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## Two Karaite books published in Warsaw in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries

**Abstract:** Warsaw was not a major centre for Karaite religious and cultural life. From the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Karaites had settled there sporadically, mainly as tobacco and cigarette merchants. Despite this, two Karaite books were published in the city. In 1889, Ilia I. Kazas (1832–1912), a well-known social and educational activist from Yevpatoria, published *Torat ha-adam* at the Alexander Gins’ press. This was his Hebrew translation of selections from *Éléments de morale* by the French philosopher Paul Janet. In 1904, *Davar davur*, a collection of folk tales, proverbs, and occasional works compiled by the Karaite clergyman Samuel, son of Shemariah Pigit (1849–1911) from Yekaterinoslav, was printed at the press of the Hebrew-language Jewish newspaper “Ha-Tsfira”.

These two publications reflect two different visions for the intellectual development of the Karaite community.

**Keywords:** Karaites in Warsaw, Karaite printing, Karaite education, I.I. Kazas, S. Pigit, Alexander Gins press, “Ha-Tsfira” press

**Słowa kluczowe:** Karaimi w Warszawie, druki karaimskie, szkolnictwo karaimskie, I.I. Kazas, S. Pigit, oficyna Aleksandra Ginsa, drukarnia „Ha-Cefiry”

“Choć posiadają oni drukowane książki i własne prasy drukarskie, Karaimi nawet w późniejszych wiekach, prawie do czasów współczesnych korzystali z rękopiśmiennych woluminów, zwłaszcza modlitewników i zbiorów poezji synagogalnej” [Although they have printed books and their own printing presses, the Karaites even in later centuries, almost until modern times, used manuscript volumes, especially prayer books and collections of synagogue poetry], noted Samuel Poznański in 1917, attributing this to the conservatism of this confessional-ethnic community<sup>1</sup> and their fear of modernity.<sup>2</sup> The vitality of the manuscript book among Karaites was also pointed out by Józef Sulimowicz, a turkologist, bibliophile and collector of caraimica, seeing the reasons for this phenomenon in the limited list of titles, the difficult availability and the high price of prints, which given the widespread literacy, did not meet the needs of the Karaite community.<sup>3</sup>

The oldest Karaite print is the four-volume prayer book *Seder ha-tefilot le-minhag kehal ha-ḳara'im*,<sup>4</sup> published in 1528/1529 in Venice by Cornelius Adelkind in the printing house of Daniel Bomberg, the first non-Jewish printer of Hebrew writings.<sup>5</sup> Its publication was initiated by a merchant from Constantinople, Yosef ben Moshe Rabizi.<sup>6</sup> This prayer book remained in use, as confirmed by copies in the collection of J. Sulimowicz, as late as the 19<sup>th</sup> century

1 Karaites are adherents of a religion based on the Old Testament, while at the same time being an ethnic group originating from Crimea and speaking a language belonging to the Kipchat branch of the Turkic languages. Their extremely small community (less than 500 people) has lived in Lithuania and Poland since the end of the 14th century. The upper case spelling is used for Karaites who identify themselves as an ethnic group, while the lower case spelling is used for other Karaites (e.g. from Egypt) living in Eastern Europe.

2 S. Poznański, *Karäische Drucke und Druckereien*, “Zeitschrift für Hebräische Bibliographie” (hereafter ZfBH), 1918, B. 21, H. 1–3, pp. 32–33.

3 J. Sulimowicz, *Mistar i halicko-karaimskie surały*, „Roczniki Biblioteczne” 1969, Vol. 12, No. 1–4, p. 41.

4 This is the title given by Poznański and by Walfish and Kizilov, see S. Poznański, *Karäische Drucke...*, p. 33; B. D. Walfish, M. Kizilov, *Bibliographia Karaitica: an annotated bibliography of Karaites and Karaism*, Leiden 2011, p. 452. Jankowski, on the other hand, in a slightly different formulation: *Seder ha-tefilot le-minhag kehal ḳara'im*, see H. Jankowski, *Literatura krymskokaraimska*, „Przegląd Orientalistyczny” 2011, No. 1–2, p. 52, referring, however, in a footnote to the form given by Poznański.

The article uses transliteration of the Hebrew according to the Library of Congress, <https://centrum.nukat.edu.pl/pl/warsztat/transliteracja>.

5 A native of Antwerp but active in Venice, Bomberg was also the first printer of the Babylonian and Jerusalem Talmud and the Rabbinic Bible. See M. Bendowska, J. Doktor, *Świat ukryty w księgach. Stare druki hebrajskie ze zbiorów Żydowskiego Instytutu Historycznego*, Warszawa 2011, p. 21.

6 This form of the nickname is given by Poznański (*Karäische Drucke...*, p. 33) alongside Ra-chizi after Fürst (see J. Fürst, *Geschichte der Karäerthums*, Leipzig 1869, p. 23). Mann, on the other hand, reads it as Revitzi (see J. Mann, *Texts and Studies in Jewish History and Literature*. Vol. II. *Karaitica*. New York 1972, p. 297 note 8).

in Halych. The second printing in order, *Aderet Eliyahu*, a codex of religious regulations by the 15<sup>th</sup>-century scholar Eliyahu ben Moshe Bashiachi, was published in Constantinople in 1530/1531 in the printing house of Gershom ben Moshe Soncino of the famous family of Jewish printers. In the 16<sup>th</sup> century, two other Karaite prints in unidentified Jewish printing houses came out in the capital of the Ottoman Empire, and only one in the following century, published in Amsterdam in the printing house of Manasses ben Israel.<sup>7</sup>

The Karaite printing house to which Poznański refers was begun in 1733. At that time, in Constantinople, the brothers Afeda and Shabbetai Yeraka, acting at the behest of the spiritual leader of the Crimean Karaites, Isaac Çelebi, published the initial parts of the prayer book *Seder ha-Tefilot le-minhag kehal ha-ğara'im*,<sup>8</sup> and then moved to the Crimea, where, in Kale near Bakhchiserai, in collaboration with Menachem Chadik Yerushalmi and Eliyahu Yerushalmi, they launched the first printing press on the Crimean peninsula.<sup>9</sup> Three volumes came out from its press: *Meğabets nidhei Yiśrael*, a collection of *haftarot* texts and prayers and blessings (1734), a complete edition of the aforementioned prayer book (1737), and a collection of blessings (1741). After the last item was published, the printing house ceased operations.<sup>10</sup>

Karaite printing activity did not resume until the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and in Kale,<sup>11</sup> four titles were published between 1804 and 1806, including a revised version of the 1737 prayer book. This was a joint venture of the Karaite communities in Kale, Gözlewe (Yevpatoria) and Kaffa (Feodosia), and the printing press, as stated in the introduction to the new edition of the prayer book, was imported from Poland.<sup>12</sup> This venture, like the previous one, was also abandoned for unknown reasons.

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7 B.D. Walfish, *Karaite Press and Printing* [in:] *Karaite Judaism: A Guide to its History and Literary Sources*, ed. M. Polliack, Leiden 2003, p. 934.

8 S. Poznański *Karäische Drucke...*, op. cit., p. 38; B. D. Walfish, op. cit., pp. 925–926.

9 Szapszał reports that the printing house served not only Karaites – in 1734 a comprehensive prayer book for the Crimeans was to be published there on the order of the Jew Moses Kokoz, see S. Szapszał, *Słów kilka o książkach karaïmskich Czelebi i ich działalności oświatowej. Na 200-lecie ukazania się na Krymie pierwszej książki drukowanej*, „Myśl Karaïmska” 1936, Vol. 11, No. 11 (1935–1936), p. 11.

10 B. D. Walfish, *Karaite Press...*, op. cit., p. 926.

11 Szapszał treats this printing house, as well as the next one, established in Yevpatoria, as an uninterrupted continuation of the activity of the first one (S. Szapszał, *Słów kilka...*, op. cit., p. 10), but the long time gaps separating them indicate that they were separate initiatives. This is confirmed by the information on the title page of the prayer book published in Kale in 1804/1805 that it was printed ‘w nowej drukarni Synów Prawa [=Karaïmów]’ [in the new printing house of the Sons of the Law [=Karaïm]].

12 B. Walfish, *Karaite Press...*, op. cit., p. 926.

Another publishing initiative took place almost thirty years later, in 1833, in Gözlewe (Eupatoria).<sup>13</sup> This printing house was the longest-established and boasted the largest output, with nearly 30 books, pamphlets and leaflets coming off its press, including such important items as the 1841 translation of the Tanakh into Karaite (Eastern Karaite) or the already mentioned collection of laws by Eliahu Bashiachi *Aderet Eliyahu* (1834), as well as another edition of a prayer book (1836). This printing house ceased operations around 1867.<sup>14</sup>

Later, Karaite publications were already printed in non-Karaite, mainly Jewish printing houses.<sup>15</sup> Between 1868 and 1914, more than 80 items were published in print in Hebrew fonts. Offices from whose presses more than one Karaite printing came out included:

- Moses Belinson's in Odesa – 10 titles between 1866 and 1883;
- Aby Mikhailovich Dychna and P. Dychna in Odesa – 8 titles between 1895 and 1912;
- Samuel Józef Fin and Abraham Tzvi Rosenkrantz in Vilnius – 5 titles between 1871 and 1872;
- A. Szulce in Odesa – 3 titles between 1883 and 1890;
- Towarzystwo Druku Rosji Południowej (Hevra ha-Russit ha-dromit) [Printing Society of Southern Russia], Odesa, 3 titles between 1908 and 1910;
- Typo-lithography by V. R. Fyodorova in Tsaritsyn – 3 titles between 1896 and 1901;
- Behrman and Rabinovich/Behrman and Associates, St. Petersburg – 3 titles between 1894 and 1897;

13 According to S. Poznański, the impetus for the resumption of Karaite typographical activity may have been provided by an unsuccessful attempt to publish the most important Karaite theological works in print in Vienna. In 1830, the well-known printer and publisher of publications in Hebrew, Anton Schmied, published *Dod Mordekhai* by Mordechai ben Nisan of Kukizov, along with three other works by Karaite scholars. Through the Hebrew scholar and publisher Samuel Löb Goldenberg, Schmied also received manuscripts of six other fundamental works, lent by Abraham Leonovich, the spiritual leader of the Halicz community (the only Karaite community in the lands of the Austro-Hungarian monarchy), but their publication in print did not take place, most likely for financial reasons. See S. Poznański, *Karäische Drucke und Druckereien*, ZfHB 21, 4–6, 1918, p. 67.

14 B. D. Walfish, *Karaite Press...*, op. cit., p. 928.

15 It should be mentioned that from the mid 1880s a Russian Karaite printing house of M. L. Murovansky, was active in Yevpatoria, founded by a Jewish merchant from Vilnius. From its press came ephemera for the Taurida Karaim Spiritual Board, pamphlets, calendars, and books (two Kazas works and a prayer book). After Murovanski's death in 1913, it was run by his wife, then bought back by S. A. Babayeva and donated to the Spiritual Board as the "Jaryk" printing house (the only printing from 1918), after which it was sold in 1919 to a Vilnius entrepreneur, Shaveliy Antokolsky.

At the beginning of the 20th century, two printing houses in Crimea had Karaite owners – S. B. Si-nani in Simferopol and D. O. Chorchenko, a native of Trakai, in Sevastopol. The latter specialised in postcards, but in 1913 it produced one Karaite publication.

- I. Cijonson in Vilnius – 3 titles, one in 1868 and two in 1907;
- Yehuda Leib Metz in Vilnius – 2 titles, in 1890 and 1891–1893 (a 4-volume prayer book published at the expense of the Vilnius tobacco merchant Szyszman).

Individual titles – printing houses: L. Nitsche, G. Ulrich, P.A. Żelezny, A.M. Dychno, Tsentralnaya in Odesa; Ettinger, Leshtukovskaya parovaya skopiechatnia P. O. Jablonski, V.S. Balashev and associates, Lurie and associates, Behrman, P. I. Babkin in St. Petersburg; Russkaya lito-tipografia in Moscow; Yalovtsev, L. and N. Rosental, A. Dvoretz, I.I. Pyrozchnikov, the Romm widow and brothers in Vilnius; N. Z. Lempert in Melitopol; Yitzhak Moshe Bakshta in Zhytomyr; Ha-techija in Kharkiv

The latter group also includes two Warsaw publishing houses, from the presses of which one title each came out. Both publications are authored by well-known figures in the intellectual and spiritual life of Karaites in the Russian Empire at the time, and at the same time are products of entirely different views and visions of the social and intellectual development of the Karaite community. The first of these is

*Torat ha-adam*

*Sefer Torat ha-Adam: rashe peraḳim mi-ḥokhmat ha-midot ha-'iyunit yeha-ma 'ašithutsa 'u bi-lešon 'Ivrit 'al pi "Yesodot Musar" le-chakham ha-tsarfati P. Zhanet 'al yedei Eliahu Kazaz (mi-Bnei Miqra). Varshe. Ba-bajt ha-defus shel adon Aleksander Ginz Naje Zielna shtrasse No. 47. Shnat 5649 / Torat" Gaadam" ili načala ètiki izložil na evrejskom âzyke po Pol'Žane I. Kazas. Varšava. V" tipografii Aleksandr Ginsa. Novozel'naâ No. 47. 1889*

It is a translation of *Éléments de morale*, a work by the French ethical philosopher Paul Janet, published in 1870. As translated into Polish, the full title is: "Nauki ludzkości. Główne punkty wiedzy teoretycznej i praktycznej na podstawie «Zasad moralnych» francuskiego uczonego P. Janet, podane w języku hebrajskim przez Karaima Eliahu Kazaza" [The Teaching for Humanity. The main points of theoretical and practical knowledge based on the "Moral Principles" of the French scholar P. Janet, given in Hebrew by Karaim Eliahu Kazaz]. The book came off the press of the printing house of Alexander Gins (1821–1908), a well-known Warsaw printer of Jewish origin, in the year 5649 (1889). Gins' publishing house had Latin, Greek, Old Church Slavonic and Hebrew fonts, and published works in Hebrew and Yiddish. It mainly published popular publications, books for children and young people, school textbooks, scientific works, revolutionary leaflets, church publications, and calendars.

The author of the translation, or rather adaptation of the French philosopher's work, was Ilya Ilyich Kazas (1832–1912), a Karaite educational activist born in Ermeni Bazar (now Armiansk) in the north of the Crimea. He received his

religious education at the school in Yevpatoria run by Abraham, son of Yosef Shelomo Lutsky (Aben Yashar). Then he took a job as a shop assistant, which was a typical vocational path for a young Karaite of the time. Thanks to the support of his uncle, however, he managed to continue his education – he obtained his high school diploma in Kherson and left for Moscow, where his father was involved in the fruit trade.<sup>16</sup> He entered university and studied for two years with Timofey Granovsky, a medieval historian and representative of Russian Occidentalism. After the professor died in 1855, he moved to St Petersburg and studied in the Eastern languages department – his teacher was the Hebraic semitologist Daniel Chwolson. He completed his studies in 1859, thus becoming the first Crimean Karaite to receive a formal university education.<sup>17</sup> After his studies, he settled in Odesa, where in 1859 he opened a private school where, in addition to religion and Hebrew, general education subjects were taught – the curriculum corresponding to that of two-class municipal schools included arithmetic, geography, Russian (which was the language of instruction in the school), Russian history and calligraphy.<sup>18</sup>

Odesa was one of the centres of the Haskalah, a Jewish movement developing in Europe from the 1880s under the influence of Enlightenment ideas. Haskalah activists opposed the dominance of orthodoxy and Talmudic teachings, advocated the modernisation of life and education, the learning of the language of non-Jewish surroundings and its use, which was to enable the emancipation of the Jewish community. The ideas of the Haskalah, combined with the Occidentalism assimilated at university, strongly influenced Kazas and his vision of Karaite education. And, as was the case with the Jewish maskilim, his activities provoked violent reactions from traditionalists, as a result of which he was forced to close his school after four years. He moved to Simferopol, where he worked as a history teacher at the local men's gymnasium. At the same time, he joined the work carried out by the Ministry of Education on the reform of the education of non-Russian minorities (*inorodcev*), which was finally approved by a decree of Tsar Alexander II on 26 March 1870. The reform aimed to “Russify and unite with the Russian nation”<sup>19</sup> these communities. Karaite and Tatar

16 B. S. Elâševič, *I.I. Kazas. Ego žizn', naučno-literaturnaâ, pedagogiceskaâ i obscestvennaâ deâtel'nost'.* *Biografičeskij očerok*, Evpatoriâ 1918, pp. 3–6.

17 B. S. Elâševič, op. cit., pp. 9–10.

18 D.A. Prokhorov, *I.I. Kazas – Organizator karaimskih učebnyh zavedenii*, „Materialy po istorii i etnografii Tavrii”, series 11, 2005, p. 509, [online] <http://dspace.nbuv.gov.ua/handle/123456789/170188> (24.04.2024).

19 *Pravila o merach k obrazovanie naselâuših Rossiû inorodcev, vysočajše utverždënnnye 26 marta 1870 goda* [in:] „Mir islama” 1913, Vol. II, series IV, pp. 260–261, [after:] A.M. Memetov, I.A. Memetov, A.N. Sukhorukov, *Formirovanie narodnago obrazovaniâ krymskich tatar posle prisiedineniâ k Rossii*, „Naučnyj Vestnik Kryma” 2020, No. 6 (29), p. 19.

schools were established in the Crimea, with native religion and language in their curricula. Still, the main emphasis was on general education subjects and the teaching of the Russian language. An important issue was the provision of teachers for these schools. In 1872, a four-class Tatar teachers' seminary was opened in Simferopol, and Kazas became the inspector of this school, focusing primarily on issues of teaching methodology. As late as 1870, he published an elementary textbook and, in 1873, a practical Russian language textbook, approved by the ministry for use in schools.<sup>20</sup>

The publication of the translation of Janet's work was linked to Kazas's most important venture, namely the organisation of a university to train Karaite clergy. The idea of its establishment was already born at the time of the administrative separation of Karaism as an independent denomination, sealed by the establishment of the Taurida Karaim Spiritual Board in 1837, headed by the Karaite hakham Simcha Babovich. He launched an initiative to establish a single religious school for 400 pupils, replacing the traditional Karaite religious education system based on some small private schools run individually by clergymen and teachers. However, the project, which envisaged the inclusion of elements of secular learning in the curriculum and was supported by scholars who came from the western governorates (Josef Szelomo Lutsky, his son Abraham Lutsky, Mordechai Sultanski, David Kokizov), failed to materialise.<sup>21</sup>

The idea was revisited in the mid-19th century, when a school headed by Karaite educational activist S. A. Beim began operating in Kale near Bakhchisaray in 1852, reporting to the provincial education department. Unfortunately, due to a lack of funding, it ceased its activities after five years.<sup>22</sup>

In the 1880s, the Taurida hakham Pampulov proposed that optional religious and Hebrew language classes be introduced into the curriculum of the schools where Karaite pupils received their education. However, this idea did not pass the test, and it was only by giving these classes, on the initiative of I.I. Kazas, that they gained the status of compulsory classes. However, it was clear that there was a need for a school where Karaite youth could simultaneously acquire religious knowledge and general education. Kazas presented the basic principles of the project in 1888. The curriculum included general subjects (Russian language, geography of the world and Russia, general history and Russian history, German language) at the level of a six-grade gymnasium, and

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20 D.A. Prokhorov, *I.I. Kazas – Inspektor simferopol'skoj tatarskoj učitel'skoj školy*, „Materialy po istorii i etnografii Tavrii” 2003, series 10, p. 603, [online] [https://maiet.cfuv.ru/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/32-МАИЭТ-2003-10\\_Прохоров.pdf](https://maiet.cfuv.ru/wp-content/uploads/2021/07/32-МАИЭТ-2003-10_Прохоров.pdf) (24.04.2024).

21 D.A. Prokhorov, *I.I. Kazas – organiser ...*, pp. 513–514.

22 Ibid, p. 514.

arithmetic, practical geometry, physics and calligraphy as taught in municipal schools. Specialised subjects were included in the final grade curriculum. They included principles of Karaite religion, ethics, and biblical exegesis, while the lower grades provided for the study of Hebrew and the reading of selected Tanakh passages appropriate to the age of the pupils. The Kazas sought to bring the level of teaching as close as possible to the pan-European level. The project gained the approval of the majority of the Karaite communities, and comments included a greater emphasis on subjects that could have practical application: the introduction of algebra and trigonometry, the advancement of the physics course, and the replacement of German with French.<sup>23</sup>

The Alexandria Higher School of Religion, where Kazas, as inspector, supervised the teaching process, did not begin its activities until 1895. Still, a translation of Janet's work, published shortly after the project was announced, was already envisaged as a textbook for ethics lessons. Kazas dedicated it to one of the university's main sponsors, Samuel Aronovich Kogen, a tobacco merchant from Kyiv.<sup>24</sup> It is possible that the edition of *Torat ha-Adam* was also financed by Kogen, who is known for his philanthropic activities.

The question arises as to why Kazas decided to publish this textbook in Warsaw. Could the reason have been the pressure exerted on Jewish printers by the Orthodox to not print books by authors representing the Jewish Enlightenment movement? Isaac Goldman, whose printing house in Warsaw in the 1870s was one of the largest, and who also ran a bookshop, published books by maskilas, but under pressure from orthodox customers, he had to give up because they threatened him with a boycott.<sup>25</sup> However, it is hard to imagine that in Odesa, one of the leading centres of the Haskalah, in the late 1880s, no printer was willing to publish a Hebrew translation of the French philosopher.

It seems more likely that family ties may have played a role in the choice of publishing location. From the 1870s onwards, Karaite tobacco merchants settled in Warsaw increasingly, and later officials and students arrived. They mostly came from Crimea. The name Kazas appeared in the Warsaw press in 1879, when Izulim Kazas, a merchant from Taganrog, stayed at the Hotel Paris.<sup>26</sup>

23 Ibid, pp. 515–516.

24 P. Janet, *Torat ha-adam*, Warszawa 1889, p. [1]. Kazas annotated the publication with a motto that is a paraphrase of a verse from the Book of Numbers (12:13): וְלֹא אֶפְרָיִם אֶתְּרָא (Please, God, heal him!), perhaps referring to some of the donor's health problems at the time (Kogen suffered a stroke in 1896 and died in 1900).

25 N. Cohen, *Distributing Knowledge: Warsaw as a Center of Jewish Publishing, 1851–1914*, [in:] ed. by G. Dynner, F. Guesnet, *Warsaw. The Jewish Metropolis. Essays in Honor of the 75<sup>th</sup> Birthday of Professor Antony Polonsky*, Leiden 2015, p. 184.

26 "Nowiny", 22 August/3 September 1879, No. 243, p. 3. Izulim is most likely a misspelled name of Shulim, a diminutive of Salomon.



In 1885, an undelivered despatch is waiting for an unspecified Kazas,<sup>27</sup> and in 1886 advertisements appear for a Kazas tobacconist offering the products of well-known Karaite tobacco and cigarette manufacturers, Gabbay from Moscow and the “Ottoman” company from St. Petersburg.<sup>28</sup> When the Karaite diaspora grew so large that there was a need for a cemetery in Warsaw, among the seven Warsaw Karaites who purchased a plot of land in Wola in 1890 was Isaac I. Kazas,<sup>29</sup> brother or cousin of the pedagogue. It seems pretty likely that it was through him/his intermediation that the choice fell on the Warsaw printing house, which was not a Jewish enterprise (Gins was baptised in the Evangelical-Reformed rite), but printed in the Hebrew script.

However, the cooperation with the Warsaw-based Gins publishing house did not live to see a continuation, and Kazas published his later publications, also intended as textbooks for the Karaite university, in other publishing houses: Moses Murovansky in Yevpatoria<sup>30</sup> and the Printing Society of Southern Russia in Odesa, one of the largest publishing houses of pre-revolutionary Russia.<sup>31</sup>

*Davar davur*

*Sefer Davar davur: maḥazi 27 sipurim mi-sipure bene ḳedem ha-mesuparim ‘al peh venot ‘ame ha-ḳedem be-artsot Turḳiya va-ḥatsi i’ Krim ne’erkhu ve-sidru le-to’elet oheve safa avar ha-tšḥah ve-ha-ḳala. Me’et ad bene miḳra’ Shemu’el ben Shemaryah z “I Pigit. Var-she bidefus ‘Ha-Tsefirah’, Marianska 2. [5]664. / Sefer Davar davur, t.e. sobranie ustnyh rasskazov meḏdu vostočnymi narodami. Sobral S. Š. Pigit”, Varšava. V tipografii “Gacefiry”, Mariânskaâ, 2. 1904. 254+42+[4] p.*

The second Karaite publication printed in Warsaw appeared in 1904, with its title translated from Hebrew into Polish as “Księga słowa wypowiedziane-go. Zbiór 27 opowieści wschodnich przekazywanych ustnie przez oriental-ne ludy na ziemiach Turcji i półwyspu Krym, opracowane i ułożone na pożytek miłośników dawnego języka nieskażonego i lekkiego” [The Book of the Spoken

27 Addressed at 75 Marszałkowska Street, „Kurjer Warszawski” No. 174, 14 (26) June 1886, p. 4.

28 They can be found in the “Kurjer Poranny” (No. 220, 29 July/10 August 1886, p. 8) and the “Kurjer Warszawski” (No. 224, 3/15 August 1886, p. 9, No. 174 14/26 June 1885, p. 4), among others.

29 A. Dubiński, *Karaimi i ich cmentarz w Warszawie*, [in:] *Karaimi*, ed. by B. Machul-Telus, Warszawa 2012, p. 149.

30 These were the second part of the Hebrew textbook for the lower classes *Le-regel ha-yeladim* (1896) and *Kivshono shel olam* (1899), a translation/adaptation of Jules Simon’s *La religion naturelle*.

31 Published here were a biography of Cicero by Kazas entitled *Tsitsero: tsiyur biografii* (1909), *Emet me-erets* (1908), a publication that was a translation/adaptation of Fulcran Vigoreux’s work *La Bible et les découvertes modernes en Égypte et en Assyrie* (first edition Paris 1879), and a collection of his own poetry and translations *Yeled sha’ashuim* (1910).

Word. A collection of 27 eastern tales transmitted orally by oriental peoples in the lands of Turkey and the Crimean peninsula, compiled and arranged for the benefit of lovers of the ancient unadulterated and light language]. The author of the work is Samuel son of Shemaria Pigit (1849–1911), a Karaite clergyman, from 1882 until his death a hazzan in Yekaterinoslav (Dnipropetrovsk, Dnipro), previously ministering in Karasubazar and Simferopol.

The publication came off the press of the “Ha-Tsfira” printing house, located at the time, as stated on the title page, at Mariańska 2. “Ha-Tsfira” was a Hebrew-language Jewish newspaper published in Warsaw. It was founded by the writer, mathematician and inventor, Chaim Zelig Słonimski in 1862 as a weekly magazine popularising natural and mathematical sciences, and from 1886, when the position of editor-in-chief was taken over by Nachum Sokolov, a writer, journalist and political activist, it began to come out as a daily newspaper not shying away from political news and journalism, while at the same time devoting much space and attention to Hebrew literature. After the First Zionist Congress in 1897, the newspaper shifted from a neutral position to one favourable to Zionism and began to engage with the movement. When ‘Ha-Melits’, published in St Petersburg, declined at the beginning of the 20th century, ‘Ha-Tsfira’ took its place, becoming the leading Hebrew-language daily.<sup>32</sup>

In his biographical sketches, Eljaszewicz states that Pigit corresponded with the editors of the Jewish newspapers “Ha-Melits” and “Ha-Tsfira”, to which he sent his articles.<sup>33</sup> While there were in fact two texts by him printed in “Ha-Melits” in 1879,<sup>34</sup> the only trace of his contacts with “Ha-Tsfira” is the *Davar davur*, if one does not count the announcements about the availability of Pigit’s earlier publication<sup>35</sup> in the offer of the bookstore belonging to the newspaper.

The publication consists of several parts. The first of these (pp. 14–210), which gave the title to the whole and is accompanied by a motto taken from the Book of Proverbs: “Słowo wypowiedziane we właściwym czasie jest jak złote jabłko na srebrnych czasach” [A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver] (Prov 25:11), is a selection of legends and fables from the folklore of Turkey and the Crimea, including Karaite folk literature, adapted by Pigit and translated from Turkish and Tatar (Karaite) into Hebrew. Seven

32 A. Holtzman, *Ha-Tsefirah*, [online] [https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Tsefirah\\_Ha](https://yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Tsefirah_Ha) – (24.04.2024).

33 B. S. Eláševič, *Karaimskij biografičeskij slovar’ (ot koniec VIII v. do 1960)*, Moscow 1993, *Materiály k serii “Narody i kul’tury”* vypusk 14, kniga 2, p. 166.

34 W. D. Walfish, M. Kizilov, op. cit. p. 607.

35 This refers to *Igeret nidhe Shemu’el*, St Petersburg 1896. The advertisements in question appeared in at least four issues of *Ha-Tsefirah* from 1902.

were taken from Radlov's published *medjuma*,<sup>36</sup> while the author heard the rest "z różnych ust w różnym czasie"<sup>37</sup> [from different mouths at different times]. The second part is entitled *Imre no'am* [Nice speech], which the author also took from the Book of Proverbs, framing this part with the motto: "Miła mowa jest jak plaster miodu – słodyczą dla duszy i lekiem dla kości" [Pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones] (Prov 16:24). There are Karaite proverbs and sentences, also taken from the Radlov *medjuma*, translated into Hebrew and arranged in alphabetical order.<sup>38</sup>

The third part, entitled *Ve-davar be-ito* [And a word at the right time], contains occasional songs in Karaite and Hebrew<sup>39</sup> and musical notations of several songs with words arranged by Pigit. Another "Warsaw" theme appears here: the author of the melody of one of the songs is, as stated, Z. Servator, a cantor in Warsaw.<sup>40</sup>

Pigit, as a lover of the Hebrew language, knowledge of which formed the basis of traditional religious education, was aware of the threat to the position of this language in the Karaite community posed by the modern model of education introduced by Kazas and with its main emphasis on the teaching of Russian. In his introduction to *Davur davar* he wrote „Nowe pokolenie, które zajmuje miejsce naszych ojców, nie zna ani hebrajskiego, ani języka codziennego<sup>41</sup>. Uczą się tylko rosyjskiego. [...] Bez wątpienia w sercu tego

36 [V. V. Radlov], *Medzhuma*, Petersburg, 1888. *Medjuma* are manuscript collections of various types of works of folk literature, the transcription of which became popular among Karaite youth in Crimea and Russia in the second half of the 19th century, see A. Sulimowicz, *Krymskokaraimskie zbiory literatury ludowej w Polsce*, [in:] K. Zdeb, K. Rabiega, R. Solecki (eds), *Konserwacja Zapobiegawcza Środowiska 8: Dziedzictwo nasze czy obce* (series „Archaeologica Hereditas” 16), Warszawa 2019, pp. 61–69. The Russian turkologist Radlov published the contents of one of the *medjuma* in the Hebrew alphabet, and then included it already in transcription in Volume VII of his monumental work *Obrazy narodnoj literatury severnych türkskich plemen / Proben der Volksliteratur der nördlichen türkischen Stämme*, St. Petersburg 1896.

37 S. Pigit, *Davar...*, op.cit., p. 6. Poznański states that 16 come from oral transmission, while the other four consist of two taken from Jewish publications and two translations from Russian, see S. Poznański, *Die karäische Literatur der letzten dreißig Jahre (1878–1908)*, ZfHB 1910, B. 14, H. 4, p. 116.

38 The manuscript JSul.I.10 in the collection of the turkologist Jozef Sulimowicz contains a similar collection of sentences in Hebrew bearing an identical title. The manuscript, compiled by Hilel son of Beracha Gelelovich of Nikolaev, unfortunately bears no date, but it seems quite likely that it may have been inspired by Pigit's publication.

39 S. Poznański, *Die karäische Literatur der letzten dreißig Jahre (1878–1908)*, ZfHB 1909, B. 13, H. 4, s. 116.

40 S. Pigit, *Davar davur*, Warszawa 1904, p. [4]. Unfortunately, the identity of this character could not be established.

41 Pigit, addressing primarily a Jewish reader, uses the word 'jargon'. However, as is evident from the rest of his speech, he refers to both Yiddish and Karaite.

pokolenia nie będzie już ducha judaizmu. Jest to ogromny krok ku asymilacji. W ciągu dwóch czy trzech generacji, które przyjdą po nich, przestana znać swoje korzenie, nie będą wiedzieli, z wywodzą się z synów Izraela i wymieszają się z obcymi, przejdą do nich nie będą nawet wiedzieli, że przeszli. [...] Pod koniec dwudziestego stulecia według kalendarza chrześcijańskiego nie będzie już pomiędzy nami, obywatelami Cesarstwa Rosyjskiego, wieczna mu chwała, nikogo, kto będzie rozumiał język tatarski i turecki. [...] Nie obawiamy się, że język turecki i literatura w nim zostaną zapomniane przez naszych potomków. Lecz tym, co nas boli, jest to, że z tym pokoleniem utracimy znajomość języka świętego. Że studiowanie świętych ksiąg stanie się nam obce w tych czasach i w czasach, które nadejdą.”<sup>42</sup> [The new generation which takes the place of our fathers now knows neither Hebrew nor the jargon. They only learn Russian”. “Doubtless, in this generation, in its heart, there will be no spirit of Judaism. It is a large step to assimilate into peoples. Within two or three more generations which come after them, they will not know their roots, that they are from the sons of Israel, and they will mix with gentiles, will enter among them and they will not know that they have entered among them. [...] and by the end of the 20th century, according to the Christian calendar, undoubtedly there will be no one among us, among the citizens of the Kingdom of Russia, let its glory be great, who will know and understand the Tatar and Turkish language at all. [...] We are not afraid that the Turkish language and the mentioned literature will be forgotten by us and our offspring. The object of our grief is that along with them, the ability of learning our sacred language will be taken away from us. And that the study of the sacred books will become alien to us as well, in these days and in the days which will come.]

There is no doubt that Pigit’s aim in compiling and translating oriental folk tales into Hebrew was to provide the reader with attractive texts that would develop and consolidate knowledge of the ‘sacred language’ and show that it could be the language of everyday life. Hence, the choice of a publishing house of a well-known Hebrew-language newspaper. It is also possible that the proposal came from “Ha-Tsfira”, which was looking for attractive items for its bookshop. After all, it contained, as already mentioned, Pigit’s earlier work, *Igeret nidhe Shemu’el*, a collection of various prose and verse works.

42 After: Małgorzata Machcińska, *Karaite Education in Crimea at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Unknown Resolution*, ‘Karaite Archives’ 2 (2014), pp. 99–70. Translated from English by the author.

## Conclusion

The books published in Warsaw are fifteen years apart. Both are the works of well-known figures in the intellectual and spiritual life of Karaites in the Russian Empire at the time, but are the result of entirely different views and visions of the social and intellectual development of the Karaite community. The first was part of an educational programme that was intended to enable the younger generation of Karaites to acquire not only a religious education, but also, and in fact above all, a general one, to provide them with opportunities for further education, to level their chances for intellectual and professional development. The second is an expression of resistance to change, the fear that going outside the strict circle of traditional Karaite teaching, focused on studying the Scriptures in the original language (one of the articles of faith formulated by Eliahu Bashiach in the 15th century), would not lead to a loss of identity, assimilation and acculturation, and consequently a departure from the ancestral faith. Time has shown that the predictions and fears of its author, the Yekaterinoslav hazzan, have partly come true; the Karaites in Eastern Europe today are a primarily ethnic community, and knowledge of Hebrew among them has virtually disappeared. However, the life of Pigit's publication proved more durable than Kazas' textbook, which lost its *raison d'être* after the Bolsheviks abolished religious education. A selection of the stories contained in the *Davar davur* was published in 1947 in Tel Aviv as *Mi-sipurei ha-karaim*, edited by Abraham M. Haberman, and in 1977 the whole book was reprinted by the Karaite community of Ramleh in Israel, composed of Karaites of Egyptian origin. Also included in the anthology of Jewish tales and legends, *Folk Tales of the Jews*, edited by Dan Ben-Amos in 2006 in Philadelphia, were stories recorded by Samuel Pigit in a collection published in Warsaw.

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giť. *Varshe bidefus 'Ha-Tsefirah', Marianska 2. [5]664. / Sefer Davar davur, t.e. sobranie ustnyh rasskazov meřdu vostočnymi narodami. Sobral S. ř. Pigit", Varřava. V tipografii "Gacefiry", Mariãnskaã, 2. 1904.*

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