complex, intensified the development of crafts and trade and supported the inhabitants in times of natural disasters. He also changed the town into one of his favourite residences. All in all, under John III Żółkiew experienced its greatest efflorescence.

Among other owners of the town, those who deserve a special credit for its development were: Stanisław Żółkiewski, Zofia Daniłowiczowa and Teofila Sobieska. However, from the close of the 17th c., its successive owners — Princes Konstanty and Jakub Sobieski, as well as the above-mentioned Radziwiłł princes — had shown less and less interest in their Żółkiew property. They also less

frequently sojourned in the town administered by the appointed castle officials. This does not mean to say that they were absolutely disinterested in the fortunes of its inhabitants, since they issued new privileges for the guilds, supported the redevelopment of local churches and monasteries and adjudicated disputes between various groups of inhabitants.

From the fragment under analysis we can learn a lot about the development of crafts, privileges of various corporations, the inflow of the clergy to Żółkiew as well as the foundation of successive sanctuaries, hospitals and convents, the redevelopment of its fortifications, as well as fires, epidemics and other disasters that made the life of the burghers difficult. We can also find here a lot of information on the sieges and war-time foreign occupations of Żółkiew in the second half of the 17th and the first half of the 18th c.

In Chapter I S. Gašiorowski includes also a lot of basic information concerning the turbulent political history of the then Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth (wars against the Cossacks, Tartars and Turks, military operations during the great Northern War). He could well have omitted it, since frequently it is very loosely linked with the history of this town. It might also be argued whether such an extensive introduction was necessary, and the whole Chapter I might not be constructed in a different way.

Chapter II: *The Rise and Functioning of the Jewish Community* (pp. 105-129) is devoted to the discussion of the history of Jews in Żółkiew, from the moment of bringing there the first settlers from Lwów in the 1590s up till the deprivation of the Jewish population of all their privileges by the Austrian authorities after 1772. Very instrumental in the organization of the local Jewish community and its emancipation from the Lwów community was Stanisław Żółkiewski, who not only encouraged the believers in Judaism to massively settle at Żółkiew, but also granted them many important privileges, among others those concerning the construction of the House of Prayer, a bath and a hospital. In the 1620s a separate synagogue was erected in Żółkiew, and the Board of the *kahal* was finally constituted, consisting among other people of four elders, three *gabayim* and three tax estimators. Gašiorowski characterizes in detail their competences as well as the role of the rabbi and *shames*; he also discusses the role performed by the officials of *kahal* in Jewish organizations of higher level, among others the District Court of Ruthenian Jews and in the Seym of Crown Jews, the so-called *Waada*. This role grew in significance under the administration of King John Sobieski (1646-1696), the best period in the history of the local Jewish community. At that time a new synagogue was erected (1692) as well as the first Hebrew printing house (1690) in the Ruthenian voivodeship. These events were accompanied by a rapid growth of the strength of the Jewish population in Żółkiew as well as a great development of Jewish crafts and trade, stimulated by numerous economic privileges. S. Gašiorowski has shown that also in the first half of the 18th c. the Jewish Consistory of Żółkiew had a high position in Ruthenia and successfully competed with the Community of Lwów for primacy in the Ruthenian land. At that time also the Jews at Żółkiew greatly outnumbered the local Christians, and Jewish merchants were noticeable in the whole territory of the Commonwealth. The crisis of this community was linked to the economic regression of the whole town in the second half of the 18th c.; it was seriously deepened by the debts of the local Jewish community (about 100 thousand zlotys in 1750), which entailed numerous bankruptcies of many wealthy Jews.

The contacts of the owners of Żółkiew with the Jews are discussed in detail in Chapter III (pp. 130-157). They were generally very good, the closest in the reign of John Sobieski. The local Jewish community received at that time four important privileges, some financial aid to the erection of a splendid synagogue, as well as royal protection, which strengthened the significance of this *kahal* in Jewish milieus in Ruthenia. Two Jews from Żółkiew became the king's confidential advisers: Jakub Becal, the administrator of crown tariffs in the Commonwealth, and John the Third's physician in ordinary, Emanuel de Jona (Jonas). The

significance of the above-mentioned men would justify a much more extensive discussion of their activity than one offered to them by S. Gašiorowski.

While discussing the friendliness of the heirs of Żółkiew to Jews, the author stresses that usually it was not disinterested, and resulted from purely economic motives (taxes, compulsory loans, the possibility of obtaining a credit). However, this friendly attitude ensured a harmonious economic and demographic development for this religious community, and as a result of the whole town, which is testified by large revenues yielded by the Żółkiew estate, generally rented out to the representatives of the Jewish élites.

The tolerant and protective attitude of the owners of the town towards the Jews bore significantly on the latter's contacts with Christian burghers who in this situation had to drop too aggressive forms of struggle against the Jewish economic competition. Direct contacts of the Żółkiewskis, Daniłowiczes, Sobieskis and Radziwiłłs with Jews were confined to the community's elders: rabbis, rich merchants, bankers, physicians or goldsmiths. Contacts with the local Jewish populace, on the other hand, were maintained by the castle officials who gradually, especially when Żółkiew was governed by the sons of John III and the Radziwiłłs, took over more and more prerogatives of the owners of the town.

Chapter IV, entitled *The Attitude of Christian Burghers to Jews* (pp. 158–197) is devoted to the discussion of various forms of mutual relations between the representatives of the Jewish community, Catholics and members of the Orthodox Church. Here the author characterizes the formal and legal restrictions imposed on the Jewish population by the Magdeburg Law, as well as conflicts between the Town Council and the Jewish community over the payment of some taxes. On the other hand Gašiorowski shows many situations that confirm the solidarity between Jews and Christians, revealed especially in the face of external threat. In 1648 e.g. the town did not yield to the demands of the Cossack colonels, that the Jews of Żółkiew be delivered over to them (which certainly meant their death) and paid a high ransom to rescue their neighbours.

The town authorities of Żółkiew were also linked with the Jewish community by many economic interests. They leased to the Jews various town taxes (for the maintenance of roads, for liquor licence), rented out farms, land and shops, contracted with them commercial companies, and even engaged in joint economic undertakings (e.g. the construction of a textile manufactory in 1748).

Much worse were in the 17th c. the official relations between the Christian craftsmen's and merchants' guilds on the one hand and the Jewish handicraftsmen and merchants on the other. In the struggle against the economic competition efforts were made to monopolize some sectors of production, and to bar the access of Jews to Christian corporations, to forbid joint companies established by some master craftsmen with Jews, etc. These actions, partly because of the protection of the owners of the town extended over the Jewish Community, turned out of little effect, and only in 1700–1720, when Jews were no longer favoured by Żółkiew's lords, did they take on a sharper character. Resentment towards granting the Jews equal rights with Christians in trade and crafts continued also in later years; however, efforts were made to solve many litigious cases by way of agreements and negotiations.

While characterizing the contacts of the burghers with the Jewish population in Żółkiew, the author shows a number of spheres of life where they were correct. This concerned among other things the turnover of real property, the lease of Christian flats and houses to Jews, the lease of malt-houses, vineyards and shops, obtaining credit from Jews, making business contracts with the Jewish merchants, frequenting the inns run by them, as well as employing Jewish carters, musicians, physicians and pharmacists. In this situation the most industrious and active representatives of the Jewish community: bankers, lease-holders and wholesale dealers frequently acquired large fortunes; more and more tenement houses and other valuable real property passed into their hands.

It is interesting to note that despite the obvious economic rivalry the local conflicts between the representatives of both religions never took on the character of dangerous religious tumults, or pogroms, which many times occurred, e.g. in the nearby Lwów. The members of Żółkiew's Jewish community certainly fell victim to various common offences, especially: theft, beating, banditry and homicide motivated by robbery. The perpetrators of these offences were usually local criminals. On the other hand, among the people from the margins of society, there happened to be many Jews who also committed offences against property, life or morality.

The last chapter of S. Gašiorowski's dissertation (pp. 198–221) deals with the contacts between Żółkiew's Christian clergy and Jews. The author has shown that their mutual relations should be analysed on two separate planes. Thus throughout the period under discussion the official policy of both the Catholic and the Orthodox Church was invariably unfriendly towards the Jews. This was evidenced by synodal acts as well as public statements of Church dignitaries, who tried to restrict Jewish religious practices. However, everyday contacts of the Christian clergy with Jews — especially in the economic field — were very frequent and familiar. Thus the Jews were frequent lease-holders of both Catholic and Orthodox ecclesiastical property, they happened to be bankers of Christian convents, provided them with various goods, they payed off to churches and monasteries the sums due as repurchase for the indebted property they took over. The Catholic clergymen were also linked with the Jewish community by mutual credit obligations; priests and monks willingly availed themselves of the services of Jewish craftsmen, inn-keepers and physicians.

These complex links (especially of an economic nature) required of both sides much deliberation and a relatively friendly atmosphere. Hence in the period under analysis a kind of religious peace reigned at Żółkiew, evidenced by a lack of any religious tumults, a limited Catholic missionary activity which brought about few conversions, and finally by the fact that throughout almost 200 years there was no case of profanation of the Host or an alleged ritual murder.

In summing up his research the author points out again the great importance of the friendly attitude of the successive owners of Żółkiew towards the local Jewish community, reflected in the inter-denominational and inter-ethnic relations in this town. Due to this attitude, certainly determined mainly by economic considerations, both the authorities of the town, the clergy and craftsmen's guilds had to (frequently despite the official regulations and their own interests) endeavour to work out such forms of co-existence with the believers of Judaism, which would meet with the approval of the heirs of Żółkiew. Hence mutual relations in this urban centre were marked by a considerable religious tolerance as well as pragmatism, concerning the exchange of services and goods as well as economic transactions. Such an attitude, at any rate, characteristic mainly of private towns, enabled the Jewish community to get integrated with Christians and to create together with them a kind of collectivity.

Due to its solid source basis, many-sided analysis of the collected materials, an interesting list of investigative questions, as well as to its lucid narration, the work under review may be regarded as a successful monograph which extends our knowledge of the relations prevailing in multi-ethnic and multi-denominational private towns in the borderland of the pre-partition Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. What one would wish for this dissertation to contain, is more comparisons, e.g. with the situation of Jews at Swarzędz, recently analysed with much insight by Anna Michałowska<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. A. Michałowska, *Między demokracją a oligarchią. Władze gmin żydowskich w Poznaniu i Swarzędzu, od połowy XVII do końca XVIII wieku (Between Democracy and Oligarchy, Jewish Community Authorities in Poznań and Swarzędz, from the Middle of the 17th till the End of the 18th c.)*, Warszawa 2000.

The book is provided with a dozen-odd interesting annexes (incidentally, used in the text to a very small extent), containing, among other things: the lists of the *sculteti*, parish priests, abbots, and rabbis of Żółkiew, a register of trades performed by local Jews, as well as a register of conversions into Catholicism, together with a description of baptisms of several score converts in Żółkiew. Some reservation concerns only Annexe II (pp. 228-229), where attempts are made to estimate the strength of the population in Żółkiew and where the author, not very consistently, juxtaposes the number of inhabitants with that of urban real estates.

The scientific apparatus of the dissertation is complemented by an extensive bibliography, an English summary, as well as two indexes: of personal and geographical names; it also has been provided with carefully selected and executed, coloured illustrations.

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