

# Karaite Education in Crimea at the End of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century: An Unknown Resolution<sup>1</sup>

**Małgorzata Machcińska**

Adam Mickiewicz University

## Abstract

The article is a contribution to studies of Karaite education in Eastern Europe. It presents an unknown resolution of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory dated to 1898, which approved a new system of education in the Karaite communities of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory. It was a formal act that formalized the transformation of Karaite education that was gradually taking place in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and its permanent re-alignment in relation to the Russian education system of that time. This resolution is important as it contributed to a decline of the Hebrew language and Hebrew literature in the Karaite community.

## Keywords

Karaite Education, Karaites in Crimea, Karaites in Lithuania, Eliyyahu Bashyatchi, Shelomo ben Aharon

As our knowledge of the traditional Karaite education system is relatively limited, I would like to start by presenting a general outline of traditional Karaite education in previous periods, mainly in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. For this reason, I will quote two exceptional texts which provide us with a description of Karaite education in the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. They come from *Seḇer ham-Miṣvot han-Niqra* 'Adderet 'Eliyyahu by Eliyyahu Bashyatchi (c. 1420–1490)<sup>2</sup> and *Seḇer 'Appiryon 'Asa Lo* by Shelomo ben Aharon

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<sup>1</sup> This article is based on the author's MA thesis *Pages from the History of Karaite Education in Eastern Europe*, written at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań in 2013 under the supervision of prof. Piotr Muchowski.

<sup>2</sup> Written about 1480, first printed in Constantinople in 1531/2.

(c. 1670–1745)<sup>3</sup>. These texts do not directly refer to Crimea; however, they certainly present the Karaite education system in the communities in Eastern Europe in that period well.

*'Adderet 'Eliyyahu* was the widely recognized legal code of the Karaites in Eastern Europe. It is a compendium of religious and social regulations. Undoubtedly, Karaite communities in Eastern Europe fully respected and applied its legal articles, including those regarding education. Eliyyahu Bashyatchi speaks on education in the chapter *'Asara 'Iqqarim*, in the paragraph *Ha-'iqqar haš-šiši*.<sup>4</sup> He formulated ten principles for the education in the *Midrash*, i.e. at school. These rules take the form of recommendations concerning various aspects of teaching, among others, the age at which boys should start learning (the age of six), the appearance of the school building, the character requirements for a teacher, the need for material support for poor children to enable their effective education, and the teaching methodology, focused on the study of the Torah and the Hebrew language, i.e. the holy language.

The second work, *Seḇer 'Appiryon 'Asa Lo* by Shelomo ben Aharon, was created at the turn of the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries. It was redrafted several times and several versions of this text have been preserved. However, the earliest version originated at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, when Shelomo ben Aharon visited Riga University, at the invitation of its rector, Professor Johan Puffendorf.<sup>5</sup> In the 40<sup>th</sup> column of the first part of *Seḇer 'Appiryon*,<sup>6</sup> he gives a description of Karaite education in Lithuania.<sup>7</sup> This description supplements the description in the *Sixth Principle* of Bashyatchi. It is generally in accordance with his recommendations. Shelomo ben Aharon emphasizes that in his day, teaching in the Karaite communities was conducted in the traditional way, as in earlier centuries. He enumerates three stages of education, which he calls *Bet Rabban*, *Midrash*, and *Yeshiva*. He states that learning starts with the alphabet; next, children learn “words and phrases”; and later, prayers and

<sup>3</sup> A shorter version was published in print by Adolf Neubauer in 1866, see NEUBAUER 1866. A longer version was published by Yosef Algamil in 2000, see ALGAMIL 2000.

<sup>4</sup> In the edition from Constantinople, folios 26 verso – 27 recto (*'Asara ha-'iqqarim*). Cf. the study of this passage by Barry Walfish in: WALFISH 1992.

<sup>5</sup> See *Haqdama* (Introduction) in *Dod Mordekhay* by Mordekhay ben Nisan; MANN 1935: 578, note 36.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. ALGAMIL 2000: 281–285.

<sup>7</sup> The text of this column was first published by Moshe Güdemann, cf. GÜDEMANN 1886, and next by Jacob Mann, cf. MANN 1935: 1444–1451.

blessings, as well as proper behaviour in the synagogue. At this stage, the most important task is learning to recite the Torah and its translation into the language of daily use, *leshon Ishma'e'l*, i.e. the Karaite (Tartar) language. This was the first stage of education. Shelomo ben Aharon reports that when a boy has made progress in the study of the Torah, then he starts the second stage of education – the study of *Nevi'im* (the Prophets) and *Ketuvim* (Writings). At this stage, students become skilled in the *peshat* method of translation. They do not have a complete knowledge of the Torah and they are obliged to continue their studies. As Shelomo ben Aharon emphasizes, a common method of teaching is repeating the studied material by asking questions.

It is unclear how long this stage of studies lasted and how many hours per day the students had to spend at school. We can assume that the whole process took a few years, depending on the child's abilities. If a student was talented, he could start the study of grammar, including the parts of speech, verb conjugations, roots and other subjects. Shelomo ben Aharon underlines the importance of grammar, repeating after David Kimḥi that a person who knows the holy language (*leshon haq-qodesh*) but does not know its grammar is "like a deaf person who leads oxen and has no stimulus in his hand" and that "in all languages, grammar is the first principle of knowledge".<sup>8</sup> During this period, students practiced writing and making exercises in "the lucidity of style", i.e. the ability to formulate correct and clear statements. It seems that one of the major tasks given to students at this stage was copying literary works and documents. According to a description by Shelomo ben Aharon, the study was mainly based on the texts of *Gan Eden* by Aharon ben Eliyyahu of Nicomedia and *'Adderet Eliyyahu* by Eliyyahu Bashyatchi. On Shabbats, students studied Torah commentary from *Seḥer Mivḥar Yešarim* by Aharon ben Joseph ha-Rofe and *Keter Tora* by Aharon ben Eliyyahu of Nicomedia. During holidays, they read Torah passages thematically, i.e. according to holidays. On the days of *Lag ba-Omer* (i.e. between Pesach and Shavu'ot), study was focused on the articles of faith from *Seḥer 'Asara Ma'amarot* by Caleb Afendopolo. Shelomo ben Aharon also mentions that talented students were then encouraged to study books recommended by Eliyyahu Bashyatchi in his *Sixth Principle*, including *'Eš Ḥayim* and mathematics textbooks by Nicomachus, Even Ezra, and Euclid, as well as books on astronomy and the natural sciences. Bashyatchi suggested the study of these

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<sup>8</sup> Cf. KIMḤI 1545: 69 recto.

books, indicating that “the science of pagans contains the words of our fathers, because during the exile they took our Books and translated them into their languages”.<sup>9</sup> It is noteworthy that Shelomo ben Aharon emphasizes that Karaite recitation teaching, unlike rabbinic teaching, included learning about ten melodies attributed to biblical books. From the description of Shelomo ben Aharon, as well as other data, it can be deduced that the entire educational process lasted several years, and the students finished it around the age of 20.

This traditional system of education functioned in the Polish-Lithuanian communities until approximately the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, when it was gradually abandoned due to rigorous legislation in the Russian Empire and the compulsory education of Karaite children in Russian schools. The archive of the Troki Spiritual Consistory was partially lost during the First World War, and we are thus not able to trace this process. However, in the light of the general changes in education in Lithuania during the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, resulting from the Tsarist policy of russification after the Polish Insurrection of 1863, we can presume that these changes started about 1867 and were finally sealed by laws making the use of Russian language in schools mandatory in 1885.<sup>10</sup> The decline in traditional Hebrew Karaite education was undoubtedly an important factor in the acceleration of cultural and social change in Karaite communities during the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

With regards to the aforementioned resolution of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory, which is the main subject of this article, I would like to emphasize that the economic situation of the Karaite population in Crimea at that time was definitely better than in Lithuania. The community was larger and, it seems, worked in a more conscious and reformatory manner. Legal decisions taken by the Crimean Karaites regarding education were preceded by deliberations and discussions among the *ḥazzans* of the Consistory. Their primary objective was to better prepare young Crimean Karaites for professional activity, thus enabling the social and economic advancement of the whole congregation.

<sup>9</sup> BASHYATCHI 1531: (*Asara ha-‘iqqarim*) 27 recto.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. KUTRZEBA 1920: pp. 158–161. *Ḥazzan* Izaak Charczenko’s memories are important evidence on this issue. He was born in 1841 and attended the Karaite school in Troki until the late 1840s. They clearly show that the school was run in a traditional manner in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. General subjects, like geography and history, were not taught. Charczenko was severely punished for attempting to study the Russian language on his own. Cf. CHARCZENKO 1925.

The discussed resolution is preserved in the Archive of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory in the State Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, in collection 241, opus 1, number 1592. This is a copy of the original document. Its text was written in Hebrew on two sides of folio number 19. It belongs to a larger collection of resolutions adopted by the assembly of the *hazzans* of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory in 1898. This resolution bears testimony to the changes in that period, evidencing a crucial moment in the transformation of the Karaite education.

The text on fol. 19 verso includes the curricula for study of the Hebrew language and religion. It reads as follows:

### סדר הלמוד לשפתנו הקדושה

1. ללמודה לנערי בני עמנו המתחנכים בבתי הגימנאזיום ובבתי הספר
2. החיצונים בכלל ראינו להנהיגו על כל הכתות באופן כזה.
3. מדרגה א'
4. קריאה וכתובה, וחמשה פרקים הראשונים מספר לרגל הילדים להחכם ר' אליהו קזאז
5. עם כללי הדקדוק בידיעה היטב את המלות על פה ובהעתקתן מלשון אל לשון.
6. מדרגה ב'
7. מס' לרגל הילדים פרקים 6-12, וקריאת התורה בתרגום מס' בראשית, הסימנים: א'
8. ב' ג' ד' ה' ואת הסימן הששי מפסוק ה' עד סופו, ואת הסימנים ז' ח', ומסימן ט' עד פסוק
9. י"ז, הסימנים יו"ד, י"א, י"ב, י"ג, י"ד, ט"ו, י"ז, י"ח, וסימן י"ט עד פסוק ל'.
10. מדרגה ג'
11. לרגל הילדים פרקים 13-20, וקריאת התורה מס' בראשית סימנים: כ"א, כ"ב, כ"ג,
12. כ"ד, כ"ה, ומסימן כ"ו פסוקים י"ב – ל"ד, סימנים כ"ז, כ"ח, כ"ט, ל"א, ל"ב, ל"ג, ל"ה,
13. ל"ו, ל"ז, מ', מ"א, מ"ב, מ"ג, מ"ד, מ"ה, מ"ו, מ"ז, מ"ח, מ"ט, נו"ן. ומס' תהלים מזמורים
14. ק', קי"ג, קל"ה, ק"ן.
15. מדרגה ד'
16. לרגל הילדים פרקים 21-30, וקריאה מס' שמות מראש הספר עד סימן כ"ד, סימן
17. ל"א פסוקים י"ב – י"ח סימנים ל"ב, ל"ג, ל"ד, ומסימן ל"ה פסוקים א' – ג', ומספר ויקרא
18. סימנים: י"א, י"ב, י"ו, י"ז, י"ט, כ"ב, כ"ג, כ"ד, כ"ה, כ"ו, כ"ז, ומספר תהלים מזמורים
19. ג', י"ג, ט"ו, ס"ז, צ"ה.
20. מדרגה ה'
21. לרגל הילדים פרקים 31-44, ס' במדבר מסימן ו' פסוקים 22-72 סימנים: ט', יו"ד, י"א
22. י"ב, י"ג, י"ד, ט"ו, ט"ז, י"ז, י"ט, כ', כ"א, כ"ב, כ"ג, כ"ד, כ"ה, כ"ח, כ"ט, ל', ל"ב, ל"ג
23. ל"ד, ל"ה, ל"ו. ואת ספר דברים לקרא בשלמות, רק באיזה מקומות הפסוקים הבלתי

24. נבונים /לקריאה/ צריך להשיטם, דהיינו בסימן כ"ב לקרא רק פסוקים י"ג- כ"ט ובסימן כ"ז רק
25. פסוקים כ-כ"ד, ואחריהם מס' יהושע הסימנים: א', יו"ד, כ"ב, כ"ג, כ"ד. וס' שופטים
26. בשלמות. ומס' תהלים מזמורים: י"ט, כ"ד, כ"ה, כ"ט, צ"ו, צ"ז, צ"ח .
27. מדרגה וי"ז
28. ספרי שמואל א' וב', מלכים א' וב', מגלת אסתר, ומס' תהלים מזמורים: ו', כ', כ"א,
29. ל"ב, ל"ג, פ"ד, פ"ו, צ', צ"א, צ"ב, ק"ג, קט"ו, קי"ח, קל"ז, קמ"ח וללמד לנערים על
30. פה את המאמרים הלוקטים ממשלי שלמה כנרשם בס' לרגל הילדים חלק ב' דף ק"י[ג], קי"א, קי"ב.
31. הערה: את הענינים האחדים הבלתי נכנסים ברשימת הסדר הזה בפרוטרוט המורה יוכל
32. למלאתם בספור על פה, בסגלה אם יהיה מן הצרך להשכיל לנערים את המאמרים
33. הקרואים. וחוזן מזה כפי האפשרות צריך להשתדל ללמדם כתיבה בהירה ויפה, וכדי שלא
34. יכבד סדר הלמוד הזה על חניכי בתי הספר, הבטיח החכם ר' אליהו קאזז לסדר בקרוב
35. את אופן הלמוד מספרו "לרגל הילדים" בדרך אחר היותר נקל ונכון.

#### Translation:

#### "The order of teaching of our holy tongue"

1. To teach it to boys, the members of our people, who are educated in secondary schools and external schools.
2. As a rule, we decided to introduce it to all classes in this way.
3. First stage.
4. Reading and writing. The first five Chapters of the book *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* by the scholar ribbi Eliyyahu Kazaz,<sup>11</sup>
5. together with the rules of grammar, including a good knowledge of words by heart and their translation from one language to another.
6. Second stage.
7. From the book *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* Chapters 6–12, including the recitation of the Torah and the translation of the Book of Genesis, Chapters 1,
8. 2, 3, 4, 5. Chapter 6 from verse 5 to the end. Chapters 7, 8. Chapter 9 to verse
9. 17. Chapters 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 17, 18. Chapter 19 to verse 30.
10. Third stage.

<sup>11</sup> Probably a reference to its second edition from 1896, written in the Russian language, although it seems relevant to the first edition from 1869 as well. Cf. KAZAZ 1869 and KAZAZ 1896.

11. *Le-regel ha-Yeladim* Chapters 13–20, including the recitation of the Torah from the Book of Genesis, Chapters 21, 22, 23,
12. 24, 25. From Chapter 26, verses 12–34. Chapters 27, 28, 29, 31, 32, 33, 35,
13. 36, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50. From the Book of Psalms, psalms
14. 100, 113, 135, 150.
15. Fourth stage.
16. *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* Chapters 21–30, including recitation of the Book of Exodus, from the beginning of the Book to Chapter 24. From Chapter
17. 31, verses 12–18. Chapters 32, 33, 34. From Chapter 35, verses 1–3. From the Book of Leviticus
18. Chapters: 11, 12, 16, 17, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27. From the Book of Psalms, psalms
19. 3, 13, 15, 67, 95.
20. Fifth stage.
21. *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* Chapters 31–44. The Book of Numbers, from Chapter 6, verses 22–27, Chapters 9, 10, 11,
22. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 28, 29, 30, 32, 33,
23. 34, 35, 36. The Book of Deuteronomy should be read in whole. Only in some places the verses inappropriate
24. /for reading/<sup>12</sup> should be omitted, this means: in Chapter 22, only verses 13–29 should be recited; in Chapter 27, only
25. verses 20–24. After them, from the Book of Joshua Chapters 1, 10, 22, 23, 24. The Book of Judges
26. should be read in whole. From the Book of Psalms, psalms 19, 24, 25, 29, 96, 97, 98.
27. Sixth stage.
28. The Book of Samuel, the First and the Second one. The Book of Kings, the First and the Second one. The Scroll of Esther. From the Book of Psalms, psalms 6, 20, 21,
29. 32, 33, 84, 86, 90, 91, 92, 103, 115, 118, 137, 148. And boys should be taught
30. sayings taken from the Proverbs of Solomon, as it is noted in the book *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim*, in part 2, pages 1[10], 111, 112<sup>13</sup> by heart.

<sup>12</sup> The word לקריאה added above the line.

<sup>13</sup> A reference to the edition of *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* from Odessa 1869, part 2.

31. Note: individual cases, which are not specified in this list, the teacher will be able to
32. supplement with oral explanations, especially if the boys need help in understanding the sayings
33. which were read. Besides, as far as possible, efforts should be made to teach them to write clearly and nicely.
34. To avoid making this order of teaching too burdensome for the school-boys, the scholar ribbi Eliyyahu Kazaz promised to arrange presently
35. a way of teaching from his book *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim* in a different manner, most easy and correct.

Folio 19 recto includes recommendations for the curriculum for girls. We read there:

#### סדר הלמוד לבנות הקראים

1. קריאת לשוננו הקדושה, מקרא, ואם מן האפשר גם הכתיבה, תפלה קצרה, ואיזה ברכות : כמו, ברכה קדם ואחר הלמוד, ברכת "המוציא", ברכת המזון, ברכת השנה, ברכת
2. ההשכמה, עם תרגומיהן, בין בלשון רוססי בין בלשון טטר, למוד ספורי כתבי הקדש (ובין מעל פה המלמד בין מעל ספר בלשון רוססי או בלשון אחרת) מצורף עם באור עקרי האמונה ועניני המועדים ומצות התורה היותר חמורות.
3. בו יוקרידא גוסטורולן טרטיב לרא מוטאליב תפלה לר נברכה לר לעזימי גיבי סדר אולונמאלידיר,
4. חכם שמואל פנפולוב
5. חזן יצחק סולטנסכי
6. חזן יהודה סאווסקן
7. חזן דק"ק כפא בבאג'ן בבאי
8. חזן דק"ק פולטווא יע"א<sup>14</sup> שמחה דובינסכי
9. חזן דק"ק גוזלווא שמואל נאמן,
10. אליהו בן אליה ז"ל קאזו.

<sup>14</sup> יגן עליה אלהים.



## Translation:

## “The order of teaching for Karaite girls”

1. Reading of our holy language, the Bible, and as far as possible, also writing, short prayer, some
2. blessings, for instance, the blessing before and after study, the blessing of *ham-Mošî*’ (who bringest forth), the blessing of food, bedtime blessing, a blessing
3. after getting up – along with their translations, into the Russian or Tatar language, learning stories from the Holy Scriptures
4. (from the teacher’s mouth or from a book in Russian or another language), together with an explanation of the articles
5. of faith and issues related to the holidays and those commandments of the Torah which are the most weighty.
6. Appropriate prayers and blessings, as well as [some] order are required for the arrangements
7. presented above.
8. *Ḥakham* Shemuel Panpulov.<sup>15</sup>
9. *Ḥazzan* Işhaq Sultanski.<sup>16</sup>
10. *Ḥazzan* Yufuda Sauskan.<sup>17</sup>
11. *Ḥazzan* of the holy community Kaffa Babağan Babay.
12. *Ḥazzan* of the holy community Poltava, may God protect it, Simḥa Dubinski.<sup>18</sup>
13. *Ḥazzan* of the holy community Gözleve Shemuel *Ne’eman*.<sup>19</sup>
14. Eliyyahu ben Eliyyahu, of blessed memory, Kazaz.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Panpulov, Samuil Moiseyevich (1831–1911), *ḥakham* of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory in the years 1879–1911. Cf. ELYASHEVICH 1993: 156–158.

<sup>16</sup> Sultanski, Isaak Mordekhayevich (1824–1899). At that time, in position of the *ḥazzan* in the community of Bakhchysaray. Cf. ELYASHEVICH 1993: 181–182.

<sup>17</sup> The *ḥazzan* in the community of Odessa.

<sup>18</sup> Sima Khilkievich Dubinski (1856–1902). At that time, *ḥazzan* in Poltava. Cf. ELYASHEVICH 1993: 43–44.

<sup>19</sup> Samuil Moiseyevich Neyman (1814–1916). Cf. ELYASHEVICH 1993: 150–151.

<sup>20</sup> Ilya Ilich Kazaz (Kazas) (1833–1912), director of the Alexander School of *Ḥazzans* (the Alexander Karaite Religious School) in Gözleve (Eupatoria), founded in 1895, and adviser to the *ḥakham* Panpulov. Cf. ELYASHEVICH 1993: 79–82; PROHOROV 2005.

This programme was most definitely prepared for the Alexandrian Karaite Theological School in Eupatoria, which was established in 1895. However, it was also adopted as an obligatory programme in all the schools of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory where Karaite children were taught. The programme was to be implemented on the basis of the handbook of Eliyyahu Kazaz *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim*. Its author was one of the signatories of the resolution under discussion, and probably its initiator. As the headmaster of the Alexandrian Karaite School, he was undoubtedly a very influential person, and in fact, was the author of the new programme. It also is noteworthy that in 1896, a new, second and revised, edition of his book<sup>21</sup> was published. It was evidently prepared by Kazaz for the needs of the new education programme. In comparison to the first edition of this textbook from 1869,<sup>22</sup> many changes were introduced regarding the contents and arrangement of the material. In addition to this, the language of the explanations was changed. Instead of Crimean Tatar text written with Hebrew letters, Russian text written in the Cyrillic script was used in the second edition. This change seems symptomatic of the new educational policy of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory, which opened the Karaite community to assimilation and integration into Russian society. Indubitably, the new programme resulted to a great extent from the educational policy and legal acts of the Russian authorities; however, the limited scope of the teaching of Hebrew and the Karaite religion (to only two or three years and three hours per week) was a deliberate decision, favouring a good general education over a knowledge of the holy language and literature in that language. Certainly, the resolutions of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory were only a part of the new extensive policy that confronted the Karaites' emancipation, and the general social and economic changes in Russia during that period.

It should be emphasized that this new policy was considered controversial and was criticized by many members of the Karaite community. A different approach is well illustrated by two preserved statements of Karaite activists from that period, Avraham Kokkey and Shemuel Pigit. They were formulated

<sup>21</sup> *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim. Prakticheskiy Uchebnik Drevneyevreyskavo Yazyka dlya Karaimskikh Uchilishch (Practical textbook of the Ancient Hebrew language for Karaite Schools).*

<sup>22</sup> *Le-Regel ha-Yeladim. Lelammed Na'are Bene Mikgra Lešon Ever. Uchebnik Drevnevreyevskavo Yazyka dlya Karaimskikh Shkol (To teach the Hebrew language to the Karaite young men. Practical Textbook of the Ancient Hebrew language for Karaite Schools).*

a few years after the new programme was implemented, when its implications had already become noticeable.

In the introduction to his *Ohel Avraham*,<sup>23</sup> a primer of the Hebrew language published in 1903, Avraham Kokkey highlights the rapid decline of the teaching of Hebrew and the loss of the knowledge of Hebrew in the younger generation. He writes that school-age children spend little time learning the language of the “holy Torah”, because they are overburdened with other duties. Consequently, young Karaites have only a limited knowledge of the principles and practices of their religion. Referring to their dim knowledge of Hebrew, he states “they do not know how to read even one syllable properly”, “they cannot even distinguish between *alef*, *he*, *het* and *ayin*”, “they are not used to distinguishing *şere* from *hireq* and also *qameş raḥav* from *qameş ḥatuf*”, and “their writing is poor”. He notes that they cannot even recite the prayers.<sup>24</sup> As a reason for this situation, he points to the decline of Karaite education, a lack of appropriate textbooks, and an inadequate school curriculum, in which learning Hebrew has been reduced to a minimum and replaced with learning Russian and secular subjects.

Similarly, Pigit writes in his book *Davar Davur*, which was published in 1904:<sup>25</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

<sup>23</sup> Cf. KOKKEY 1903: 5–6.

<sup>24</sup> Cf. KOKKEY 1903: 6:

[...] כאשר אנחנו רואים עתה, על פי הרוב התלמידים אשר עשו בבית למודם זמן רב בימים ההם אינם יודעים לקרוא הברה אחת כדרכה, ולא יוכלו להבדיל אף בין אותיות אהח"ע ד"מ קראים במקום א-ה ובמקום ח-ע או להפך, ובמקום ש-ימנית ש-שמאלית וכדומה וגם מהנקודות לא הרגלו להפריש בין צרי ובין חירק וגם בין קמץ רחב לקמץ חטוף, כי כלנה חסרון גדול, והמה מחריבי העולם כמאמר אדוננו מורנו ורבנו החכם האלהי אהרון הרופא זצ"ל בעל המבחר, וגם כתיבתם דלה, ועוד חסרון גדול מהנהגה, אשר לא הרגלו ולא למדו לדעת לתת שבה יהודיה לבוראנו יתעלה, ולברכהו בשמו על חסדו אשר גמל עליו [...]

<sup>25</sup> Cf. PIGIT 1904: 213–217 (note).

דור החדש הקם עתה תחת אבותם אינם יודעים לא את העברית, ולא את הזארגאן. המה לומדים לבד רוסית. בלי ספק בדור כזה לא יהיה עוד בקרב לבס רוח יהדות כלל וכלל. וזהו צעד גדול להתבולל בעמים. ועוד דורות שנים שלשה אשר יקומו אחריהם לא יכירו את מקורם כי מבני ישראל המה, ויתערבו בגוים ויבואו בקרבם ולא יודע כי באו אל קרבנה. (214)

[...] ועד אחרית המאה העשרים הזאת לספירת הנוצרים, בלי ספק לא ימצא בקרבנו בין אזרחי מלכות רוסיה יר"ה יודע ומבין טטרית וטורקית כלל וכלל. (215)

ואין חשש אם היתה משתכחת לשון טורקית והליטראטורא הנ"ל מפינו ומפי זרענו. אבל לדאבון נפשנו עמהן יחד נכרת ממנו למוד לשוננו הקדושה. ולמודי ספרי הקדש גם המה כזר נחשבו לנו בימינו אלה, ולימים אשר יבואו אין יודע מה יהיה גורלנו? זאת לנו ימים יודיעו. (216–217)

to assimilate into peoples. Within two or three more generations which will 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 next: "[...] and by the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> 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. No one knows what our fate will be. The time will show us."

There is a likelihood that the curriculum for the schools which was introduced in the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory and officially enacted in 1898 also had an impact on the curricula in the schools in the Polish-Lithuanian communities. The data here are incomplete, as the Archive of the Troki Spiritual Consistory was lost.<sup>26</sup> Nevertheless, this impact can be noticed in the correspondence between representatives of the two consistories preserved in the Archive of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory. In a letter of 20 June 1897,<sup>27</sup> representatives of the Troki Spiritual Consistory asked the authority of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory (in the Russian language) for the official Hebrew language and religion curricula in the Alexandria Karaite Theological School in Eupatoria, as a Karaite (primary) school was to be opened in Troki in September 1897, and in order to present them to the education authority official (the headmaster of school) of the Vilna Governorate. In reply, a letter was sent (on 4 August 1897; in the Russian language, as well) to the above-mentioned education authority official with a description of the curricula.<sup>28</sup> It informed that the Alexandrian Karaite Theological School in Eupatoria functioned as a religious school supervised by the *hakham* of the Taurida and Odessa Spiritual Consistory and a public primary school under

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<sup>26</sup> Cf. A-SKI 1924: 22.

<sup>27</sup> The State Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Fond 241, opus 1, number 728, fol. 14 recto.

<sup>28</sup> The State Archive of the Autonomous Republic of Crimea, Fond 241, opus 1, number 728, fol. 15 recto–16 recto.

the supervision of the education authority (school officials) of the Taurida Governorate. The faculty consisted of two teachers of “the language of the Torah” and one teacher of the Russian language and arithmetic; the first two were paid by the Spiritual Consistory and the third by the Ministry (i.e. the Ministry of People’s Enlightenment). The public primary school was a two-grade school whose curriculum was divided into five terms (three in the first grade and two in the second one). The Hebrew language (the holy language) was taught during five terms, whereas the Russian language and arithmetic were taught from the second to the fifth term. The Russian language was the language of instruction; however, it was explained that earlier (i.e. until the school year 1896–1897) teaching was conducted in “the language used in poor houses of Karaite families, in the dialect of Tatar”. This change resulted from the order of the Taurida and Odessa *hakham*. The attached curriculum for primary school students includes the following description (cf. fol. 15 verso – 16 recto): “During the first term, teaching reading and writing. During the second term, teaching the pupils fluent, mechanical reading, from the grammar §§ 1–7, from a practical textbook {of the ancient Hebrew language}<sup>29</sup> of Kazas, including oral and written translation, from the ancient {Hebrew} Biblical into Russian and from Russian into ancient {Hebrew} Biblical, of the words included in given paragraphs, and including learning the vocabulary which refers to them. During the third term, from the Holy Scripture, translating the Book of Genesis. From the grammar §§ 8–24, from the quoted textbook, including oral and written exercises and vocabulary learning. During the fourth term, from the Holy Scripture, translating {the Books of Exodus} the b. of Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers. From the grammar §§ 25–34, from this textbook with exercises. During the fifth term, from the Holy Scripture, translating the Book of Deuteronomy. From the grammar §§ 35–44, from the textbook by Kazas. At the end, learning the nine fables in prose, featured in these paragraphs, by heart. During the recent stage, lectures for pupils are given (in the form of) oral conversations in Russian on primary dogmas of the Karaite faith.” At the end of the letter, it was explained that the Russian language and arithmetic were taught in accordance with the primary education curriculum of the Ministry of People’s Enlightenment.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Cancellation marks.

<sup>30</sup> I would like to give my acknowledgments to Veronika Klimova for translating this letter.

It can be concluded from this correspondence that the programme adopted in 1898, which changed the traditional model of education, served as a model for the curriculum of the Karaite public school in Troki, as well. Unfortunately, we are not able to explain if the textbook of Kazaz was also used as a basic manual in the schools of the Troki Spiritual Consistory. In the archives, I managed to find only one mention of the textbook of Kazaz dated 1937. It is quoted in a report on the teaching programme in the Karaite community of Luck, signed by the *hazzan* Rafał Abkowicz.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> It is quoted as *Podręcznik języka hebrajskiego – J.Kazasa* (The textbook of Hebrew language by J. Kazas). Cf. The Wróblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, F 143–1023, fol. 147r. It seems however that it was only one of the textbooks used by *hazzan* Abkowicz in his teaching work. According to an oral account of his great-granddaughter Mariola Abkowicz, he also used the textbook *Rešit Ḥokhma* by Magnus Kryński (edited many times, among others in Warsaw, 1923). On Magnus Kryński see: [http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnus\\_Kryński](http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Magnus_Kryński). I would like to give my acknowledgment to Mariola Abkowicz for this information.

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**Małgorzata Machcińska** is a PhD student in the Institute of Linguistics at Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań. In 2014, she published her first article “*Regulamin dla szkoły karaimskiej: polska edycja rękopisu Abrahama Firkowicza*” (*Rules for a Karaite school: the Polish Edition of Avraham Firkowicz’s Manuscript*). The article includes a critical edition of the manuscript F946, op. 1, 185 from the collection of the National Library of Russia, cf. *Jewish History Quarterly* 251, 2014, 529–545.