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MUSICAL CONTACTS BETWEEN THE POLISH AND JEWISH COMMUNITIES AND THE IMAGE OF JEWISH CULTURE IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY POLISH POPULAR MUSIC

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Introduction

In Polish musicology, relatively little space has been devoted to the traditional musical culture of Polish Jews, although recent years have brought a distinct increase in the number of scholarly publications on this subject.¹ Rarer still are published remarks on mutual relations in music between the Polish and Jewish communities, which treated one another as separate up to the second half of the nineteenth century.² Yet entering into mutual relations was unavoidable, not only because, from the turn of the thirteenth century, those communities remained neighbours, but also because they closely observed one another, considered manifestations of each other's cultures,³ and influenced one another in the domain of music. It seems crucial, therefore, to determine the scope and character of those relations and the musical models that the two communities absorbed. That task is facilitated by extant – albeit dispersed – artefacts in the form of normative sources, accounts in chronicles and diaries, commentaries from observers and scholars, iconography, and also sheet music, recorded music and films. It is impossible, of course, to discuss the whole of this extensive subject in the form of an article. Hence the present essay aims merely to describe how the mutual relations between the two national groups took shape in the domain of musical practice, to define the state of those relations in the nineteenth century, and to characterise how Poles perceived Jews and their culture – including musical culture – both in the principal strand of the documentation of musical traditions (the realm of Oskar Kolberg, who was also a pioneer in the documentation of the traditional music of Polish Jews⁴) and also in general musical circulation. Hence this article will address not only explicit references to Jewish music and the presence in Polish folklore of Jewish music as understood by Joachim Braun,⁵ but also the question of musical contacts in popular cultural life.

Shaping musical relations between the Polish and Jewish communities to the end of the eighteenth century

As already mentioned, continuous contacts between the Polish and Jewish communities began to take shape around the turn of the

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Major publications of the last two decades include a number of essays by Sylwia Jakubczyk-Ślęczka: 'La musique juive à Cracovie de l'entre-deux-guerres selon les informations du journal *Nowy Dziennik*', *Scripta Judaica Cracoviensia*, 9 (2011), 121–135; 'Obraz życia muzycznego rzeszowskich Żydów w okresie międzywojennym opisany na łamach lwowskiej *Chwili*' [A picture of musical life among the Jews of Rzeszów between the wars as described on the pages of the Lviv-based *Chwila*], *Kamerton*, 57 (2013), 165–173; 'Żydowskie środowisko muzyczne międzywojennego Lwowa' [The Jewish music environment of inter-war Lviv], *Musica Galiciana*, 14 (2014), 245–254; 'Żydowskie organizacje muzyczne w międzywojennym Rzeszowie' [Jewish musical organisations in inter-war Rzeszów], *Kamerton*, 59 (2015), 80–86; Sylwia Jakubczyk-Ślęczka, 'Musical Life of the Jewish Community in Interwar Galicia. The Problem of Identity of Jewish Musicians', *Kwartalnik Młodych Muzykologów UJ*, 34 (2017), 135–157; 'Życie muzyczne społeczności żydowskiej na terenach dawnej Galicji w okresie międzywojennym' [The musical life of the Jewish community on the territory of former Galicia between the wars], in Michał Galas and Wacław Wierzbieniec (eds), *Z dziejów i kultury Żydów w Galicji* [From the history and

culture of the Jews in Galicia] (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2018), 239–264; ‘Reforma żydowskiej muzyki liturgicznej w Galicji na przełomie XIX i XX wieku’ [The reform of Jewish liturgical music in Galicia around the turn of the twentieth century], *Studia Judaica*, 44 (2019), 235–265; ‘Reguła „kol isza” a role kobiet w życiu muzycznym Żydów galicyjskich w okresie międzywojennym’ [The *kol isha* rule and the roles of women in the musical life of Galician Jews between the wars], in Grzegorz Oliwa and Kinga Fink (eds), *Musica Galliciana*, xvi (Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego, 2019), 222–240; ‘Jewish Music Organizations in Interwar Galicia’, in François Guesnet, Benjamin Matis and Antony Polonsky (eds), *Polin. Studies in Polish Jewry*, xxxii (London: Littman Library of Jewish Civilization, 2020), 343–370. The following essays by Agnieszka Jeż are also significant: ‘„Śpiewniki” Menachema Kipnisa jako źródło do badania muzyki i kultury muzycznej w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym’ [The ‘songbooks’ of Menachem Kipnis as a source for research into music and musical culture between the wars], *Kwartalnik Historii Żydów*, 2002/3, 303–317; ‘Świat za kratami – obraz życia na marginesie społecznym w *Pieśniach złodziejskich* Szmuela Lehmana / The World Behind Bars – A Picture of Life on the Margins of Society in the *Thieves’ Songs* by Shmuel Lehman’, tr. Jan Sielicki, *Etnografia Nowa*, 7–8 (2015–2016), 475–489; ‘Taniec w szkole: doświadczenia dzieci i młodzieży żydowskiej w dwudziestoleciu międzywojennym w Polsce’ / ‘Dance at School: the Experience of Jewish Children and Teenagers in the Interwar Period in Poland’, *Studia Choreologica*, 21 (2020), 175–215; ‘Pejzaż dźwiękowy sztetla we wspomnieniach dzieci i młodzieży żydowskiej w przedwojennej Polsce’ [The soundscape of the shtetl in the recollections of Jewish children and youngsters in pre-war Poland], *Journal of Urban Ethnology*, 19 (2021), 31–46. Also noteworthy are several studies by Bożena Muszkalska: ‘Uwalnianie iskier bożych – modlitwy w polskich synagogach’ [Releasing divine sparks: prayers in Polish synagogues], *Czas kultury*, 2002/5–6, 202–207; ‘Problem moduśu w aszkenazyjskich śpiewach synagogalnych’ [The question of mode in Ashkenazi synagogue chants], *Muzyka*, 2004/3, 91–103; ‘Expression of the Jewish Identity in the Contemporary Synagogue Chant in Poland’, in Anna Czekanowska, Ursula Hemetek, Gerda Lechleitner and Inna Naroditskaya (eds), *Manifold Identities: Studies on Music and Minorities*, (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2004), 238–245; ‘Alien Melodies versus Jewish Identity in the Music of Ashkenazim from East-Europe’, in Naila Ceribašić and Erica Haskell (eds), *Shared Music and Minority Identities. Papers from the Third Meeting of the ‘Music and Minorities’ Study Group of the International Council for Traditional Music (ICTM)*, Roč, Croatia, 2004 (Zagreb: Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research, 2006), 225–234; ‘Bóg kocha radosnych. Simcha muzyką wyrażana’ [God loves the joyful: simcha expressed in music], in Anna Grzegorzczyk, Jan Grad and Paulina Szkuclarek (eds), *Fenomen radości* [The phenomenon of joy] (Poznań: Wydawnictwo naukowe UAM, 2007), 127–137; ‘Po całej ziemi rozchodzi się ich dźwięk...’ *Muzyka w życiu religijnym Żydów aszkenazyjskich* [‘Their sound spreads across the earth...’: music in the religious life of Ashkenazi Jews] (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2013); ‘In Search of a Disappearing World’, *New Eastern Europe*, 2014/4, 215–220. Finally I should add Benjamin Vogel, ‘Klezmerzy Księstwa Warszawskiego’ [The klezmers of the Duchy of Warsaw], *Studia Musicologica Stetinensis*, 2 (2010), 183–188.

2

The lack of research into the presence of Jewish elements in Polish musical culture was pointed out by Marian Fuks in his book *Muzyka ocalona. Judaica polskie* [Salvaged music: Polish Judaica] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Radia i Telewizji, 1989), 23. That postulate was realised in part by Maja Trochimczyk, in an article that arose out of a conference held in November 1998 at the University of Southern California: ‘Separation and Belonging: Polish Jews, Jewish Poles and Their Music’, *Polish Music Journal*, 6/1 (2003). In Poland, only a handful of texts partially filling that gap have appeared: Bożena Muszkalska, ‘Freilach, Jazz and Chopin. The Klezmer-Movement in Contemporary Poland’, in Rosemary Stelovea, et al. (eds), *The Human World and Musical Diversity: Proceedings from the Fourth Meeting of the ICTM Study Group ‘Music and Minorities’* in Varna, Bulgaria 2006 (Sofia: Institute of Art Studies – Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, 2008), 60–64; Bożena Muszkalska, ‘Wątki żydowskie u Kolberga na tle historyczno-kulturowym’ [Jewish motifs in Kolberg within the historical and cultural contexts], *Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny*, 12 (2014), 159–168; Tomasz Nowak, ‘Wątki żydowskie w XIX-wiecznej polskiej kulturze muzycznej w świetle zbiorów Oskara Kolberga’ [Jewish elements in nineteenth-century Polish musical culture in light of the collections of Oskar Kolberg], *Polski Rocznik Muzykologiczny*, 5 (2006), 221–240. In the field of ethnology, analogous research was conducted around the turn of the 1980s by Alina Cała (see her *Wizerunek Żyda w polskiej kulturze ludowej* [The image of the Jew in Polish folk culture] (Warsaw: Oficyna Naukowa, 2005)).

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See Cała, *Wizerunek Żyda*. Such observations concerning Jewish customs and superstitions were already made by Oskar Kolberg, *Chełmskie. Część I* [The Chełm region: part 1], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xxxiii (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964), 39–40; <https://polona.pl/item/chelmskie-cz-1,MTQyNzQ1NjQ/55/#info:metadata>, accessed 24 August 2020.

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Nowak, ‘Wątki żydowskie’. See also Oskar Kolberg, *Chełmskie. Część I*, 39–40; idem, *Przemyskie* [The Przemysł region], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xxxv (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964), 181–183; idem, *Góry i Podgórze. Część II* [The mountains and foothills: part II], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xlv (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1968), 351; idem, *Mazowsze. Część VI* [Mazovia: part 6], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xli (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1969), 161–162, 294–295; <https://polona.pl/item/mazowsze-cz-6,MTQyNzQ1Nzc/239/#info:metadata>, accessed 24 August 2020. It is worth emphasising that subsequent collections, although considerably larger, date from several decades later, cf. e.g. Menachem Kipnis, *60 folkslider* (Warsaw: A. Gitlin, 1918); Fritz Mordechaj Kaufman, *Die Schönsten Lieder der Ostjuden. Siebenundvierzig ausgewählte Volkslieder* (Berlin: Jüdischer Verlag, 1920); <https://polona.pl/item/die-schonsten-lieder-der-ostjuden-siebenundvierzig-ausgewahlte-volkslieder,MTEzNjUwMjE5/6/#info:metadata>, accessed 24 August 2020.

5

Joachim Braun understands Jewish music to mean ‘that which combines the formal, stylistic and semantic determinants of Jewish culture and behaviours’ (Joachim

thirteenth century, when the first groups of immigrants from Western Europe settled in Polish lands, primarily close to the main administrative centres. Privileges of immunity issued in Polish lands (established in 1264 by the Statute of Kalisz, extended in 1334 to the whole of the Kingdom of Poland, and in 1388 also to the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, which bore consequences for the subsequent Commonwealth of Poland-Lithuania), together with growing migratory pressures in Western Europe both contributed to the intensification of interethnic contacts. Although we have no accounts on this subject from the late Middle Ages, the renewal in successive synodal constitutions between 1267 and 1420 of numerous bans on Christians entering into contacts with Jews shows that they were probably not observed too conscientiously.⁶ Those contacts certainly intensified during the sixteenth century, when around eighty per cent of all Jews lived in the Republic of Poland.

Already in the fourteenth century, the influx of a large Jewish population triggered demands – from municipal councils, and later also from the knightage – to curb the rights of Jews and the mutual contacts between Poles and Jews. These tendencies were most strongly marked during the sixteenth century. Those restrictions, in turn, led to the pauperisation of the Jewish population and saw Jews increasingly turn to less profitable professions. They also influenced the creation of numerous regulations hindering mutual activities in the service sector. In 1549, for instance, King Sigismund Augustus issued a decree governing the organisation of musicians' guilds, in which the tenth paragraph banned members of the Kraków guild of musicians from playing in Jewish homes and branded anyone defying that ban three times as a criminal and shameful person (*putridus* and *indignus*).⁷ The statute of Lviv musicians, meanwhile, issued by the city council in 1580, stated: 'likewise jews,⁸ any of them playing music, that none should be so bold as to play at any banquets or feasts, or at Catholic, Rus or Armenian weddings, on pain of losing their musical instrument. And if [any] jews should wilfully assert themselves, paying no heed to this, they should be punished by the municipal council'.⁹ This statute was ratified by King Ladislaus IV in 1634. Earlier, however, in 1629, a company of 13 Jewish musicians 'reached an agreement with the guild of Lviv musicians, giving them the right to play at Catholic weddings'.¹⁰ Privately, as well, representatives of the two communities must have come to agreements quite often, given that the statute of the guild of Kraków 'usualists' banned the teaching of instruments without the guild's consent, particularly stressing the ban on teaching converted Jews.¹¹

Braun, 'Aspekte der Musiksoziologie in Israel', in Walter Wiora et al. (eds), *Studien zur systematischen Musikwissenschaft* (Laaber: Laaber, 1986), 87). That definition should be adopted under certain conditions: 1) it is difficult in the music of any culture to identify elements not occurring in other cultures – hence determinants of Jewish culture and behaviours obviously occur in other cultures; 2) some elements are held to be determinants of a given culture on account of the frequency with which they occur and the fact that they could hardly be deemed universal phenomena.

6
Andrzej Żbikowski, *Żydzi [The Jews]* (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Dolnośląskie, 2000), 17–21.

7
Zdzisław Jachimecki, *Muzyka polska w rozwoju historycznym od czasów najdawniejszych do doby obecnej, T. I – Od Bogurodzicy do Chopina włącznie* [The historical development of Polish music from the earliest times to the present day, vol. I: from 'Bogurodzica' to Chopin included] (Kraków: S. Kamiński, 1948), 147.

8
I treat the Jewish community as primarily a national community, of which religion is just one of the determining factors, and so adopt the common orthography of the word 'Jew' with a capital letter. In source texts, however, I retain the original orthography, so the reader can see how representatives of that community were perceived over the course of the period under discussion – as members of a national ('Jew') or a religious ('jew') community. The choice of orthography could sometimes betray also an author's attitude towards representatives of the Jewish minority.

9
Jachimecki, *Muzyka polska w rozwoju historycznym*, 147.

10
Zbigniew Chaniecki, *Organizacje zawodowe muzyków na ziemiach polskich do końca XVIII wieku* [Professional organisations of musicians in Polish lands up to the end of the eighteenth century] (Kraków: PWM, 1980), 40, 94, 154.

11

Ibidem, 68. *Uzualiści*, or 'usualists', were musicians who derived their knowledge from practice rather than study.

12

See Antoni Miller, *Teatr polski i muzyka na Litwie jako strażnice kultury zachodu (1745–1865): studjum z dziejów kultury polskiej* [Polish theatre and music in Lithuania as bastions of Western culture (1745–1865): a study in the history of Polish culture] (Vilnius: Wydawnictwo im. Stanisława i Tekli z hr. Borychów Łopacińskich, 1936), 156; <https://pbc.gda.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=48459>, accessed 25 August 2020.

13

Irena Zabłocka-Bączkowska, 'Kujawski bal' [A Kujawy ball], in *Krajobrazy i ludzie. Opowiadania norfoldzkie* [Landscapes and people: Norfolk tales] (Opole: Instytut Historii Uniwersytetu Opolskiego, 1995), 99–100 (1st edn *Wiadomości*, 432 (1954)); Feliks Parnell, *Moje życie w sztuce tańca (pamiętniki 1898–1947)* [My life in the art of dance (memoirs 1898–1947)] (Łódź: Grako, 2003), 118.

14

Miller, *Teatr polski*, 157.

15

Chaniecki, *Organizacje*, 40.

16

Kurjer Warszawski, 5 July 1825, 747; <https://polona.pl/item/kurjer-warszawski-r-5-t-2-nr-158-5-lipca-1825,MTg5Nzc3M-Dc/2/#info:metadata>, accessed 24 August 2020.

17

Zbigniew Chaniecki, 'Kapele janczarskie jako przejaw sarmatyzmu w polskiej kulturze muzycznej' [Janissary bands as a manifestation of Sarmatism in Polish musical culture], *Muzyka*, 1971/2, 50.

18

Chaniecki, *Organizacje*, 95.

19

Kurjer Warszawski, 23 January 1827, 85; <https://polona.pl/item/kurjer-warszawski-r-7-nr-22-23-stycznia-1827,MTg5N-gzMTQ/0/#info:metadata>, accessed 24 August 2020.

As we may conclude from the documents cited above, the mutual capabilities of Jewish and Polish 'usualist' musicians during the feasts and festivities of their neighbours of a different nationality and faith attests to their knowledge of at least the core of the social and ritual musical repertoire. What is more, one is surprised at the versatility of Jewish musicians from Lviv that enabled them to perform also the ritual and social repertoire of the Ukrainian community and the Polish Armenians without any difficulty. That may explain why guilds of Polish musicians sought to obtain privileges limiting the activities of Jewish musicians. But things did not look the same everywhere. In Vilnius in 1703, a 'Contubernium of Usualists' and a 'Confraternity' attached to the church of the Holy Trinity¹² were established, which, despite their religious Catholic character, were also open to Jews, who were allowed to play at Christian churches and weddings, for which they paid a penny each into the association's coffers. Thanks to extant documents of those Vilnius fellowships, we also know the names of some of the Jewish musicians accepted into the Contubernium, suggesting that musical practice was passed down through the generations in some Jewish families, as we also learn from much later sources.¹³ Leyzor Mejerowicz, Szmujł Leyzerowicz, Josel Szewłowicz, Leyba Nochimowicz, Abram Markowicz and Moyżesz Leyzerowicz were made members in 1755, and Josel Moyżeszowicz and Szolomowicz in 1791.¹⁴ In some towns and cities, there were also separate guilds of Jewish musicians, like that in Lublin, which was granted a privilege by King John Casimir in 1654.¹⁵ It was also the case that the finest Jewish musicians enjoyed enough celebrity that they were sometimes imported from distant locations. For example, the wedding of one of the richest Warsaw burghers, on 5 July 1725, 'was also entertained by a Jew brought in [...] from Brześć, who sang like a nightingale'.¹⁶

From the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have sources confirming that Jewish musicians played not just for burghers, but also for magnates and even crowned heads of state. King Ladislaus IV, in 1638, was entertained by 'musicorum synagoga symphoniaci de tribu Juda' ('musicians from the synagogue in the Jewish part of the city'), dressed in Turkish costumes.¹⁷ John III Sobieski readily listened to Jewish bands, as occurred in 1694 in Lviv and Vysotsk,¹⁸ or on 20 January 1695 during a sleigh ride (*szlichtada*) in Warsaw, when 'Jews with tsimbls' preceded 'Ukrainians with theorboes, trumpeters, pipers and janissaries assembled from various courts'.¹⁹ Also a year later, in 1696, a Jewish band accompanied by Cossacks and janissaries provided entertainment for Queen Maria Casimira.²⁰ And in 1717, while Elżbieta Sieniawska, who did not have her own court ensemble, was visiting Puławy,

she was offered the services of Jewish musicians from Tarnogród.²¹ Jewish instrumental music also accompanied a 1763 homage paid by the Jewish community of Zamość to Prince Adam Kazimierz Czartoryski.²² As we can see, at royal and magnate courts, Jewish musicians very often replaced musicians from janissary bands, which were much sought after in the times of the Sarmatian fashion for orientalism and could only be acquired as military spoils. On occasion, however, Jewish musicians were treated in a more multi-functional way. That is confirmed by a much later account given by Maurycy Karasowski of a conversation with a Jewish musician from Berdychiv whom he happened to meet:

On reaching a somewhat isolated street, narrower still than the others, I heard a distinct clarinet voice playing or rather weeping forth a polonaise of a remarkably original contour. [...] Finally I approached the window whence the plaintive clarinet voice was ringing out, and I spotted an old Israelite man who, despite his advanced years, still displayed a skilful, proficient mastery of that instrument.

– Excuse me, friend – I said[,] having greeted the old man with a bow – but please tell me what polonaise is that which you play so well? – What’s that polonaise? – he replied with a sure voice, [–] blown if I know! I learned it from my father.

– And your father – where did he learn it?

– Hm, that I don’t know; probably at the court of Radziwiłł, the Vilnius voivode.²³

– What did he do there? – I ask with surprise.

– How so, what did my father do there? He was clarinetist in His Highness’s court chapel. Besides my father, there were eleven other jews playing on various instruments, forming a separate ensemble; because there was another one too, composed entirely of Christians. The prince voivode dressed all the jews in the Turkish fashion and sometimes, when he demanded it, they would play for him in his apartments, but most often in the church during services. My father no doubt learned that polonaise there, in Nesvizh, and I from him.²⁴

In the early nineteenth century – a time when the remnants of Sarmatism were fading away – an echo of the former presence of Jewish musicians at courts and in churches was the use of the services of Jewish bands by monasteries and boarding school theatres, as in the case of the Dominicans of Nowogród around the turn of 1817, when ‘Jews with tsimbls were hired to play [...] every evening for four silver roubles’.²⁵ Soon, however, that too came to an end, and memory of such practices was eroded to such an extent that Maurycy Karasowski, in the mid-nineteenth century, could not conceive that ‘this infidel people that once crucified Christ could be forced to pay tribute, in a Catholic church, dressed in Turkish attire, to Him in whose holiness it does not believe,

20
Chaniecki, ‘Kapele janczarskie’, 52.

21
Janusz Nowak, ‘Kapele muzyczne na dworze hetmana Adama Mikołaja Sieniawskiego i jego żony Elżbiety z Lubomirskich (1685–1729)’ [Music ensembles at the court of Hetman Adam Mikołaj Sieniawski and his wife Elżbieta née Lubomirska (1685–1729)], *Muzyka*, 2003/3, 30.

22
Nathan Michael Gelber, ‘Eine jüdische Huldigung in Polen im 18. Jahrh.’, *Mitteilungen zur jüdischen Volkskunde*, 61/62 (1919), 32; https://www.jstor.org/stable/41459599?seq=2#metadata_info_tab_contents, accessed 24 August 2020. Cited after Jean Claude Pingeron, *Un épisode de la vie des Juifs polonais au dix-huitième siècle: Hommage de Salomon Reinach à M. Joseph Derenbourg le 21 août 1891* (Paris: L. Cerf, 1891).

23
Reference to Karol Stanisław Onufry Jan Nepomucen ‘Panie Kochanku’ Radziwiłł (1734–1790).

24
Maurycy Karasowski, *Rys historyczny opery polskiej poprzedzony szczegółowym poglądem na dzieje muzyki dramatycznej powszechnej* [An historical outline of Polish opera preceded by a detailed survey of the history of universal dramatic music] (Warsaw: M. Glücksberg – S. Orgelbrand, 1859), 233–234; <https://pbc.gda.pl/dlibra/doccontent?id=12958>, accessed 24 August 2020.

25
Zbigniew Jędrzychowski, *Teatra grodzieńskie 1784–1864* [Grodno Theatre 1784–1864] (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2012), 150.



Figure 1. Kazimierz Żwan, *Karczma* [An inn], 1818, two-colour lithograph, National Library in Warsaw, G.50918/II

and to contribute to His praise with music!²⁶ In the culture of the landed gentry, however, Jewish bands remained present up to the Second World War, accompanying family solemnities and balls held by the proprietors of small and medium-sized landed estates.²⁷

Save for situations in which they were to replace janissary musicians, Jews generally played on instruments which were widely used in urban musical practice in the lands of Poland–Lithuania at the time – usually ‘violins (in their folk variety, known as *serbs*), *tsimbls* (*tsimbls*), less often basses (*basetlas*) and bagpipes’, and ‘a band most often comprised three players, e.g. violin, *tsimbl* and *basetla*’.²⁸ Those instruments would also dominate the line-up of Jewish bands up to the second half of the nineteenth century.

Jewish musicians also lived and played in rural locations, probably from the sixteenth century onwards, when a considerable influx of Jews into Poland, together with the restrictions placed on their municipal rights, forced them to settle and earn a living outside towns. In the subject literature, however, the start of the rural klezmer tradition is normally dated to the mid-eighteenth century. That view was no doubt informed by the fact that the earliest extant written accounts confirming that Jewish musicians played for a peasant community date from the second half of the eighteenth century. One example here is an account given by the French traveller Hubert Vautrin, who stayed in Poland from 1777 to 1781 and wrote in his memoirs:

During Shrovetide, peasants from several villages gather in the inn, where their entire feast consists of two or three glasses of aqua vitae

26

Karasowski, *Rys historyczny opery polskie*, 234.

27

Oskar Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Obraz etnograficzny. T. III – Mazowsze Leśne* [Mazovia: an ethnographic picture. Vol. 3 – woodland Mazovia] (Kraków: W. L. Anczyc i Sp., 1887), 112; Zabłocka-Bączkowska, ‘Kujawski bal’, 99–100.

28

Z. Chaniecki, *Organizacje*, 72.

and a little bread. To the strains of a Jewish player's tsimbl or violin, they whirl around rhythmically, pressed into a small floor space. They fill the breaks in the dancing with vodka drinking and lively conversation.²⁹

It is my belief, however, that the second half of the eighteenth century was not the start of the Jews' musical practice in the rural environment, but rather a period when that practice intensified in connection with the economic crisis that had been growing for quite some time. In the middle of that century, this crisis led to the considerable impoverishment of the Jewish community and changes in its professional structure.³⁰ There is no question, however, that in the second half of the eighteenth century the phenomenon of itinerant Jewish musicians appeared.

Jewish musical folklore in the nineteenth century as described in the press and by folklore collectors

Żydowska – bałagulska od Przemysła

Zwa be - kim men die Muus, zwa be - kim - men cha - las a waj cy mir
cy ma - ne juhr, ech hab schon meir mit wue cy fuh - ren, wio! nej naj na no no na
na naj na naj na, na naj na naj na naj na naj na naj na.

Example 1. Pieśń bałagulska [Wagon driver's song] from Oskar Kolberg's volume *Przemyskie* [The Przemyśl region]

Although Polish folklore collectors did not generally seek out Jewish music, Oskar Kolberg did note examples of it. And that was probably not material gathered by chance, given that Kolberg, in his first volume on the Chełm region, wrote:

The Jews, making up the bulk of the population especially around small villages, deal here, as everywhere, in trade and factorage. Their customs and lifestyle, although sometimes described in general terms (by Niemcewicz or Czacki, for instance), are worthy of detailed study.³¹

Although Kolberg himself never undertook such a detailed study, he nonetheless did pioneer the documentation of the traditional

29
Cudzoziemcy o Polsce: relacje i opinie. T. 2: Wiek XVIII–XIX [Foreigners on Poland: accounts and opinions. Vol. 2: the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries], ed. Jan Gintel (Warsaw: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1971), 97.

30
Cf. Żbikowski, *Żydzi*, 30–32.

31
Kolberg, *Chełmskie. Część I*, 39–40.

32

Kolberg, *Przemyskie*, 181–183 <https://polona.pl/item/przemyskie,MTQyNzQ1Njg/219/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020. This song must have enjoyed considerable popularity, as we find it in songbooks dating from several decades later, compiled by Menachem Kipnis, (*60 Folks lider*, no. 47) and Fritz Mordechaj Kaufmann (*Die Schönsten Lieder*, 84). It is interesting to note that Kaufmann introduces performance remarks and also defines the text as a variant in the Warsaw dialect of Yiddish.

33

Kolberg, *Przemyskie*, 183; <https://polona.pl/item/przemyskie,MTQyNzQ1Njg/221/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

34

Fuks, *Muzyka ocalona*, 24.

35

Although the tonal centre does change in the *bałegulski* song, I consider the tonality of the first and last segments of the melody to be decisive.

36

See Abraham Cwi Idelsohn, *Jewish Music: Its Historical Development* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929), 24, 35, 76, 397–398, 403.

37

Agnieszka Jeż, 'Literacki i muzyczny obraz żydowskiego miasteczka na podstawie "Śpiewników" Menachema Kipnisa' [A literary and musical picture of a Jewish village based on the 'Songbooks' of Menachem Kipnis], master's work written under the supervision of Anna Czekanowska-Kuklińska, Warsaw University, Institute of Musicology, 1999, 84.

musical repertoire of the Jewish community in Polish lands.

From the perspective of Polish-Jewish relations, Kolberg's records invaluable document features of Jewish musical folklore in the nineteenth century. The use of far more voluminous twentieth-century collections might distort our image of the musical folklore of a completely different historical period.

od Przemysła

Example 2. The song 'Rebe, rebe gaj' [Good rabbi, rabbi], from Oskar Kolberg, *Przemyskie* [The Przemyśl region]

In Oskar Kolberg's collections, we find a total of four songs in Yiddish, two each in the monographs *Przemyskie* [The Przemyśl region] and *Góry i Podgórze. Część II* [Mountains and foothills. Part 2]. In the volume devoted to the Przemyśl region, Kolberg recorded 'Fuhr ech mijer araus'³² – about a Jewish wagon driver (*bałegule* in Yiddish) who, although misfortunate and sad, still believes that his fortunes will change – and 'Rebe rebe gaj'³³ – about generational conflict over love between a rabbi's growing daughter and her parents. These songs are examples of larger thematic groups in the musical repertoire: *bałegulskie* songs and other typical love songs from the nineteenth century that reflect the discontinuation of the practice of marrying girls at a young age and the emancipation of young Jews.³⁴ Both examples adhere to the Aeolian mode (defined in the Jewish tradition as the *Mogen-Avos*), with a few alterations of the third degree in the *bałegulski* song that may betray the influence of the Mixolydian mode (*Adonai Malakh*) or the minor mode.³⁵ It was the Aeolian mode, with the numerous alterations employed within it, that Abraham Cwi Idelsohn regarded, in light of his research, as one of the most typical of the Jewish musical tradition, given its widespread use in recitations of the books of the prophets from the Holy Scripture (hence Idelsohn defined it as the 'prophetic mode').³⁶ In the melodic writing of both songs, one easily notes the relatively frequent occurrence of repetitions of notes, and in the song 'Rebe rebe gaj' we can also distinguish characteristic motifs based on a tonic triad and intervallic leaps between the first and fifth degrees of the scale. These features of the melody point towards the influence of synagogal songs.³⁷ Both songs are in duple time, with

characteristic descending rhythmic figures ♪♪♪♪ or isorhythmic quaver and semiquaver passages, which also correspond to features characteristic of a large part of the Jewish repertoire recorded during a later period.



Ma noimer u ma na anse
 chel eng erzehle e neue mensse
 etz meint ich bin gekimmen auf getuwes
 iach bin Itzek fin di schlochsche uwes.

Example 3. Song 'Ma noimer' [My name], from Oskar Kolberg's *Góry i Podgórze* [Mountains and foothills]

Kolberg found the two other songs in Zakopane (published in the volume *Góry i Podgórze* [Mountains and foothills]. 'Ma noimer' and 'Och und meine schnelle lufem'³⁸ are both improvisational and metrically free, with a simple melody built on a tetratonic or hexatonic scale and organised isorhythmically. Specific to these two songs is the use mainly of scale degrees belonging to the tonic triad and their relatively frequent repetition, thanks to which these songs resemble the invocations of solemn ritual chants. From Agnieszka Jeż's research into the collections of Menachem Kipnis, we can identify these songs as feasting or satirical Hassidic chants, or more precisely anti-Hassidic parodies, as they refer jokingly in their lyrics to the informant named in the source, Izaak Engel, and the circle of his acquaintances – Zadek Awruhom and Scholia.³⁹

More Jewish tunes appear in the (probably instrumental) group of dances and melodies without lyrics. Among the most interesting here are melodies written down in Ruda Guzowska (now Żyrdów) during a Jewish wedding.⁴⁰ The nature of both dances seems best suited to violin fingering (as is indicated also by the ornaments used – mordents, trills and double stops). These dances display a similar musical form (abb'c), mode (Aeolian, or Aeolian with altered seventh degree), metre and rhythm (duple, with isorhythmic quaver and semiquaver passages and characteristic descending rhythmic figures). The melody is based on the tonic triad in the example marked with the number 259 and on repeated notes in example 260, which points to the influence of synagogal repertoire discussed above.⁴¹ Similar musical features (although with a raised sixth degree in its Aeolian mode) also appear in a 'Jewish dance' recorded in Guzów – a settlement several miles from Ruda Guzowska.⁴² That short distance makes it highly likely that this example could have been performed by the same Jewish violinist, who this time found himself outside the context of wedding celebrations.

38
 Kolberg, *Góry i Podgórze*. Część II, 351; <https://polona.pl/item/gory-i-podgorze-cz-2,MTQyNzQ1ODQ/368/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

39
 Jeż, 'Literacki i muzyczny obraz', 74, 84, 88–89.

40
 Kolberg, *Mazowsze*. Część VI, 161–162; <https://polona.pl/item/mazowsze-cz-6,MTQyNzQ1Nzc/239/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

41
 Jeż, 'Literacki i muzyczny obraz', 84.

42
 Kolberg, *Mazowsze*. Część VI, 294–295; <https://polona.pl/item/mazowsze-cz-6,MTQyNzQ1Nzc/376/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

Żydowskie wesele Guzów, Ruda

Example 4. Instrumental repertoire from a Jewish wedding in Ruda Guzowska from part 6 of Oskar Kolberg's *Mazowsze* [Mazovia]

Another repertorial group collected by Kolberg consists of examples described as 'Żyd' or 'Żydek' ('Jew', 'Little Jew').⁴³ The very name makes it highly likely that the performance of this repertoire was adopted by Christian musicians, although it was undoubtedly assimilated from Jewish musicians, as is also borne out by the features of Jewish music that characterise it, as described by Abraham Cwi Idelsohn:⁴⁴ a simple binary form, duple metre, isorhythmic rhythms and altering modes: Dorian (*Mi-Sheberah*), Phrygian (*frejgisz*, *Ahavah-Rabbah*) and Aeolian (*Mogen-Avos*). Besides this, the Lydian mode also appears, although that no doubt indicates the influence of the repertoire of Polish villagers. Apart from the features mentioned above, we can distinguish gestures taken from synagogal chants: intervallic leaps between the second and fifth degrees and octave leaps on the fifth degree of the scale.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, in the examples recorded in one Carpathian hamlet, we also note melodic and rhythmic phrases characteristic of the Carpathian environment and syncopated groupings associated with the Kraków region,⁴⁶ which shows that the musical repertoire of the Jewish community was susceptible to outside influence. In one case, Kolberg indicated that the written melody was essentially 'a dance in four, with bows'.⁴⁷ Grażyna Władysława Dąbrowska, in her lexicon of Polish dances, distinguished a whole repertorial group of this type, defining it thus:

43 Kolberg, *Sanockie-Krośnieńskie. Część II* [The Sanok-Krosno region. Part 2], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], I (Warsaw, Wrocław, Kraków: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1972), 406, 412–413; <https://polona.pl/item/sanockie-krosnienskie-cz-2,MTQyNzQ1OTY/444/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

44 Idelsohn, *Jewish Music*, 24, 35, 76, 397–398, 403.

45 Jeż, 'Literacki i muzyczny obraz', 84.

46 Kolberg, *Sanockie-Krośnieńskie*, 413.

47 *Ibidem*, 406.

[...] a dance sometimes adopted by the Polish population of small towns and some villages, in different parts of the country, from the Jewish population living in its midst. [...] Danced everywhere to similar music in two parts; in one part with bows; in the other, in a sort of lively polka, walk or run.⁴⁸

At this point, we should pay a little more attention to the performers of the dances described above: the musicians. During the first half of the nineteenth century, they used the same instruments as mentioned in the previous section,⁴⁹ Jewish musicians most often lining up with violin and bass, violin, bass and frame drum, or violin, bass and tsimbl.⁵⁰ A Jewish trio consisting of tsimbl, violin and frame drum was mentioned by Wasilij von Rotkirch in his account of the work of the theatre in Druskininkai c.1854.⁵¹ Over time, however, bands began to expand, with the addition of wind instruments, and tsimbls began to be either replaced by other instruments with similar qualities or eliminated altogether.⁵² By way of example, on a bas-relief from 1875, Cyprian Godebski depicted a Jewish band consisting of tsimbl, violin, flute, bass and clarinet. Describing Jewish bands of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, Marian Fuks mentions, alongside violin, double bass, drum and tsimbl, also lutes and trumpets, and he also emphasises the virtuosity of the players.⁵³

But Jewish bands do not exhaust the subject at hand. It should be remembered that the nineteenth century was the period of the *Haskalah* (Enlightenment), which also brought considerable changes in the awareness and situation of Jews in Polish lands. Among other things, that movement exerted a sort of social pressure, as a result of which many musicians – most often from families with klezmer traditions reaching back many generations – began to abandon functional music in favour of concert practice. Unfortunately, in Polish lands, the doors to concert halls and theatre orchestras opened rather gradually. Hence, on the one hand, successive generations of Jewish musicians entered the world of ‘serious’ music in stages; on the other, in connection with the growing social demand for new forms of entertainment, an intermediate phenomenon arose: dance bands, touring bands and spa bands comprising solely Jewish musicians.⁵⁴ That also affected klezmer bands: in many places, particularly in Galicia, they began to expand, at times attaining the size of

48

Grażyna Władysława Dąbrowska, *Taniec w polskiej tradycji. Leksykon* [Dance in the Polish tradition: a lexicon] (Warsaw: Muza – Polskie Towarzystwo Etnochoreologiczne, 2005/2006), 295–297.

49

Fuks, *Muzyka ocalona*, 30, 49.

50

Piotr Dahlig, ‘Jankiel – historia, poezja i codzienność’ [Jankiel: history, poetry and everyday life], *Muzykalia XIII/Judaica* 4, 2012, 6; http://demusica.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/dahlig_muzykalia_13_judaica_4_3.pdf, accessed 25 August 2020. See also Kolberg, *Mazowsze Leśne*, 112. A Galician Jewish band consisting of violin, bass and tsimbl was portrayed by Kajetan Wawrzyniec Kielisiński on a copperplate from 1832–1842 and by Wincenty Smokowski on his painting *Wesele żydowskie* [A Jewish wedding], from c.1840; http://cyfrowe.mnw.art.pl/dmuseion/docmetadata?id=4634&show_nav=true, accessed 25 August 2020. Kazimierz Żwan, on a lithograph entitled *Karczma* [An inn], from 1818, represented a band comprising tsimbl and bass; <https://polona.pl/item/karczma,OTEzNDM0NzA/O/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

51

Manuscript ‘Zapiski o Druskiennikach’ [Notes on Druskininkai]. Cf. Z. Jędrychowski, *Teatra grodzieńskie*, 284.

52

Kolberg, *Kujawy. Część II* [Kujawy: part 2] (Warsaw: Jan Jaworski, 1867), 209; <https://polona.pl/item/lud-jego-zwyczaj-jego-sposob-zycia-mowa-podania-przyslowia-obrzedy-gusla-zabawy,MTQ4OD-c2MDI/216/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

53

Fuks, *Żydzi w Warszawie – życie codzienne, wydarzenia, ludzie* [Jews in Warsaw: everyday life, events and people] (Poznań–Daszewice: Sorus, 1996), 49.

54

Halina Goldberg, ‘Przynależność przez muzykę: wkład Żydów w kształtowanie się muzycznej polskości’ [Belonging through music: the Jews’ contribution to shaping Polishness in music], in Wojciech Nowik (ed.), *Topos narodowy w muzyce polskiej okresu postromantyzmu i Młodej Polski* [The national topos in Polish music of the late Romantic and Young Poland period] (Warsaw: Uniwersytet Muzyczny Fryderyka Chopina, 2008), 194 (see also *Muzykalia XI / Judaica* 3 (2011); http://demusica.edu.pl/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/goldberg_muzykalia_11_judaica3.pdf, accessed 25 August 2020).

55

Józef W. Reiss, 'Polska muzyka taneczna XIX wieku' [Polish dance music of the nineteenth century], *Muzyka*, 1953/9–10, 33.

56

Wojciech Tomaszewski, *Między salonem a jarmarkiem* [Between the salon and the fair] (Warsaw: Biblioteka Narodowa, 2002), 237, 238.

57

Kurjer Warszawski, 9 June 1856, 827, see also *Kurjer Warszawski*, 23 February 1854, 261, *Kurjer Warszawski*, 9 March 1859, 330.

58

Wojciech Sowiński, *Słownik muzyków polskich dawnych i nowoczesnych, kompozytorów, wirtuozów, śpiewaków, instrumentalistów, lutnistów, organmistrzów, poetów lirycznych i miłośników sztuki muzycznej, zawierający krótki rys historii muzyki w Polsce, opisanie obrazów cudownych i dawnych instrumentów z muzyką i portretem autora* [Dictionary of Polish musicians past and present, composers, virtuosos, singers, instrumentalists, lutenists, organ builders, lyric poets and lovers of the art of music, including a brief outline of the history of music in Poland, a description of miraculous images and old instruments, with music and a portrait of the author] (Paris: W. Sowiński, 1874), 154–155; <https://polona.pl/item/slownik-muzykow-polskich-dawnych-i-nowoczesnych-zawierajacy-krotki-rys-historii-OTI4OTQx-OTc/219/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.



Figure 2. Franciszek Streitt, 'Wędrujący kwartet' [An itinerant quartet], *Kłosy*, 30 September 1875, Digital Library of the University of Łódź

chamber orchestras in the service of wealthy townsfolk and landed gentry. We know of some such bands from flattering accounts in the press, namely, the orchestras of the Aubers of Tarnów, the Wolfsthals of Tarnopol (from where they travelled for weddings and balls even to Lviv),⁵⁵ Judka Melodysta, Jontel of Międzyrzecz, Nusbaum of Łęczycza and the most famous ensemble of Siwek vel Chwat of Radom.⁵⁶ To get a better idea of the realities at that time, it is worth pointing out that this last group had the following line-up: 'two trumpets, one trombone, a piccolo and four trombas marina'.⁵⁷

The most spectacular phenomenon in the nineteenth-century musical culture of the Jews from the lands of the former Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania was the appearance of outstandingly gifted, self-taught virtuosos. First and foremost, we should mention here Samson Jakubowski of Kaunas (b. 1801), who in the 1820s invented the 'wooden harmonica' (a xylophone with blocks arranged in four rows on rolls of straw), on which he delighted audiences from St Petersburg and Königsberg to Paris (from 1832), and also in Germany, Denmark and Great Britain (he was praised by such figures as Cherubini, Rossini, Paganini, Paër and Auber). He composed and improvised fantasies, potpourris and polonaises. After a brief, dazzling stage career, however, he lost his popularity.⁵⁸

Greater fame was enjoyed by Michal Jozef Guzikov. This future xylophone player was born into a klezmer family on 2 September 1806 in Shklov, in the Mogilev region. His father, a professional flautist and drummer, initially taught Jozef to play the flute as well. They performed together as a duet in different towns in Russia. Soon, however, tuberculosis forced Jozef to change his instrument. In 1831 he constructed a 'wood and straw instrument', which was actually just an improved version of Jakubowski's xylophone. Jozef

Guzikov's modernisation involved a more ergonomic arrangement of the wooden bars on specially prepared rolls of stitched-together straw (hence the frequent references to a 'straw harmonica'). As a result, the instrument was more resonant, and figurations could be played more smoothly. In 1834 Guzikov performed in Moscow, Kyiv and Odessa, where he met Karol Lipiński. With the help of that outstanding violinist, he undertook a concert tour of Germany, Austria, Belgium and France, arousing enthusiasm with his fantasies on Polish themes, and transcriptions of operatic arias and concertos by Weber, Hummel and Paganini. Exhausted by his illness and the tour, he died on 21 October 1837 in Aachen.⁵⁹

Another virtuoso, albeit not on an international scale, was Mordko Fajerman, born in Kałuszyn in 1803 or 1810.⁶⁰ That is probably also where he learned to play the violin and 'tsimbl', through his own efforts and the imitation of the best musicians he knew, as he spoke about his own education: 'You had to hear the like of those I heard!'⁶¹ He played professionally on a glass idiophone of his own construction, which had 25 bars arranged in three rows, struck with cork beaters. Despite its different construction, Fajerman – like all those reporting on it – called this instrument, in keeping with the Old Polish tradition, a 'tsimbl'.⁶²

Thanks to the insightfulness and openness – exceptional in the nineteenth century – of Waclaw Szymanowski, we know quite a lot about Fajerman's aesthetic and technical preferences:

He loves his instrument more than anything; he makes his own pegs for it and repairs it when necessary. He does not think a great deal of the violin, although he plays it well, he looks down his nose at the piano, and he holds the barrel organ, be it of the most refined Italian construction, in the utmost contempt. There is no instrument for music, so he says, like the tsimbl. It encompasses everything and expresses everything. Fingers, however well trained, are always lacking the elasticity of cork; a bow disappoints, as it is long, and the strings are too close to each other; on the trumpet or the clarinet, you run out of breath and at the most annoying moment a shrill, rasping or overblown sound will ring out; only a beater always does what it should, meets the glass and produces just the right sound, according to the musician's will, according to the idea of the work.⁶³

In a great fire in Kałuszyn, in 1845, reported extensively in the press, Fajerman lost everything, and in the spring of 1850 he moved to Warsaw,⁶⁴ where he settled on Brzozowa

59

See *Old Jewish Folk Music: The Collections and Writings of Moshe Beregovski*, ed. Mark Slobin (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 536–537.

60

The date 1803 results from Waclaw Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista warszawski' [The last Warsaw tsimbalist], *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 407 (1867), 16; <https://polona.pl/item/tygodnik-illustrowany-t-16-nr-407-13-lipca-1867,N-zk5NDAYMw/3/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

Issue 36 of the Warsaw-based *Nowiny* in 1878 ('Wiadomości bieżące. Cymbalista' [Current news: a tsimbalist], 3, <https://polona.pl/item/nowiny-pismo-codzienne-1878-nr-36-5-sierpnia,ODUxNTGyMjI/2/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020) reported that Fajerman was aged 97, but that seems to be either a printing error or the fantasy of the editor or the musician himself. The date 1810, meanwhile, comes from Zygmunt Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska ilustrowana* [Illustrated encyclopaedia of Old Poland] (Warsaw: P. Laskauer – W. Babicki, 1900), i:256; <https://polona.pl/item/encyklopedja-staropolska-ilustrowana-t-1,MTExMTE2NjY/263/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020. See also 'Zygzacoony instrument muzyczny' [An obsolete musical instrument], *Biesiada Literacka*, 42 (1914), 277–278; <https://polona.pl/item/biesiada-literacka-pismo-literacko-polityczne-illustrowane-1914-t-76-nr-42-17,MjU5NDY5O-DI/14/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

61

Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista', 16.

62

Barbara Szydłowska-Ceglowa, *Staropolskie nazewnictwo instrumentów muzycznych* [The Old Polish nomenclature of musical instruments] (Wrocław: Ossolineum, 1977), 223.

63

Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista', 16.

64

Kurjer Warszawski, 28 June 1850, 886; <https://polona.pl/item/kurjer-warszawski-r-30-nr-166-28-czerwca-1850,MTkxNjQOM-DI/1/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.



Figure 3. Mordko Fajerman, *Tygodnik Ilustrowany*, 407 (1867), National Library in Warsaw, mf. 32460

Street.⁶⁵ Despite considerable competition, he attracted the attention of journalists already in his second month in Warsaw.⁶⁶ Aware that the practice of playing instruments like his was in decline, he did not consider his occupation to be very profitable so he did not train any pupils. He spoke about this in 1867:

the tsimbl is dying out, and the taste for it is dying out too. In any case, young people today prefer to trade and gaze at the zloty in their hand

65
Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista', 16.

66
Kurjer Warszawski, 1850/166, 886–887.

until it grows into a ruble. The tsimbl cannot accomplish that trick; one can barely make a living from it. So when I die, I don't even know if there is anyone else in Warsaw I could leave my instrument to and who would be able to play it.⁶⁷

Despite that, Mordko Fajerman kept not just himself and his wife from his playing, but five children as well.⁶⁸ His performances always followed a set order:

When he arrives at a courtyard somewhere, and children surround him, he puts a mallet in their hand with a smile and tells them to try, gladdened at their misfortunate efforts. Only when asked to show them how it is done does he launch into chromatic scales, trills and a whole labyrinth of passages that would seem impossible to play on the tsimbl; tones merge and succeed one another in such a way that they are hard to grasp, and yet it all forms a whole, and you won't find anything superfluous there. In Jankiel's fingers,⁶⁹ the beaters fly as if by magic, as if they had taken on wings. And curiously, although he is an old and seemingly frail man, as soon as he takes the beaters in his fingers and strikes the tsimbl, his movements display the assuredness and elasticity of youth; the old man is reborn and has become an artist – a self-assured, indefatigable artist.⁷⁰

Szymanowski's description is perhaps a uniquely detailed profile of the individual style of a courtyard klezmer of exceptional technical proficiency. What is more, we also owe to Szymanowski information about Fajerman's preferred repertoire and professional motivation, which shows us a man with a profound love of music and his art, and not just a journeyman anxious to get paid:

He also possesses a wide repertoire, but mostly of local pieces. In mazurs he is unparalleled, and he likes to play them best. [...] He has a couple of favourite pieces, which he does not play for money, but gives as an encore if he comes across a true devotee of his playing. For Jankiel is very sensitive to praise, which he prefers to money, although the latter he also appreciates a great deal.⁷¹

And let us recall here an important passage from the beginning of Szymanowski's article:

[...] when we say Jankiel, it is not because that was his actual name, but everyone calls him by that name, and the old man does not refute it. It seems that the fame of his poeticised protoplast has smiled upon him, and he boasts a likeness to the description, as he too has a long grey beard, a wrinkled forehead, and old-fashioned clothes.⁷²

The inevitable association with the literary figure of Jankiel (see n.70) undoubtedly contributed to Mordko Fajerman's huge

67
Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista', 16.

68
In 1878 a journalist with the Warsaw-based *Nowina* reported: 'He has two sons, one of whom plays the violin, the other the clarinet; but neither pursues the kind of music cultivated by his father'. 'Cymbalista' [A tsimbalist], *Nowiny*, 36 (1878), 3.

69
The figure of Jankiel comes from Adam Mickiewicz's epic poem *Pan Tadeusz*, in which he was depicted as a brilliant improviser, and also a wise Jew who genuinely loved Poland. In comparing Mordechaj Fajerman to Jankiel, the author also ascribed to him the attributes of the literary figure.

70
Szymanowski, 'Ostatni cymbalista', 16.

71
Ibidem.

72
Ibidem.

73

During the 1794 uprising against Russia, Tadeusz Kościuszko recruited peasants from the vicinity of Kraków, from whom he formed militia units. These units, although they did not play a decisive role in the uprising, which was lost anyway, began to be glorified in the second half of the nineteenth century, when there was a desire to mobilise the peasants to fight for Poland's independence. Movement elements symbolising the struggle of peasant troops in the Kościuszko Uprising were added to the *krakowiak*, also danced by the nobility. For example, a hand raised diagonally symbolised a battle scythe, and the galloping of dancers represented the peasants' assault on cannons.

74

'Cymbalista', 3.

75

Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska ilustrowana*, i:256.

76

Gazeta Warszawska, 3 October 1857, 3; <https://polona.pl/item/gazeta-warszawska-1857-nr-259-3-p-azdziernika,MTEyMj|OMT-M3/2/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

77

Korespondencja Fryderyka Chopina, tom I, 1816–1831 [Correspondence of Fryderyk Chopin, vol. 1: 1816–1831], ed. Zofia Helman, Zbigniew Skowron and Hanna Wróblewska-Straus (Warsaw: Wydawnictwa Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego, 2009), 386.

78

Gazeta Codzienna, 18 December 1858, 3; <https://polona.pl/item/gazeta-codzienna-1858-nr-335-18-grudnia,MjAXMzU4OTc/2/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

popularity in Warsaw. It would seem, moreover, that the tsimbalist himself – even late in life – felt a yearning for national myths and wrote himself into them quite ably. At a time when the myth of the brave Kościuszko's peasant soldiers from the countryside of Kraków⁷³ was increasingly popular and there was a need for elaborate new compositions adhering to *krakowiak* rhythms, and also for other dances of a peasant provenance, Fajerman also changed his repertoire, as reported by a journalist for *Nowiny* in August 1878:

A couple of days ago, in one of the gastronomical establishments, we heard... a concert by Jankiel. The old man, with his snowy-white hair, well known to the Warsaw public, is still in good health, and, on an instrument discarded by rather finicky musicians, he performs *krakowiaks*, *obertas* and *mazurs* with characteristic skill and feeling. Yet the speciality of this folk artist appears to be *krakowiaks*, the presentation of which on the *tsimbl* is marked by softness and fire.⁷⁴

Soon after, however, around 1880, due to old age or death, Mordko Fajerman disappeared from the streets of Warsaw,⁷⁵ although his legend is still rekindled every so often in Warsaw publications to this day.

Yet not all opinions about Jewish musicians were so flattering. Accounts from the provinces were generally dominated by a critical narrative: from delicate taunts to outright disapproval. For example, in 1857, from a concert in Łęczna, the journalist for the *Gazeta Warszawska*, preserving considerable moderation, reported:

in a large Jewish stable [...] instead of chairs, planks were arranged in the form of benches, and the four jews making up the orchestra (four others were paid off and went to play in the cafe) spared not their strings and lungs to satisfy the listeners [...].⁷⁶

On 18 December 1858, meanwhile, describing an inn located just 100 metres from the former barracks of General Piotr Szembek's 3rd Infantry Brigade, where three decades earlier Fryderyk Chopin heard Szembek's excellent military musicians give a marvellous performance,⁷⁷ the editor of the *Gazeta Codzienna* wrote:

Music mania has arrived in Sochaczew; it is represented by émigrés from the Skierniewice pleasure gardens of Egyptian-Israelite origins [...]: a young *szejgjec*, or *primo violino*, a juvenile *Judel*, or *violino secondo*, and a *szpektor* with guitar, or *basso et canto*. Anyone wishing to take a loathing to music should make their way to the tavern in Sochaczew, where in the foreground they will see a tap-room with suitable society, in another room the above-described musical trio, and in a third, through thick clouds of smoke, will espy a billiard table and amateurs with their cues walking around it.⁷⁸

Jews and their musical culture in the perceptions of Polish society during the nineteenth century

In the last part of this article, I wish to look at how Jews and their musical culture were perceived by Polish nobility, townsfolk and peasantry. This will allow us to complete the picture of the musical relations between the two ethnic communities during the nineteenth century.

To begin with, we should turn our attention to the *mayufes*. Although this term comes from the incipit of the Hebrew Sabbath song (*zemer*) 'Mah yofis', in Polish culture, from the eighteenth century, it was associated with a dance performed by the Jews to entertain the nobility and landed gentry.⁷⁹ Over time, however, it seems that increasingly lowly social groups demanded a *mayufes* from representatives of Jewish communities, as documented in nineteenth-century plays, novels, dictionaries and periodicals.⁸⁰ Interesting in this context are Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki's recollections of the 14-year-old Fryderyk Chopin playing a *mayufes* in front of Jewish grain merchants, who 'skipped around joyfully and danced', 'because he played, he played like a born Jew'.⁸¹ This dance was also presented on theatre and ballet stages up to the inter-war years as a kind of caricature: a soloist would play indeterminate twists, leaps and so on at a rapid tempo. By the 1920s, however, its rather unsophisticated dance form and, above all, caricatural character were found to be rather distasteful, as expressed by Stanisław Dzikowski:

Admiring today the dance displays of the Warsaw ballet and its highly talented performers, alas one cannot help but sense that it is rather mannered, the form ossified and all inventiveness lacking. [...] For a number of years now, we have been watching the same krakowiak, the same oberek and mazurka, and the same hopping about of a jovial Jew with his Rebecca and their little brats.⁸²

It is not surprising, therefore, that from the perspective of Jewish culture, this dance – often performed under duress – was treated as a manifestation of the domination of Polish landowners over the agents that served them, and the term *mayufesnik* or *mayufes-yid*, for more than a hundred years, has denoted someone who adopts a servile attitude towards people of superior standing or hides his Jewish roots.⁸³

With regard to the educated nobility and townsfolk, or 'intelligentsia', it should be stressed that up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century they all but failed to notice musical personalities among Polish peasants, who generally combined their musical practice with work on the fields, which inevitably had a negative impact on their technical prowess. Meanwhile, Jewish musicians, who for a very long time were legally barred from many possibilities

79
Chone Shmeruk, 'Mayufes – A Window on Polish-Jewish Relations', in Gershon David Hundert (ed.), *Polin: Studies in Polish Jewry*, x: *Jews in Early Modern Poland* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), 273–275.

80
Ibidem, 276–288.

81
Kazimierz W. Wójcicki, *Cmentarz Powązkowski pod Warszawą T.2* [Powązki Cemetery near Warsaw, vol. 2] (Warsaw: S. Orgelbrand, 1856), 16.

82
Stanisław Dzikowski, *O tańcu. Rozważania kulturalno-obyczajowe* [On dance: considerations relating to culture and customs] (Warsaw: Księgarnia Biblioteki Dzieł Wyborowych, 1925), 9.

83
Chone Shmeruk, 'Mayufes – A Window on Polish-Jewish Relations', 280–285.

of earning a living that were available to the native communities and were thereby forced to specialise in a chosen profession, sometimes attained enormous musical proficiency. Their virtuosity attracted many observers, who were moved to break through the barrier of anonymity, as the editor of the *Kurier Warszawski* noted with surprise when observing the playing of Mordko Fajerman:

It seems, on the surface, that such a thing should not even attract our attention; meanwhile, seeing and hearing this unique new artist, we are obliged to say otherwise. *Twenty-five* glass bars in three layers and two cork mallets constitute the entire mechanism of this instrument, from which *Mordka*, producing harmonious and graceful tones with incredible skill, unwittingly makes us say about ourselves that rarely can we encounter such *mordkas*.⁸⁴

As we can see, amazement at the musician's technical proficiency did not stop Karol Kucz from making an unrefined joke at the end of his account, punning on the name Mordko and the Polish word *mordka*, meaning 'little face', especially that of an animal. Yet drawing attention to Fajerman's outstanding personality – albeit involuntarily – became a fact. Around the same time, a new generation of educated people was gradually reaching maturity, one that was characterised by more democratic views and a respect for the Jews and their musical culture, adopted with the myth of Jankiel from Mickiewicz's *Pan Tadeusz*. Consequently, one is not surprised by the account cited below:

When I was a pupil of Leszczyński's boarding school, around 1860, and 'Jankiel' came to Świętojska Street [where the school was located], we invited him to our dormitory and there, sometimes for a whole hour, he aroused in us a youthful enthusiasm for playing such as no courtyard had ever heard.⁸⁵

Though preceded by the figure of Mosiek from comedy operas by Ludwik Adam Dmuszewski and Alojzy Żółkowski, an important role was played by the Jankiel myth itself.⁸⁶ It attracted a rich literature,⁸⁷ which it is impossible to summarise in this text. It is worth emphasising, however, that in the second half of the nineteenth century, any pretext sufficed to automatically superimpose the literary model of Jankiel and his playing onto phenomena actually occurring in everyday life. The example of Mordko Fajerman is most evocative in this respect.

In the dance-musical practice of Christian inhabitants of Poland–Lithuania, one striking phenomenon was the extremely frequent association of nineteenth-century European dances (such as the polka, *écossaise* and *schottish*), or the texts ascribed to them, with Jewish themes. It seems likely that a common pretext for such associations was the duple metre and rhythm itself, and sometimes

84
Kurier Warszawski,
1850/166, 886–887.

85
Gloger, *Encyklopedia
staropolska ilustrowana*,
i:256.

86
Cf. Chaim Löw,
'Rodowód Jankiela.
W stulecie „Pana Tade-
usza” [Jankiel's lineage:
on the centenary of *Pan
Tadeusz*], *Miesięcznik Ży-
dowski*, May 1934, 385–
401, at 394–398; [https://
polona.pl/item/miesiecz-
nik-zydowski-r-4-t-1-
z-5-maj-1934,NDkwN-
zY2MTE/11/#info:meta-
data](https://polona.pl/item/miesiecznik-zydowski-r-4-t-1-z-5-maj-1934,NDkwN-zY2MTE/11/#info:meta-data) (cf. also *Muzykalia
XI / Judaica 3*; [http://
demusica.edu.pl/
muzykalia-xi-judaica-3/](http://demusica.edu.pl/muzykalia-xi-judaica-3/),
accessed 25 August
2020).

87
Stanisław Rossowski,
„*Pan Tadeusz*”: rozbiór
szczegółowy [*Pan Tade-
usz*, a detailed analysis]
(Lviv: K. S. Jakubowski,
1929), 530, Stanisław
Zetowski, 'Koncert
Jankiela w świetle pojęć
muzycznych' [A concert
by Jankiel in musical
terms], *Muzyka*, 1931/10,
395–401; C. Löw, 'Ro-
dowód Jankiela'; Gold-
berg, 'Przynależność
przez muzykę', 187–205;
Dahlig, 'Jankiel', 6.

also the characteristic melody (such as different variants of the Aeolian mode). But composers also readily turned to Jewish subjects, including Henryk Chojnacki (1817–1894), in his polka *Fajęte-Bajęte*.⁸⁸ Many more works of this sort later appeared, and a kind of contemporary monument to such creative output is the unwaning popularity among folk musicians of the *Polka szabasówka* (*Shabbat polka*), composed by Hipolit Brzeziński.⁸⁹ It is difficult to shake the conviction that references to Jewish folklore in Polish output represented a fascination with the only locally available eastern exoticism.

Also linked to dance folklore are rarely described games known as ‘playing the Jew’. Kolberg himself describes such a game three times, classifying it as ‘urban’ and quoting a detailed description from the Greater Poland region.⁹⁰ It was a kind of parlour guessing game, with forfeits, during which a specific tune was hummed or – as with variants of the game from Maków Mazowiecki and Bodzanów – a suitable song was sung.⁹¹ That repertoire does not appear to display any strong links to Jewish culture; the melodic variant from Maków is in triple time with a choriambic rhythm, and only the pentachord scale retains some similarity to the Aeolian mode. Equally far removed from the presented records of Jewish music is the pentatonic example from Bodzanów. The Greater Poland melodic variant, meanwhile, brings to mind the *klapok* from Łowicz or the *owczarek* from Silesia, and through them may be associated with a whole family of dances including the Mazovian *klepany* and *klapok* and also the *klaskany* from Greater Poland and Silesia.⁹² Yet this question assumes a different hue when we cite the opinion of Zygmunt Gloger, who asserts that these are old Polish dances, remnants of which – ‘as [Łukasz] Gołębiowski maintains – may have been preserved in the dance of Jewish women at weddings [the so-called *patsh* or *pleskn*’].⁹⁴ So it is highly likely that dance and parlour amusements such as ‘Jew’, ‘Jewess’ or ‘playing the Jew’ and dances such as the *klepany*, *klapok* and *klaskany* formed a link between the dance culture of Polish Jews and Poles inhabiting different regions, from Silesia to the north-eastern extremes of Mazovia.

It is unlikely, however, that models were taken from Jewish music in all cases of repertoire referring to that culture. One example here might be the ‘Zelman game’, with the following text:

Jedzie, jedzie pan Zylman,	Mr Zylman’s coming, coming,
jedzie, jedzie jego brat,	his brother’s coming, coming,
jedzie, jedzie cała	Zylman’s family
Zylmanowa rodzina... ⁹⁵	they’re all coming, coming...

88
Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część I*, 87–88; <https://polona.pl/item/mazowsze-cz-1,MTQyNjk3MzQ/110/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

89
Hipolit Brzeziński, *Szabasówka: polka*, [c.1925]; <https://polona.pl/item-view/25c24cf1-cd7e-48ed-8fb5-2a0bbf278e93?page=1>, accessed 25 June 2023, cf. *Zbiory Fonograficzne IS PAN*, shelf-marks: T1584/08, T2670/01, T2838/15, T2949/08, T3181/08, T3308/11, T3340/03, T3340/05, T3343/16, T3347/09, T3349/19, T3370/01, T3552/08, T3803/10, T4601/10.

90
Oskar Kolberg, *Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie. Część I* [The Grand Duchy of Posen [Poznań]: part 1], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], ix (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1963), 261; <https://polona.pl/item/w-ks-poznanski-cz-1,MTQyNjk2Nzg/282/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

91
Oskar Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część IV* [Mazovia: part 4], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xxvii (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964), 346–347.

92
Dąbrowska, *Taniec w polskiej tradycji*, 78–80.

93
See Yale Strom, *The Book of Klezmer*, 64.

94
Gloger, *Encyklopedia staropolska ilustrowana*, iii:31; <https://polona.pl/item/encyklopedia-staropolska-ilustrowana-t-3-k-p,MTQzNzg/36/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

95
Oskar Kolberg, *Kaliskie i Sieradzkie* [The Kalisz and Sieradz regions], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xlvii (Wrocław, Kraków: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1967), 541; <https://polona.pl/item/kaliskie-i-sieradzkie,MTQyNzQ1ODU/574/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

agents¹⁰²) most often pursued by Jews, a group with a specific professional and social standing,¹⁰³ with the occasional use of words and interjections imitating distinctive verbal utterances of Polish Jews or asemantic syllable clusters from Hassidic songs – *nigunim*, e.g.:

Był tu Mosiek na harędzie miał dziateczki parę
Ciorke stare, babkę stare i poćwiwe Sarę.
Aj waj bim bim bum, i poćwiwę Sarę,
Bim bam bum bum, bum bum, bum bum.¹⁰⁴

Mosiek called here at the tavern with a few young children
An elder daughter, aging grannie and the good old Sara.
Oy vey bim bim boom, and the gold old Sara,
Bim bam boom boom, boom boom, boom boom.

Among the more frequent are humorous texts representing stereotypical images of a poor Jew plagued by various misfortunes, with calls or interjections of the character – according to traditional folk notions – of a Hassidic lament,¹⁰⁵ e.g.

Był-ci ja go zydek bardzo ubogi
Miałem-ci go towar bardzo pziedrogi
Aj waj simmichaj, cindzi lindzi bom bom bom.
Com go naskupował – złodziej go zrabował, aj waj prec zabrał:
Igły pozłacane – Boze mój kochany – srebne nozycki
Aj waj simmichaj, cindzi lindzi bom bom bom.¹⁰⁶

I was a very poor little Jew,
I had very costly wares
Oy vey simmichey, chinji linji bom bom bom.
Every time I bought them, a robber would then steal them, oy vey:
Gilded needles – o good Lord – and little silver scissors
Oy vey simmichey, chinji linji bom bom bom.

Extremely common are songs and ditties expressing disapproval of or even hostility toward the customs, rituals and religion of the Jewish community,¹⁰⁷ which – according to Aleksander Hertz – was typical behaviour among the community with regard to the activities of a merchant during the pre-capitalist era,¹⁰⁸ e.g.

Chytry, pyszny lud nastanie,	A sly and bumptious people's coming,
Chytry pyszny zazdrośliwy I cudzego dobra chciwy.	Sly and bumptious, envious And covetous of others' goods.
Oszukaństwem i lichwami, Zrównają się ze żydami. ¹⁰⁹	With deceit and usury, They'll be a match for jews.

102
Kolberg, *Kujawy*, 233–234. Cf. also the ZF IS PAN collection, shelf-mark T1458/15; Jan Piotr Dekowski and Zbigniew Hauke, *Folklor Ziemi Łęczyckiej* [Folklore of the Łęczyca region] (Warsaw: Centralny Ośrodek Metodyki Upowszechniania Kultury, 1981), 199.

103
Aleksander Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej* [Jews in Polish culture] (Paris: Instytut Literacki, 1961), 445.

104
Kolberg, *Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie. Część V*, 172; <https://polona.pl/item/w-ks-poznansk-ic-z-5,MTQyNjk2OTg/195/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020. Cf. also e.g. ZF IS PAN, shelf-mark T1112/33, T1464/26a.

105
Oskar Kolberg, *Sandomierskie* [The Sandomierz region], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], ii (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1962), 208; Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część IV*, 346–347; Oskar Kolberg, *Mazury Pruskie* [Prussian Masuria], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xl (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1966), 448. Cf. also ZF IS PAN, shelf-mark T0619/14.

106
Oskar Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II* [The Kraków region: part 2], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works] (Wrocław, Kraków: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 223; <https://polona.pl/item/krakowskie-cz-2,MTQyNjk2NTk/248/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020. Cf. also Kolberg, *Sanockie-Krośnieńskie. Część II*, 293.

107
Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II*, 224; O. Kolberg, *Góry i Podgórze. Część II*, 130; Dekowski and Hauke, *Folklor Ziemi Łęczyckiej*, 196–198; ZF IS PAN, shelf-mark T0826/19a i b.

108
Hertz, *Żydzi w kulturze polskiej*, 62.

109

Oskar Kolberg, *Kieleckie. Część II* [The Kielce region: part 2], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xix (Wrocław, Kraków: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1963), 142; <https://polona.pl/item/kieleckie-cz-2.MTQyNjk3MjI/155/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

110

Kolberg, *Mazury Pruskie*, 448–449.

111

Kolberg, *Sanockie-Krośnieńskie. Część II*, 321; <https://polona.pl/item/sanockie-krosnieniskie-cz-2.MTQyNzQ1O-TY/349/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

112

Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II*, 223–224; O. Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część V*, 315.

113

Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II*, 222–223, 225, 525–526; O. Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część V*, 313–315.

114

See Nowak, 'Wątki żydowskie', 233–235.

115

Mychajło Hruszewski, 'Spiwannyk z początku XVIII w.' [A songbook from the beginning of the eighteenth century], *Zapysky Naukogo Tovaristva im. Shevchenka*, 1 (1897), 4, 13–16.

116

Iwan Franko, 'Wojna Żydowska' [The Jewish war], *Wisła*, 1892/2, 263–278; <https://polona.pl/item/wisla-miesiecznik-geograficzno-etnograficzny-t-6-1892-z-2.OTAY-OTQ5NQ4/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020. The Schildbürgers, inhabitants of the fictional town of Schild, are the protagonists of many humorous tales that began to appear in various publications at the end of the sixteenth century.

117

Entries nos. 359 and 360 from Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część V*, 315; entry no. 424 from Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II*, 222.

And some songs contain negative opinions regarding the Jewish faith, revealing the ignorance and prejudices of the people cultivating this type of repertoire:¹¹⁰

Żydowski Pan Jezus	The Jewish Lord Jesus
W czerwonych porteczkach,	In little red britches,
Roku mu nie było,	Before he was one,
Skakał po dziweczkach. ¹¹¹	He was jumping on bitches.

Most frequent of all, however, is a motif mocking the incapacity for military service of Jews recruited for the army,¹¹² as well as the Jews' inability to create their own armed forces.¹¹³ The characteristics ridiculed are their equipment, lack of skill with weapons, poor discipline and organisation, cowardice and raising simple actions to the rank of heroic deeds, which constituted the stereotypical image of Jews in the eyes of Polish society. The lyrics of the oldest extant songs of this type enable us to situate them within the social-historical realities of the Commonwealth of Poland–Lithuania between the sixteenth and early nineteenth century,¹¹⁴ although the earliest noted text dates from 1718.¹¹⁵ Iwan Franko, researching this repertoire, indicated that motifs of this type appeared in Poland under the sway of sixteenth-century German tales about seven Schwabs or Schildbürgers and continued until the early twentieth century.¹¹⁶ In terms of the music, this repertoire should be linked to Polish musical culture, although one clearly notes the stylisation – or perhaps even the quoting of motifs – of Jewish music in the metres, rhythms and melodies of some examples.¹¹⁷

Jewish themes are very often present in Christmas carols and Passion plays. In Christmas and carnival shows, and also in the lyrics of Easter songs,¹¹⁸ the presence of a Jew is even the rule: Jews, although cursed and condemned to everlasting contempt, were nevertheless living testimony to the veracity of the Gospels.¹¹⁹ In pastoral works, a Jew usually banter with a peasant¹²⁰ or a shepherd,¹²¹ or else he sings a short solo song and dances,¹²² which in the context of Christmas rites – as in the case of carnival customs¹²³ – represents an augury of fertility and abundance. Besides this, in paratheatrical representations, a Jew is an outsider, and in the culture of Polish peasants, an outsider always brings good fortune. In all these instances, we are dealing with musical, albeit satirical, references to Jewish culture. They are best illustrated by the bantering: whereas the peasant (or shepherd) employs mazurka repertoire, the Jew sings his lines to a tune in a duple metre that is based on leaps between the first and fifth degrees, or else on the tonic triad. This is a reference to features of synagogal chants.¹²⁴ In the other examples, we may suspect the direct

quoting of the melodies of Jewish dances¹²⁵ – as is indicated by tonal, melodic and metric-rhythmic features – or looser references in metres and rhythms.

Summary

As we can see from the above examples, the image of the Jew in Polish lands during the nineteenth century differed a great deal between social strata. The virtuosity of Jewish musicians that accompanied the process of professionalisation aroused the interest and admiration of the Polish intelligentsia to a much greater degree than in the case of peasant musicians. That was due partly to the Mickiewiczian myth of Jankiel, and also to the process of democratisation among successive generations of the Polish nobility over the course of the nineteenth century. We must also remember that for the Polish intelligentsia, Jewish culture represented the most accessible way of satisfying the need for contact with the Orient.

In contrast to the stance of the nobility, the attitude towards Jews and their musical culture manifested by the peasantry was different and more complex. Lower social strata, when taking up Jewish motifs in their own musical expression, quite often reacted to conflicts of interest experienced in their contacts with Jews. Their songs often employed devices of a satirical, mocking, and even chauvinistic character, which, at least in some instances, display a foreign provenance (German songs about seven Schwabs or Schildbürgers mentioned above), dating from the period of the greatest influx of Jews into Polish lands. But the existence and presence of Jews also attested to the veracity of events constituting the foundation of the Christian faith. Jews could stand as important ritual symbols that brought prosperity, although often, together with elements of their environment and culture, they provided merely a pretext for social amusement.

References to Jewish culture in the musical expression of the Polish community were generally confined to the most widespread stereotypes, which attests to the superficial character of contacts between the two communities. Within that context, the idiom of Jewish music was much better understood, and when the need arose, it was imitated or even closely copied. This resulted from the fact that Jewish musicians – within the society to which they ethnically belonged – formed the group that during the nineteenth century most often and most intensely maintained contacts above all with the peasantry and townsfolk, but also with the Polish landed gentry. Those relations were reinforced by at least a two-hundred-year tradition of mutual musical contacts, during which Jewish usualists were admitted

118
Oskar Kolberg, *Kaliskie* [The Kalisz region], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xxiii (Wrocław, Kraków: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964), 79; <https://polona.pl/item/kaliskie,MTQyNjk3MzE/92/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

119
cf. *Cała, Wizerunek Żyda*, 15.

120
cf. Oskar Kolberg, *Radomskie. Część I* [The Radom region: part 1], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], xx (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1964), 83–85. Cf. also e.g. ZF IS PAN, shelf-marks T2164/15, T3249/09k, T3631/21.

121
cf. Oskar Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część I* [The Kraków region: part 1], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], v (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1962), 212.

122
cf. *ibidem*, 204, 213, 360; O. Kolberg, *Mazowsze. Część I*, 86–88.

123
cf. Oskar Kolberg, *Kujawy. Część I* [Kujawy: part 1], in *Dzieła wszystkie* [Complete works], iii (Wrocław, Kraków, Warsaw: PWM – Ludowa Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza, 1962), 210; Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część II*, 87; Kolberg, *Wielkie Księstwo Poznańskie. Część I*, 126–128. Cf. also examples from ZF IS PAN, shelf-marks T1137/24 (Ligota Katowicka, Katowice county), T1469/13 (Mnichów, Sieradz county Sieradz).

124
cf. Jeż, 'Literacki i muzyczny obraz', 84.

125
cf. Kolberg, *Krakowskie. Część I*, 213; 'the so-called Hussita (Hassidim)' – see *ibidem*, 87; <https://polona.pl/item/mazowsze-cz-1,MTQyNjk3MzE/110/#info:metadata>, accessed 25 August 2020.

not just into the salons of wealthy townsfolk, but also into the apartments of the nobility and crowned heads of state, as well as to church choirs, much to the surprise of nineteenth-century authors. The present sketch represents an attempt to provide a broader outline of the mutual relations between the two communities, which requires further research on many levels. Without that research, it will be impossible to understand many of the mechanisms and phenomena of both Polish musical culture and also the musical culture of Polish Jews.

ABSTRACT

Enduring contacts between Polish and Jewish communities on Polish soil began to take shape around the turn of the thirteenth century, initiating a period of many centuries of mutual cultural and musical influence. Extant sources, although few and far between (normative documents, chronicles, journalistic accounts, commentaries from observers and scholars, iconography, sheet music, recorded music and films), enable us to follow the development of the mutual musical relations between the two national groups over time. Yet this article concentrates primarily on the state of those relations during the nineteenth century, limited to popular culture. Taking the works of Oskar Kolberg as an example, we will discuss the repertoire of the Jewish community at that time, as perceived and received by the Polish community. This will be followed by a presentation of Jewish music groups that played for Poles as well, and also of particularly popular Jewish musicians who were singled out by journalists at that time. The article also presents the way in which Jews and their musical culture were depicted by Polish journalists and portrayed in the musical expression of representatives of rural and urban communities.

The article shows that the image of Jews and their musical culture among different strata of Polish society during the nineteenth century varied a great deal. The virtuosity of Jewish musicians aroused interest and admiration among the Polish intelligentsia and acquired a mythologised personification in the literary figure of Jankiel. Lower social strata, when taking up Jewish strands in their musical expression, were often reacting to conflicts of interest experienced in their contacts with Jews representing a pre-capitalist economy. Jews in ritual and everyday situations constituted important ritual symbols bringing in wealth, and their very presence in theatrical forms was perceived partly as evidence of the veracity of biblical events. References to Jewish culture in the musical expression of the Polish community were confined to the most common stereotypes, which attests to the superficiality of the contacts between the two communities. Against that background, the actual idiom of Jewish music was far better understood, imitated and copied.

KEYWORDS

Jewish folk music, Jewish musicians, klezmers, musical instruments, Polish folk music, songs about Jews, stereotypes, myths, phantasms

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