

# Jewish History *and* Jewish Memory

*Essays in Honor of*

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## 6 CREATING A TALE OF MARTYRDOM IN TULCZYN, 1648

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Among the most poignant descriptions in Jewish historiography in the premodern period must rank the tale of the Jews of Tulczyn, who, together with local Poles, met a frightening death at the hands of Cossack and peasant attackers in June 1648. The tale of mass Jewish martyrdom in Tulczyn was told by a number of contemporary Hebrew chroniclers but perhaps none of the stories is better known than the one found in *Yeven metsulah* (*Abyss of Despair*), Nathan Hanover's story of the fate of Polish and Lithuanian Jewry during the Chmielnicki rebellion in 1648–1649.<sup>1</sup>

Modern historians have questioned the veracity of a number of aspects of Hanover's chronicle, particularly the numerical data, stressing instead the work's importance as a reflection of contemporary Jewish attitudes and an attempt to convey an image of Polish Jewry to survivors and Jews elsewhere.<sup>2</sup> Yet the specific question of Jewish martyrdom in Tulczyn, central to Hanover's narrative and perhaps to the work's place in the collective memory of Polish Jewry, has not been examined.

All sources, Polish, Ukrainian, and Hebrew, concur that there was a massacre in Tulczyn in late June 1648 in which large numbers of Poles and Jews were slaughtered.<sup>3</sup> There is, however, no unanimity in the chronicles of the events of 1648–1649 regarding what actually happened during the massacre, particularly with respect to the Jews.<sup>4</sup> None of the Hebrew chroniclers, including Hanover, witnessed the events in Tulczyn. To be sure, Hanover was an eyewitness to certain events in his town of Zasław, but as the Cossacks drew near, he and his family fled the town for Międzyrzecz.<sup>5</sup> Hanover did not see events elsewhere.<sup>6</sup> He heard about the fate of Jews in a number of places from those who survived the carnage as he sometimes noted.<sup>7</sup> After the events of 1648–1649, Hanover wandered westward, preaching in various towns as he crossed the German lands, eventually arriving in Amsterdam and later Venice. No doubt, his travels afforded him additional opportunities to hear the stories of survivors who had migrated to the west.<sup>8</sup> Yet Hanover's primary sources of information about the events in Tulczyn in 1648 were the three Hebrew chronicles of 1648–1649 whose publication preceded that of *Yeven metsulah*: (1) Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn's *Tsok ha-'ittim* (*Cry of the Times*), published in Cracow, 1650; (2) Rabbi Shabbetai ben Me'ir Katz's so-called *Megillat 'efah* (*Scroll of Terror*) that served as an introduction to his *Selihot ve-kinot*, or penitential prayers and dirges, that appeared in

Amsterdam in 1651; and (3) *Petah teshuvah* (*An Opening for Repentance*) by Gabriel Shusburg, Amsterdam, 1651.<sup>9</sup> At times Hanover copied from these works verbatim, at other times he paraphrased, and in some instances he took events said to have happened elsewhere and wove them into his own tale of Tulczyn.<sup>10</sup> Without ever acknowledging his debt, Hanover used each of these accounts of 1648 to create his own story of the massacre of Jews in Tulczyn (see Appendix).

Hanover's single most important source in developing the story of Tulczyn was Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczepbrzeszyn's *Tsok ha-'ittim*.<sup>11</sup> From here, Hanover took not only numerous phrases but specific information, such as the number of soldiers in the fortress in Tulczyn (600) as well as the number of Jews in the town (2,000).<sup>12</sup> The stirring cry of Rabbi Aaron urging the Jews not to attack the Poles for fear of the consequences to other Jewish communities that appeared in *Tsok ha-'ittim* was altered slightly and retold in *Yeven metsulah*. Hanover did not, however, copy blindly. Me'ir ben Samuel recorded that Duke Janusz Czetwertyński was killed by Eastern Orthodox who "brutally cut off his head with a saw." Hanover refined this and noted that a former serf who had worked in Czetwertyński's flour mill "brutally cut off his [Czetwertyński's] head with a saw" to avenge earlier mistreatment. This account is in fundamental agreement with rumors recorded by a member of the Polish nobility, Adam Mielżyński, and conveyed to a colleague in a letter dated 18 August 1648.<sup>13</sup> Me'ir ben Samuel reported that Czetwertyński's wife was raped and killed by the Cossacks; Hanover mentioned her rape, no more. Perhaps she was raped, but she was certainly not killed as she remarried some years later.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to copying details about events in Tulczyn from Me'ir ben Samuel, Hanover essentially followed the organization of *Tsok ha-'ittim*. Both works began their descriptions of Tulczyn by listing the number of Jews seeking protection there, followed by a discussion of the pact between the Poles and the Jews and the Jews' active and initially successful role in defending the town.<sup>15</sup> The Cossacks' plan, the nobles' acquiescence to their demands, the Jews' angry response, the soliloquy of a rabbinic leader, and the acceptance of his plea differ in some details, but all follow the same pattern in both works. However, while Hanover followed Me'ir ben Samuel's lead in developing the story of Tulczyn, he made several significant emendations, the most striking of which was his portrayal of how, just before the massacre of Tulczyn Jewry, the Eastern Orthodox offered the Jews the possibility of escaping death.<sup>16</sup> Hanover wrote, "After these things one of their intermediaries appeared, and planting a banner in the ground, he said to them in a loud voice: 'Whoever wishes to change his faith and remain alive, let him sit under this banner.' No one answered him. Thus he announced three times and no one responded. Immediately the gate of the garden opened and the infuriated mob rushed in and killed a large number of Jews."<sup>17</sup>

An offer of salvation through conversion had indeed appeared in the story of Tulczyn in *Tsok ha-'ittim*. Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczepbrzeszyn had written:

With black flags and strange noises, they fell upon the Jews who were weak, exhausted,

and powerless (Isa. 40:29). And they killed the Jews with sharpened swords; the young and the old, parents and children.

The Jews fell on their faces in order that they not see the atrocities and the killing of their children. And the children cried out to the Lord their God. And they [the attackers] stood over them like army officers and asked them if they would convert to Eastern Orthodoxy. If so, they will live and if not they will die like their fathers and fall on the corpses of their dead.

Immediately they stretched forth their necks to be slaughtered and they said, "let our blood be accepted as a sacrifice." And they gave praise and glory to God.<sup>18</sup>

In *Tsok ha-'ittim*, only a segment of the community—apparently the young—was offered salvation through conversion. While these particular victims defiantly proclaimed their belief in the One God, the work leaves the impression that not everyone had a similar opportunity.

How Jews died was not merely an academic issue for Hanover. In his introduction to *Yeven metsulah*, Hanover had declared that the Cossack attacks of 1648–1649 were intended "to destroy His chosen Israel" by giving the Jews the choice of conversion or death.<sup>19</sup> Such a characterization of the Cossack revolt, with its inherent opportunity for an unambiguous rejection of Christianity through Jewish martyrdom, made the story of the Jews of Tulczyn critical to Hanover's narrative. The martyrdom of the Jews of Tulczyn would be the example par excellence of what Hanover had said in his prefatory remarks was the paradigmatic Jewish response to the Cossack threat: "the Jews, however, heeded not their words but stretched out their necks to be slaughtered for the sanctification of His Holy Name."<sup>20</sup> No less significantly, within the frame of reference of mid-seventeenth-century Polish Jewry, a community that adhered to traditional religious values, defiant martyrdom would not only glorify the victims of 1648–1649 but place the tragedies squarely within the continuum of perceived medieval Ashkenazic piety and religious heroism.<sup>21</sup>

The story of Jewish martyrdom as found in *Tsok ha-'ittim*, however, was not compelling enough to accomplish this. If Hanover was to emphasize the religious fealty of Polish Jewry in its time of despair and successfully place 1648 in the tradition of past tragedies, a more resolute image of martyrdom would be necessary, one that could serve as a model of Polish Jewry's response to the events of 1648–1649 and, by association, bring all Jewish victims of Chmielnicki within the Ashkenazic ideal of martyrdom.<sup>22</sup> Hanover therefore enhanced his story of Tulczyn.

Unfortunately for Hanover, neither of the other two major Hebrew sources available to him offered more vivid examples of Jewish martyrdom in Tulczyn. Quite the contrary. Katz and Shusburg made no mention of classic martyrdom in Tulczyn, that is, cases in which given the choice between death and conversion to Christianity, Jews chose to die. In *Megillat 'efah*, the Jews of Tulczyn were simply mercilessly slaughtered;<sup>23</sup> in *Petah teshuvah*, although deemed martyrs by Shusburg, the Jews accepted death in order not to endanger Jews elsewhere, not as an unequivocal rejection of Greek Orthodoxy. Only late in his narrative, almost as an afterthought, did Shusburg tell of how they rejected the

temptation of conversion while they sat in thirst and hunger awaiting their fate.<sup>24</sup> A glowing example of martyrdom in 1648 was, however, to be found in Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn, Shushburg, and Katz's description of the massacre of the Jews of Gomel', a town in the easternmost region of Lithuania, north of Kiev. Each portrayed Gomel' as being one of the outstanding, if not *the* outstanding, example of classic martyrdom in 1648.<sup>25</sup>

In his portrayal of events in Gomel', events that Katz, a resident of Vilnius at the time, did not see, Katz described how Cossacks tried to tempt the Jewish community to "worship our gods." Jews were promised that if they agreed to apostatize, not only would they be spared but they would come to enjoy wealth and power. According to Katz, the Jewish response was unequivocal. Not only did the Jews reject any notion of apostasy but they cried out: "to God who dwells in the heavens, 'Hear Lord our God, the one God, King of the worlds, "Because for You we are killed all the day" (Ps. 44.23).<sup>26</sup> "Lord, God of Israel, give a perfect lot [1 Sam. 14.41 with Rashi's comments]. We will not sit with vain men nor will we join with scoundrels" [see Ps. 26.4]. And they admitted their sins and said, "We are guilty." They submitted themselves to Divine punishment and said, "The Lord's ways are perfect."<sup>27</sup>

Yet an even more powerful description of martyrdom in Gomel' was to be found in *Tsok ha-'ittim*, where the very R. Eliezer who assumed such a central role in admonishing the Jews of Tulczyn to die a martyr's death in *Yeven metsulah* not only entreated the Jews of Gomel' to stand firm and die as martyrs but he himself was a model of such behavior:

The rabbi, our master and strength, the brilliant Rabbi Eliezer, the head of the rabbinic court in our generation, may the Lord avenge his blood, "My brothers, remember the killing of our brothers who were martyred for the sake of our God. We too will stretch forth our necks and merit eternal life according to our suffering because there is no holiness like the Lord, our God." The rabbi called, "Our brothers, come forward, stretch out your necks, make haste and do His word. You will see me and you will do the same and with the martyring of your souls you will inherit the Garden of Eden. And all your enemies will be embarrassed." Immediately, thousands were willing to give up their lives. They rejected this world and sanctified the Holy Name.

The aforementioned head of the yeshiva martyred himself first for the Great God and answered and said in happiness and joy, "I am not coming to an end; at the very same time I will ascend to heaven and I will attain and rise up to the Garden of Eden. Perhaps I will be accepted as an *'olah* offering."

The venerable and elderly, young men and women, saw the torment, the wounds, the breaking [of bones], the strange and difficult deaths; that the rabbi was tormented with troubles and from his mouth went forth pure words and he did not listen to the strangeness [i.e., the temptation of conversion?] and he admonished his brothers with warnings that they should die a martyr's death for the sake of the Creator.

Our brothers, our flesh and blood, were pure. They all yelled out, "our master and teacher, we have heard your words, the words of God. If we have sinned against God then how sweet it will be to the Lord our God that with the blood of our souls we will stretch forth our necks to the slaughter. Maybe this will atone for our sins."

All those standing there opened their mouths and said in unison, boys and girls in awe and fear: "We will forgive one another and the Almighty will forgive us and we will give

our souls to the Lord and our flesh to the terrible waters. And our enemies, the seed of the Greeks [the Eastern Orthodox], will raise our souls to He who dwells in heaven." They said to the empty ones [the Eastern Orthodox]: "Fulfill your wishes. Do with us as you see fit and we will not worship according to your religion because of the fear (of Heaven) that is of old and the love of Our Blessed God who will resurrect us to live in the everlasting day." And when the Cossacks heard this they attacked the Jews and wounded them with clubs so that they should not die quickly. And the rebellious Greek attackers killed many Jews who were loved in their lives and who in their deaths were not separated (from God).<sup>28</sup>

What eased the blending of the tale of Gomel' into that of Tulczyn was Katz's claim that the massacre in Gomel' took place on the very Friday in June 1648 on which Tulczyn Jewry was destroyed. Katz's specific differentiation between the two events notwithstanding, the date alone created an instant connection between the events and effectively offered Hanover additional material with which to create a legend of classic Jewish martyrdom in Tulczyn.

Hanover did not simply transpose this account of events in Gomel' onto Tulczyn but appears to have been inspired by it. The Gomel' story supplied a model of defiant communal rejection of idolatry, something that was missing in the story of Tulczyn as told in *Tsok ha-'ittim*. Here all the Jews of the town were forced to choose between Christianity and death, and death was the unanimous choice. That Hanover, who wanted to accentuate martyrdom, simply gleaned from the story of Gomel' was only natural.<sup>29</sup>

To be sure, Hanover looked to other Hebrew sources for material.<sup>30</sup> Neither the testimonies of Jews who survived the attacks of 1648–49 nor the printed Hebrew Chronicles were the only sources available to Hanover in composing *Yeven metsulah*. In an age and region where religion stood at the center of Jewish self-expression, *kinot* (dirges) were composed almost immediately after the events to perpetuate within the rubric of prayer the memory of those who perished. In Hanover's description of Tulczyn, R. Eliezer charged the people to die a martyr's death together with rabbis Solomon and Chaim, rabbis that do not appear in the Gomel'<sup>31</sup> story but do, however, recall characters from Ephraim ben Joseph of Września's dirge about the Jews of Niemirów, where "three shepherds of Israel and heads of *yeshivot*" were slaughtered in the town.<sup>32</sup> Such martyrs were most appropriate candidates to help exhort the people of Tulczyn to die rather than accept Greek Orthodoxy. As for the nature of the offer to convert by sitting under the banner, the image of asking a Jew to submit to an idolatrous authority in an indirect fashion was familiar to every Jew who knew the story of Hannah and her seven sons.<sup>33</sup>

If comparisons to other sources raise questions about the historical reliability of the story of Tulczyn as found in *Yeven metsulah*, an examination of other contemporary accounts of events in Tulczyn only strengthen doubts about Hanover's tale.

The Hebrew chronicles were not the first documented accounts of the fate of the Jews in Tulczyn in 1648. On 8 July 1648, a member of the local government in Lwów, Samuel Kuszewicz (1607–1666), reported to Warsaw that after a military struggle the Cossack commander Maksym Kryvonis and his followers had

captured Tulczyn and had killed many Catholic priests, nobles, and Jews there.<sup>34</sup> Two weeks earlier, on 24 June 1648, Kuszewicz had noted that the Cossacks were killing randomly without distinction for religion, gender, or age.<sup>35</sup> According to Kuszewicz's reports, the Cossacks sought to kill as many people as they could. Calculated offers of salvation to Jews who would convert to Greek Orthodoxy do not appear to have been part of their battle plan.<sup>36</sup>

Just a number of weeks after the devastation in Tulczyn, on 6 August 1648, a young Jewish man came to the rabbinic court in Lwów with testimony regarding the marital status of a woman whose husband was thought to have been murdered in Tulczyn during the Cossack attacks. The man gave the following eyewitness testimony in Judeo-German that was recorded by the court:

And about eight days before the killing in Tulczyn, R. Leb and his brother, the young man, [Eli]melech from Krotniza(?), came. Then there was an attack and they did not want to allow anyone to leave; and with great difficulty and with the aid of the noble everyone fled from Komrahid(?) and came to Tulczyn. Also Leb son of Pesah and his brother [Eli]melech were in danger there and I was with them with others in the fortress . . . and so the noble, Duke Czetwertyński made a compromise with the Cossacks and turned over the Jews. And so, on Thursday, they took prisoners to the commander of the fortress, a man from Uman. Then on Friday, the peasants ran into the courtyard before the fortress and Jeremiah was standing there with members of his family in a corner at the edge of the place. Also R. Leb, the previously mentioned R. Pesah, and [Eli]melech's brother were all standing in the corner at the edge [of the area] and I was standing with them. After that [i.e., the entrance of the peasants], I ran from them with other people and I immediately saw that they raised up the people who were in that very corner to kill them. I saw that Jeremiah's wife was killed as well as my father's wife. The people who were there were killed and no one could escape since there were thousands of peasants in the fortress. Whoever tried to escape was killed there. In general, no one escaped the slaughter, only those who were in the best physical condition and whoever was very fast. I was among the first to run out through the cemetery.<sup>37</sup>

The witness's sworn statement indeed supported the contention that the Jews were given over to the Cossacks by Czetwertyński.<sup>38</sup> There was no mention, however, of an offer to the Jews to convert or of mass martyrdom in Tulczyn. According to the testimony, there appears to have been mass hysteria during the attack. Those who were physically able tried desperately to run from the slaughter. There was no report of organized resistance or brave communal acceptance of death as Hanover claimed. Additional testimony from Lwów was given the very following day (7 August 1648) by a second eyewitness, who told of how he and a comrade had fled the killings in Tulczyn and hid in the forest. There his friend was found by the Cossacks and brutally attacked. He died screaming for his companion to save him.<sup>39</sup>

If there were instances of martyrdom in Tulczyn, neither of these two witnesses, men who were present in Tulczyn at the time of the massacre, made any mention of it. Perhaps more significantly, neither tried to associate either themselves or their loved ones who died in the town with martyrs and martyrdom.<sup>40</sup> They evidenced no embarrassment in stating that the Jews who had died in Tulczyn had been mercilessly killed by their attackers and that they themselves and others had tried to flee for their lives.

One seemingly impartial Hebrew source did, however, suggest that there was martyrdom, perhaps even mass martyrdom, in Tulczyn. In the responsa of R. Gershon Ashkenazi (ca. 1620–1698) appears a question with respect to an *agunah* (a woman who cannot remarry because the fate of her husband remains legally uncertain) named Temril dating from after the spring of 1652.<sup>41</sup> Three testimonies were brought to support the claim that Temril's husband, Moses ben Samuel, the former beadle of Luboml, had been killed in Tulczyn during the carnage in June 1648. While two of the accounts simply noted that Moses had been killed in Tulczyn, the third witness, Judah Leb Katz, reported the following: "It is true that we who are signed below know with total certainty and it is as clear to us as day that Mr. Moses ben Samuel, who was called by all Ber Mirver and who was the beadle in our community, the holy community of Luboml, was killed for the sake of the Holy Name [*ve-neharag 'al kiddush ha-Shem*] like the other holy ones who were killed for the sake of the Name."<sup>42</sup> This perception of events in Tulczyn would appear to support the contention that individuals, if not the entire community, died martyrs' deaths during the Cossack assault on Tulczyn. R. Ashkenazi, however, did not think so.

In considering the legal admissibility of Katz's testimony, R. Ashkenazi, who had studied in Poland before serving as a rabbi in Moravia and later in Vienna, noted that

... there is room for some doubt [in Katz's testimony] since perhaps this that he said, "it is clear as day to us that he died a martyr's death," means that it is clear to him that he [Moses] did not apostatize and not [that it was clear to him] that he was killed. And so it seems somewhat from his language since he said, "like the other holy ones who were killed for the sanctity of the Name." This implies that he only came to say that he [Moses] was killed as a Jew and that he had not apostatized, for if this is not so, why did he compare it to the others who died?

In the context of a legal discussion in which he expressed grave reservations about allowing Temril to remarry, R. Ashkenazi was willing to interpret Katz to mean that Moses had been killed as—but not necessarily because of being—a Jew.<sup>43</sup> According to R. Ashkenazi, the phrase *neharag 'al kiddush ha-Shem* that traditionally meant "killed for the sake of the sanctity of the Name" did not mean martyrdom but rather "killed while still attached to the Divine Name," that is, as a Jew. Using Katz's comparison of Moses' death to that of the other Jewish victims in Tulczyn to support his argument, Ashkenazi concluded that Katz had testified that, like the other Jews in Tulczyn, Moses had remained a Jew; he was not a martyr.<sup>44</sup> That the phrase *kiddush ha-Shem* in the context of Tulczyn did not conjure up immediate images of mass martyrdom suggests that R. Ashkenazi did not know of Tulczyn as a place of heroic Jewish resistance. If he had, his seemingly novel interpretation would have certainly sullied the name of a holy community and its martyrs.

Indirect testimony from a Jew in an Arabic source from the years immediately following the publication of the Hebrew chronicles also made no correlation between Tulczyn and Jewish martyrdom. Marcarius, patriarch of Antioch, visited



Orthodox countries in Europe from 1652 to 1659 seeking assistance for the Orthodox community in Syria that was experiencing hardships under Turkish rule. The trip was recorded by his son, Paul of Aleppo, who accompanied him on his journey. According to the chronicle, in 1654 the entourage met a Jew whom they asked about Chmielnicki and the Jews:<sup>45</sup>

They questioned the Jew, Yenachi, who was a refugee in Moldavia, regarding the manner in which the hetman Chmielnicki treated Polish Jews. He responded that he massacred and tyrannized, that he was worse with respect to them than Vespasian was during antiquity. We silently laughed to ourselves at his response. He told us of when Chmielnicki appeared in this country and cleansed<sup>46</sup> the land of several thousand Jews. And when he arrived in this place where the wealthy and notable Jews who remained had gathered themselves and sought refuge, in the fortress called Tulczyn, with their provisions and money,<sup>47</sup> they [those in Tulczyn] fortified themselves with cannons, with [gun]powder, and with provisions. The Cossacks came to lay siege to the town and conquer it by sword; they entered the town and killed everyone whom they found with blows of cudgels and logs but not by the sword; there were about 20,000 of the [Cossacks]. They also killed the children in the wombs of their pregnant mothers; they pulled them through with the lance. In this way they exterminated them.<sup>48</sup>

No mention of Jewish martyrdom was to be expected in the report of churchman who spoke proudly of how Chmielnicki had “cleansed (Arabic, *futuh*) the land of several thousand Jews” and had exterminated foreign people from the region leaving only “pure Cossack Orthodox.”<sup>49</sup> If the Eastern Orthodox who participated in the attack on Tulczyn held views of racial purity similar to this clergyman’s, there would have been little room for offers to Jews or anyone else to convert.<sup>50</sup> Moreover, although missionary activities were not unknown in the Eastern Church, such tendencies were far weaker than they were in the Roman Catholic Church.<sup>51</sup>

Unquestionably there were instances in which Jews converted out of fear or due to various tortures in the hope of saving their lives. Some were able to flee to Poland when the opportunity presented itself, where they could resume their lives as Jews, while others tried to endure among the Eastern Orthodox.<sup>52</sup> The number of such conversions was significant enough to prompt King Jan Kazimierz to declare in May 1649 that such Jews could openly return to Judaism.<sup>53</sup> Yet readiness to convert in 1648–1649, as at least one Jew who reportedly told his captors that he wanted to convert found out, was not a guarantee of deliverance because conversion of the Jews (as well as the Poles) to Eastern Orthodoxy was not a goal of the Cossack rebellion.<sup>54</sup> The uprising of 1648–1649 was a political and economic struggle in which religion played a crucial role in self-definition and identifying the enemy but religious doctrine was not the central issue in the conflict.<sup>55</sup> It was Nathan Hanover and other Hebrew chroniclers who made the conversion of the Jews one of the Cossacks’ primary goals of the 1648 revolt. Once presented in this way, the attacks on the Jews became part of a pattern of the past familiar to every Jew. The task of the Hebrew chronicler, as well as of the composers of many of the dirges who accepted this point of view, was to show how the Jews of Poland were faithful bearers of the tradition and, like their forefathers,

withstood temptation and accepted death as Jews rather than life as Christians.<sup>56</sup>

When discussing the fate of Polish Jewry in 1648 in a more neutral context, Hanover lamented the death, destruction, and pauperization of the community but made no mention of martyrdom of any kind.<sup>57</sup> In preparing a chronicle, the challenge was to construct the stage on which Polish Jewry could publicly demonstrate not only its piety but its unwavering faith.

Hanover created his tale of mass martyrdom in Tulczyn by combining stories told of other places and adding classic Jewish motifs of martyrdom. This left readers, very few of whom even in Poland knew the true story of what had happened in Tulczyn, with the image of defiant Jewish resistance to a religious threat. Such an image strengthened the traditional Jewish ideal of martyrdom as well as general religious commitment. More important, it transformed the Jews slaughtered in Tulczyn in June 1648—and by association those killed elsewhere in Poland and Lithuania in 1648–1649—from simple victims of war to classic Jewish martyrs. In the eyes of Nathan Hanover and most likely of his contemporaries as well, this type of memorialization of the Jewish victims of 1648–1649 was far more important than simply trying to reconstruct and record the true fate of the victims for the sake of posterity.

### Notes

1. Nathan Hanover, *Yeven metsulah* (Venice, 1653). Hanover's book was reprinted no less than nineteen times before 1900, including six Yiddish-, one Polish-, one French-, one German-, and two Russian-language editions. No other chronicle of the events of 1648 has enjoyed such broad circulation. A photo-offset of the first edition appears in *Sippure ha-gezerot be-shnot Ta"H ve-Ta"T*, ed. M. Rosman, Texts and Studies no. 19 (Jerusalem, 1981), 23–45. The work has appeared in a generally reliable English translation by Abraham Mesch under the title *Abyss of Despair* (1950; reprinted with a foreword by William Helmsreich, New Brunswick, N.J., 1983). For ease of reference, I have used Mesch's translation, emending when necessary based on the first edition. Hanover's description of the killings in Tulczyn appears on pp. 54–59 of Mesch's text.

2. See Bernard Weinryb, "The Hebrew Chronicles on Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the Cossack-Polish War," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1 (1977): 164, 174–75, 176; and Rosman's introduction to *Sippure ha-gezerot be-shnot Ta"H ve-Ta"T*, ix. Also see Yoel Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah* (Tel Aviv, 1994), 38–42, 60–61.

3. See the material gathered by Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah*, 64–65, 79–80, 88–89, as well as "Letopis' samovidtsa o voynakh Bogdana Khmel'nitskago i o mezhdusobiiakh, byvskikh v Maloi Rossii po ego smerti" (An eyewitness chronicle of the wars of Bogdan Chmielnicki and the inner conflicts that took place in Little Russia after his death), in *Chteniia v obshchestve istorii i drevnostei Rossiiskikh* [Readings in ancient Russian society and history], vol. 2, pt. 1, ed. O. Bodianskii, (1846–1847), 11, a source kindly brought to my attention and provided to me by Dr. Rabba and graciously translated for me by Professor Shimon Redlich.

4. An emphasis on Judeo-German and Hebrew sources is necessitated by the lack of Ukrainian and Polish sources discussing the fate of the Jews in Tulczyn. While Tulczyn holds an important place in Polish historiography as the site of vicious massacres of Poles, the fate of the Jews was not expanded upon in contemporary Polish historiography (see

Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah*, 64–65, 79–80, 88–89). As Frank Sysyn, “The Jewish Factor in the Khmelnytsky Uprising,” in *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. Howard Aster and Peter Potichnjy, 2d ed. (Edmonton, 1990), 46, 51, has noted, the fate of Jews was of little interest to contemporary Polish and Ukrainian chroniclers, just as, it should be added, the fate of others was of little inherent concern to Jewish writers.

5. Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 64–68.

6. See Jacob Shatzky, “Histarish keritisher araynfir tsum ‘Yevev metsulah’ fun R. Natan Neta’ Hanover,” in *Gezeres Ta”H* (Vilnius, 1938), 14–15, who noted that Hanover made numerous geographic errors, underlining his lack of familiarity with the field of battle and suggesting a lack of firsthand knowledge of the events.

7. Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 65–66, 88. Hanover did not specifically mention having heard reports from survivors of Tulczyn.

8. The suggestion that Hanover gathered facts from refugees as he himself traveled in Holland, Germany, and Italy, was made by Shatzky, “Histarish keritisher,” 13–14.

9. A fourth work, *Tit ha-yeven* by Samuel Feitel, also may have been available to Hanover. The work was printed in Venice around 1650 but is essentially a listing of communities destroyed in 1648–1649. Feitel’s entire account of Tulczyn consisted of the following: “and from there they came to Tulczyn and there [in Tulczyn] there were 100 householders and there was a great evil decree there and about 6,000 souls were killed and there remained only a few women.” Such a meager description would have been of limited use to Hanover in preparing his narrative.

10. In trying to create a “chronicle to serve future generations . . . in [a] lucid and intelligible language” (*Abyss of Despair*, 25), Hanover could not simply plagiarize from his predecessors, for each work posed inherent stylistic difficulties for Hanover. Me’ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn and Shushburg both adhered to set rhyme and form. Katz, in particular, but Me’ir ben Samuel and Shushburg as well, made extensive use of biblical verses, making the works difficult to understand for anyone lacking a good knowledge of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, Hanover generally had to reformat information from these sources in his own style.

11. Me’ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn appears to have spent 1648 in Zamość. See the publisher’s introduction to *Tsok ha-ittim* (Cracow, 1650), 1b. A photo-offset of the Cracow 1650 edition appears in *Sippure ha-gezerot*, 1–22.

12. See, for example, *Abyss of Despair*, 55, where a number of brief phrases such as “And as the days passed” and “the Jews understood the trickery” appear in exactly or almost exactly the same form as they are found in Me’ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn, *Tsok ha-ittim*, 3b. Regarding statistical information, cf. *Tsok ha-ittim*, 3b; *Abyss of Despair*, 54.

13. Me’ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn, *Tsok ha-ittim*, 4a; Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 58. Adam Mielżyński reported that the duke was killed by an ax-wielding miller who had been his serf (Jakób Michałowski, *Jakuba Michałowskiego. . . księga pamiętnicza z dawnego rękopisma* [Jakób Michałowski’s memoirs from early manuscripts; Cracow, 1864], no. 61, 157). My thanks to Ms. Magdalena Teter for her assistance in locating information about Czetwertyński.

14. Me’ir ben Samuel of Szczepieszyn, *Tsok ha-ittim*, 4a; Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 57. The 18 August letter from Mielżyński reported that the duchess had been captured and was being held in a “most miserable” Cossack camp (Michałowski, *Jakuba Michałowskiego*, no. 61, 157). On the duchess’s remarriage, see Stanisław Kossakowski, *Monografie historyczno-genealogiczne niektórych rodzin polskich* (A historical-genealogical monograph of some Polish families), 2d ed., vol. 1 (Warsaw, 1876), s.v. “Czetwertyński, Janusz,” 94.

15. Jews were actively involved in communal defense in Poland well before 1648. In the 1620s, Jews helped defend Lwów from Tartar incursions. See Maurycy Horn, *Powinności wojenne Żydów w Rzeczypospolitej w XVI i XVII wieku* [Jewish military service

in the Polish Republic in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries] (Warsaw, 1978), 72, 75, 85–87.

16. Hanover's other notable addition was that, after describing the massacre of over 1,500 Jews in Tulczyn, he recorded that "then the Eastern Orthodox took ten rabbis who were alive and placed them in prison, in irons, to await their ransom for ten thousand gold pieces" (*Abyss of Despair*, 57). This information did not appear in *Tsok ha-'ittim* but originated in Shusburg's *Petah teshuvah*. Here Hanover used Shusburg's work to supplement his primary source, albeit without being totally faithful to Shusburg's own account. In *Petah teshuvah* the Jews of Tulczyn, starved by their captors, agreed to pay 10,000 Polish gold pieces to save their entire community, and the hostages were taken as collateral (7b). There remained a glimmer of hope, however faint, to save their lives. In *Yeven metsulah* the community, was destroyed before the rabbis were taken hostage. Their capture was portrayed by Hanover as but another attempt to pillage an already decimated community, further vilifying the Cossacks without seriously compromising the image of mass martyrdom. While Hanover repeats the same 10,000 gold sum mentioned by Shusburg, the suggestion of Israel Halperin that Hanover relied on eyewitness testimony for his information about the captives cannot be dismissed. See "Shevyah u-fedut be-gezerot Ukra'enah ve-Lita' she-mi-shenat TaH ve-'ad shenat TaT," reprinted in his *Yehudim ve-Yahadut bemizrah Eropah* (Jerusalem, 1979), 217.

17. Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 56–57.

18. Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn, *Tsok ha-'ittim*, 4a.

19. Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 23, 27. A similar notion is found in the publisher's introduction to *Tsok ha-'ittim*, 1b. Hanover evidenced greater historical sophistication elsewhere in *Yeven metsulah* where he attributed the Cossack rebellion to additional causes including the Poles' poor treatment of the Eastern Orthodox (*Abyss of Despair*, 29–33, 38).

20. See Hanover, *Abyss of Despair*, 23.

21. See Jacob Katz, "Ben TaTN"U le-Ta"H-Ta"T," reprinted in his *Halakhah ve-kabbalah* (Jerusalem, 1984), 328, and David Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse* (Cambridge, Mass., 1984), 48–51.

22. Professor Yerushalmi has already pointed out that Polish Jewry sought to link 1648 with earlier catastrophes in medieval Franco-Germany, most notably with the events in Blois in 1171. See his *Zakhor* (Seattle, 1982), 49–50, 51, as well as Katz, "Ben TaTN"U le-Ta"H-Ta"T," 328, Roskies, *Against the Apocalypse*, 51, and Alan Mintz, *Hurban: Responses to Catastrophe in Hebrew Literature* (New York, 1984), xi, 89, 104. Gershon Bacon and M. Rosman, "Kehillah 'nivhar' be-metsukah: Yahadut Polin be-'ikbot gezerot Ta'H Ta'T," in *Re'ayon ha-behirah*, ed. S. Almog and M. Heyd (Jerusalem, 1991), 215, have noted that all the chronicles and dirges began with the destruction of the Jewish community of Nemirów on 20 Sivan even though it was not the first community destroyed. They suggest that this may have been intended to create an immediate connection between the events of 1648–1649 and Blois. Such a connection was explicitly made by Shabbetai ben Me'ir Katz, *Selihat ve-kinot* (1651), 2b.

23. Katz, *Selihat ve-kinot*, 2b.

24. Shusburg, *Petah teshuvah*, 7b–8a.

25. Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn, *Tsok ha-'ittim*, 5a–5b; Katz, *Selihat ve-kinot*, 2b–3a; Shusburg, *Petah teshuvah*, 9a.

26. This is a central verse in classic Jewish martyrology. See, for example, *Sifre, De-varim*, ed. Louis Finkelstein (1939; reprint, New York, 1969), Pisqa 32, 55.

27. Katz, *Selihat ve-kinot*, 3a.

28. Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn, *Tsok ha-'ittim*, 5b–6a.

29. As for his own reference to Gomel, in his chapter on the massacres of Jews in Lithuania, Hanover simply wrote that, "in the city of Gomel' countless thousands were martyred for the glorification of the Name" (*Abyss of Despair*, 78). Perhaps Hanover chose

to emphasize the massacres in Tulczyn and essentially ignore the events in Gomel' because of Tulczyn's place—following both *Tsok ha-'ittim* and *Megillat 'efah*—as the second center mentioned in the narrative.

30. Hanover may well have made use of non-Hebrew material in developing his narrative of Tulczyn, just as he did in writing of the events in Niemirów. See Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah*, 57. A search of this material remains to be done.

31. Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn, *Tsok ha-'ittim*, 5b.

32. Ephraim ben Joseph's *kinah* appeared as an addition to Jacob ben Naphtali Sopher of Gneizno's *Nahalat Ya'akov melitsat [sic]* (Amsterdam, 1652), 9b, together with a *kinah* for the victims of 1648 written by Hanoch ben Abraham and a memorial prayer for Jews killed in Niemirów by a relative of Sopher, a certain Rabbi Joseph, that also mentioned the three rabbis by name (10b). The three works were reprinted by Jonas Gurland, *Le-korot ha-gezerot 'al Yisra'el* (1887; reprint, Jerusalem, 1972), 12–16. According to the *kinah*, two of the rabbis murdered in Niemirów were “our teacher and master” R. Solomon of Szarygród and “our teacher and master” R. Chaim. There is little reason to doubt that Hanover had read the additions to Sopher's work. On the final page (12a) of the 1653 edition of *Yeven metsulah* appeared a brief attestation to the veracity of Hanover's work by none other than Jacob ben Naphtali [Sopher] of Gneizno. The third rabbi said to have been killed in Niemirów was the scholar R. Yehi'el Michael ben Eliezer. However, Me'ir ben Samuel of Szczebrzeszyn (2b–3a), Katz (2b), Shusburg (4b), and Hanoch ben Abraham (10a) had all made R. Michael's death a central event in the annals of Niemirów, a model adhered to by Hanover.

33. See Gershon Cohen, “Ma'aseh Hannah ve-shiv'at beneha be-sifrut ha-'ivrit,” in *Sefer ha-yovel le-kavod Mordekhai Menahem Kaplan*, ed. M. Davis (New York, 1953), 113–14. The reply of the Jews to the Cossacks in Katz's description of events at Gomel' — “And if you do not kill us, the Lord has many messengers regarding us. Our Master has many lions and bears” — appears in several rabbinic sources, including *Lamentations Rabbah* 1.50 and *Midrash Lamentations* 1.7, both of which discuss Hannah and her sons.

34. Cited in Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah*, 65.

35. Ibid.

36. See also Rabba, *Ben zikkaron le-hakhashah*, 58.

37. Abraham Rappoport, *Sefer she'elot u-teshuvot ha-etan ha-ezrahi* (Ostrog, 1796), no. 22, a problem addressed to him by Rabbis Joseph Goetz, Me'ir Sack (no. 23), and Rappoport (no. 24), all of whom were rabbis in Lwów. I have incorporated into the text the minor corrections suggested by Israel Halperin, “Shevyah u-fedut,” 221. The witness's identification of the attackers as peasants is essentially correct. The Cossack leader of the attack on Tulczyn, Maksym Kryvonis, had been ordered by Chmielnicki in the summer of 1648 to organize mass peasant uprisings in the Ukraine.

38. A Ukrainian account notes that this was typical of the Polish nobility. Fearing for their own lives, members of the *szlachta* (Polish nobility) turned over the Jews and their property to the Cossacks in many towns in the hope that by so doing they would save their own lives. See “Letopis' samovidtsa o voynakh Bogdana Khmel'nitskago,” 11.

39. See Rappoport, *Responsa*, no. 22.

40. A third testimony based on hearsay was given in this matter in Lwów on 12 August 1648 (Rappoport, *Responsa*, no. 22). A woman told of how she heard from two of her sister-in-laws, eyewitness reports, that after the man, Leb, had been wounded by his attackers, he shouted out to the “scoundrels,” “please, I beg you, kill me!” (*ich bit euch der schlagt mich recht*), which they promptly did. Perhaps this can be construed as an act of defiance by Leb; however, it may well have been a plea for a merciful death. Like the other witnesses, the woman made no attempt to connect Leb's death with martyrdom.

41. Gershon Ashkenazi, *She'elot u-teshuvot avodot ha-gershuni* (Frankfurt, 1699), no. 106. One of the statements, indeed the only eyewitness report, dated 26 Ab [5]409 (4 August

1649), stated that Moses was killed in "Shultshin." This appears to be a printer/copier's error (in the typeface used in the 1699 edition the difference between a *tet* and a *shin* is ever so slight) that should be emended to read "Tultshin," or Tulczyn in Polish orthography. According to the testimony of one of these witnesses, "only twelve people escaped the slaughter with me." Weinryb, "The Hebrew Chronicles," 175, n. 57, took this to mean that only thirteen Jews escaped the slaughter in Tulczyn. The phrase "with me," however, is the operative one here. It is doubtful whether the witness could have known the fate of all other Jews who tried to escape from Tulczyn.

42. Ashkenazi, *Responsa*, no. 106.

43. R. Ashkenazi could not question the witness. One of the special leniencies allowed in evidence with regard to an *'agunah* was the acceptance of written testimony. Since witnesses could move or die before a case was prepared and presented and even if they were available they were unlikely to want to bother to travel long distances to the rabbinic court of a leading authority (in this case, the testimony of Judah Leb Katz was taken and signed in Węgrów, far from R. Ashkenazi), testimony was often recorded in a local rabbinic court, signed by the witnesses and the court, and then given to the family to use. Families or the community then continued to gather what they believed to be pertinent information on the case and delivered it to a rabbinic authority for consideration.

44. A scanning of the Bar Ilan Responsa Project, version 3.0, offers no similar interpretation of the term *neherag 'al kiddush ha-Shem* in previous Ashkenazic responsa literature. However, this and several other sources from mid-seventeenth-century Poland suggest an evolving and expanding popular—it must be remembered that the witness was a layman—definition of Jewish martyrdom, a matter that requires further study.

45. See *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche*, trans. Basile Radu, in *Patrologia Orientalis*, ed. R. Graffin, vol. 22, no. 1 (Paris, 1930), 5–6.

46. Dr. Nimrod Hurvitz has informed me that the Arabic *futuh* is used by Arabs to describe their vast conquests in the seventh century and has the meaning of "purify" with a religious tinge to it. Radu translated the word as *débarrassa*. Obviously, a Jew would have been unlikely to use such a word.

47. Radu renders as "biens."

48. *Voyage du Patriarche Macaire d'Antioche*, vol. 26, no. 5 (1949), 666. Paul of Aleppo attributed the attacks against the Jews to Divine retribution. "These infidels were not content to tyrannize the Cossacks, but they had sexual relations with their wives and daughters. This is why God poured his wrath upon them and the Poles who had given them the authority [over the Cossacks]" (vol. 26, no. 5, p. 667). The text had already been noticed by Rabba, *Ben zikaron le-hakhashah*, 108–9.

49. By comparison, Jewish martyrdom was noticed by certain Christian chroniclers of the First Crusades and beyond during the Middle Ages. See the material gathered by Mary Minty, "Kiddush ha-Shem be-'ene notsrim be-Germanyah be-yeme ha-benayim," *Zion* 59 (2–3) (1994): 214–26.

50. Halperin, "Shevyah u-fedut," 220, noted that a contemporary Muscovite emissary reported that Jews who converted were accepted into the Ukrainian army, whereas Poles were killed even if they asked to convert. It would seem unlikely, however, that Ukrainian forces would have immediately accepted new converts baptized at gunpoint into their ranks.

51. On possible reasons for this difference that are relevant to this period, see Kenneth Scott Latourette, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity*, (1938; reprint, Exeter, 1966), 2: 224–25.

52. See "Letopis' samovidtsa o voynakh Bogdana Khmel'nitskago," 11.

53. A copy of the order was recorded in Pinsk in 1650 and has been translated by Mordekhai Nadav, "The Jewish Community of Nemyriv in 1648: Their Massacre and Loyalty Oath to the Cossacks," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 8 (3–4) (December 1984): 393–94.

54. See Nathan Kahana, *Sefer she'elot u-teshuvot divre renanah*, ed. I. HersHKovitz (Brooklyn, N.Y., 1984), no. 61. Needless to say, the behavior of soldiers does not always represent the ideals of a society. In discussing the Crusades, Benjamin Z. Kedar, *Crusade and Mission* (Princeton, N.J., 1984), 65–67, has noted that, by the mid-twelfth century, conversion of the Muslims was an obvious, if unarticulated goal of the Crusades. Nevertheless, not every Muslim who offered to convert on the battlefield was spared.

55. There were contemporary Poles who understood the war to be essentially a religious conflict—but between Catholics and Orthodox, not Jews and Christians. See Frank Sysyn, “Seventeenth-Century Views on the Causes of the Khmel’nyts’kyi Uprising: An Examination of the ‘Discourse on the Present Cossack or Peasant War,’” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 5 (1981): 444. Even Shmuel Ettinger, “Jewish Participation in the Settlement of Ukraine in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. Howard Aster and Peter Potichnjy, 2d ed. (Edmonton, 1990), 29–30, who argued rather dogmatically that the attacks against Jews in 1648 were motivated by Muscovite influence and its hatred of Jews, maintained that religious zeal was not a significant factor in the massacres. Religion was, however, intertwined with Ukrainian self-identity, and those of other religions were considered foreigners. See Jaroslaw Pelenski, “The Cossack Insurrections in Jewish-Ukrainian Relations,” in *Ukrainian-Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, 38; George Williams, “Protestants in the Ukraine during the Period of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth,” *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 2 (1978): 202; and particularly, Frank Sysyn, “Ukrainian-Polish Relations in the Seventeenth Century: The Role of National Consciousness and National Conflict in the Khmelnytsky Movement,” in *Poland and Ukraine Past and Present*, ed. Peter Potichnjy (Edmonton, 1980), 58–82.

56. Approximately seventeen of the nineteen stanzas of Samuel ben Simeon’s dirge for the victims of 1648 published in the Salonika (1652) edition of *Tsok ha-’ittim*, 10a–10b, focused on the horrors of the events. Yet the opening lines and the two last stanzas spoke of the readiness of the victims to sanctify “the great and feared Name” and of how they helped strengthen each other to die as Jews rather than convert.

57. In 1652, Hanover published a homiletic work, *Sefer ta’ame sukkah* (Amsterdam), concerning the festival of Sukkot and its rituals based on a talk(s) that he had delivered in Cracow during Sukkot 1645. In his introduction, Hanover observed that there had recently been difficult times for the Jews of Poland. There had been terrible destruction and death from both war and the plagues that followed in the wake of the hostilities. Hanover mentioned that Polish Jews had had their assets stolen from them and had had to use whatever of their resources remained to hire mercenaries to protect them, and sometimes the towns in which they lived, day and night (1b).

## Appendix

### THE MASSACRE OF JEWS IN TULCZYN AS DESCRIBED IN FOUR HEBREW CHRONICLES

Italics have been used to highlight text that appears in *Yeven metsulah* and any of the three Hebrew chronicles of 1648–1649 that predated Hanover's work, whether word for word or apparently paraphrased. Katz's story of Gomel' has been included in the appendix because it served as a source for Hanover's reconstruction of events in Tulczyn. Parallel passages have been placed next to each other in order to ease comparison of the structures of the narratives. Passages that appear among Hanover's predecessors but do not appear in *Yeven metsulah* have not been noted. There has been no attempt to reproduce the poetic style of the authors nor to offer fully annotated translations. Biblical and talmudic sources have been provided when believed helpful for understanding the passage and to allow the reader to check the accuracy of the translation more easily. In following Mesch's translation, I have used the somewhat anachronistic term "Ukrainians" to designate Eastern Orthodox.



[p. 54] And it came to pass after they did their evil as they pleased in the holy community of Niemirów, that a band of about ten thousand men, scoundrels and hooligans, assembled together under the leadership of the oppressor of the Jews, [Maksym] Kryvonis, may his name and memory be blotted out. They proceeded from there to the holy community of Tulczyn, for there, in the fortress were assembled some six hundred troops from the Polish nobility and with them were gathered some two thousand Jews. Among the latter were also trained soldiers and seasoned warriors. And the two made a covenant, the Jews and the nobles, to help each other in the struggle against their common enemy, and took an oath not to betray one another. They greatly reinforced the fort and the Children of Israel went up armed (Exod. 13.18) with all kinds of weapons. And the Jews and the nobles took their posts on the rampart. Each time the Greeks (=Ukrainians) drew near the fortress, the defenders standing on the wall shot at them with arrows and guns, and they killed many of the Ukrainians. They fled from the Children of Israel and the Children of Israel summoned courage and pursued them, killing several hundred of their men.

The Ukrainians assembled again together with all the villagers and the inhabitants of the nearby towns, [p. 55] numbering in the thousands and tens of thousands. They brought iron battering rams to bring down the wall. With wild shouts and strange yelling, characteristic of the Cossacks, they made a sudden attack on the wall. When those stationed on the wall saw the multitude, their hearts trembled. Yet they continued to shoot from the wall and did not allow them to come near it. This time too they fled from the Children of Israel.

And as the days passed, the Ukrainians took counsel together and agreed to send a peace offer to the nobles in the fortress. They would conclude a truce on condition that the Jewish spoil be delivered to them as a ransom for their lives. This they did and a message of peace was sent to the nobles in the fortress. The nobles immediately

[p. 3b] I will tell and speak of the troubles of Tulczyn. There were about six hundred soldiers, nobles, who were hiding in the fortress and gathered with them were about two thousand of the scattered sheep [Israel] (Jer. 50.17) who were slung out (Jer. 10.18) at its gates. And the nobles received them and they made an agreement with them and the two made a righteous covenant to help each other.

The nobles were gathered in the fortress (to defend the fort) and around it the Jews stood on guard with bows and arrows between the pillars. When the tails of fire-brand (Isa. 7.4) came, they shot at them with arrows and torches (guns?) and the Greeks (=Ukrainians) ran in fear. And the nobles and the Jews chased after them and they smote the rebels a great blow.

In place of hundreds came tens of thousands swooping down like a vulture (Deut. 28.49); they screamed with great and strange cries. They did not succeed in reaching the wall and the archers scattered (fired?) and they did not flee. And those in the fortress saw this and they were astonished by the multitude and amazed and their hearts trembled greatly and they were afraid.

And as the days passed, the Ukrainians took counsel with their wise men. "Why should we sit in the rain? We will send a peace offer to the fortress, to the high and mighty nobles. They will make peace with us (Gen. 34.21) and the Jews who are scattered among the nations will redeem their (i.e., the nobles') souls from death with their blood.<sup>1</sup>

The heads of the nation took counsel together. "Why are we with the Jews? How long will we sit in fear lest we become poor and we will have to hide. We will give the money of the Jews as a bribe. We will call the Jews and we will not have to hide." And they called the Jews one by one and they took their weapons from all of them.

The Jews understood their trickery, that this was a plot of the Ukrainians to take their money and kill them. The Jews gathered and discussed the issue and decided to kill the nobles and stand against them and

[p. 2b] Attention now turns to the holy community of Tulczyn. And they surrounded the fortress for eight days, and they encircled it until everyone who was in it was starved and parched. And there were many there of the Children of Israel and many princes from other nations and day and night they did not cease fighting against the "empty ones" [Ukrainians]. And afterwards, the empty ones spoke to the leaders, the princes: "Why do you feel as a people and a nation? For the wretched Jews who are our enemies since early days?" And they spoke to them sweet words and words of reproach as one whispers: "Surely we do not desire you, great and friendly princes, only give us the Jews who deny our faith and we will drink over them the cup of consolation (Jer. 16.7) and we will do with them as we please and we will gore them as with the horns of a wild ox (see Ps. 22). And the princes fulfilled the words of the empty ones and they turned over to them the children of Judah, the nobility (see Dan. 1.3), and they killed there about 3,000 upright and innocent souls, some of whom they beat and others whom they wounded. They gave them to those who beat them and struck hard blows with all types of weapons, with plows, spades, and hatchets. And this was on the sixth day [Friday], "And the heavens and the earth were completed and all their hosts" (Gen. 2.1) were perfected. Four days in the month of Tammuz [24 June 1648] in which the [two] tablets were broken and the Urim and Tummim were hidden.<sup>2</sup>

And at the very same time it appeared that there was a difficult decree aimed against us from the heavens, because on that very Friday it was decreed against us twice, because also then *they killed about 1,500 beloved and pleasant souls* in the town of Homel (Gomel) in the Russian area, far from Tulczyn, about 70 Persian miles which are 260 Sabbath limits, in the [weekly Sabbath Torah] portion of "and they bit the people and many people of Israel died" (Num. 21.6; the portion Huq-qat), many and great [people]. And it is

[p. 7a] For these things I weep, my eye, my eye runs down with water (Lam. 1.16); we said assemble yourselves and let us go to the fortified town (Jer. 8.14) of Tulczyn, after two days He will revive us (Hos. 6.2); there we were cut off and twice given water of gall to drink (Jer. 8.14). We lifted up our hearts with our hands to God in the heavens (Lam. 3.41).<sup>3</sup>

... Four times as difficult as the killings in Niemirów. In addition, the tragic event in which our friends betrayed us, after we left without anything, dispossessed of everything, they left us hungry and parched *for about five days* and afterwards they killed us on the eve of the holy Sabbath. And there we lifted up our hearts with our hands ... and our eyes and hearts were there everyday to our Father in heaven because of the remainder of our brethren in the Diaspora. *Since it was possible for us to take revenge and to attack those who made our suffering worse, those very nobles who broke the covenant and who thought to appease [the Ukrainians] by using us as offering to the Greeks (=Ukrainians) to save their souls. However, on the orders of the scholars, the rabbis, there was an emergency ruling not to make ourselves hated among the inhabitants of the land, in the eyes of the king, and the ministers of the Kingdom of Poland and to give our souls for the holiness of His Name, may it be blessed, and not to attack the Polish nobles* in order not to profane holy Judah, the remnant [of Israel]. And this is the meaning of "we lifted up our hearts with our hands," to take our souls in our hands to God in the heavens, for His Name and holiness, may He be blessed, and His nation, *that there should be a remnant in the land*. And these words are as it was; we raised our souls and hearts in prayers and supplications before God, may He be exalted and blessed.

We set out, army against opposing army (1 Sam. 17.21); we joined with the wicked nobles of Edom; I will render vengeance to my enemies (Deut. 32.41) according to what their hands deserve (Isa. 3.11); Give us

agreed to accept the offer. *They sent for the Jews to disarm them one by one until all were disarmed. The Jews understood the trickery and wanted to lay hand upon the nobles first, and to stand against them, since they were the first to betray the covenant. But the head of the rabbinical academy of the holy community of Tulczyn, the scholar, our teacher and master, Rabbi Aaron, shouted in a great voice to the Jews: "Hearken, my brethren and my people. We are in exile among the nations. If you will lay a hand upon the nobles and the Catholic kings will hear of it, they will wreak vengeance upon our brethren in exile, God forbid. Therefore, if it is a Divine decree, let us accept our sentence with rejoicing. We are not worthier than our brethren of the holy community of Niemirów. And may the [p. 56] Almighty be merciful unto us in the face of our enemies. Perchance, they will accept our possessions as a ransom for our lives."*

And the Jews hearkened to him, and brought into the courtyard of the fortress all their valuables which they had acquired. The Ukrainians immediately entered and the leader of the nobles, Duke Czetwertyński, said to them: "Behold, here is your request." And they took all the booty of the Jews. The Ukrainian oppressors then told the above mentioned duke to imprison all the Jews so that their lives would hang in doubt, for they would not know what their judgment might be; whether they would keep their promise or not. On the third day when they were in pain (Gen. 34.25), the Ukrainians came to the nobles and asked that all the Jews be delivered to them. Immediately the nobles shoved the Jews out of the fortress, so that the nobles might escape injury. Brokenhearted and downcast, all the Jews walked out. The Ukrainians imprisoned them in an enclosed garden so that they would not escape. They remained there for a long time (2 Kings 2.17, 8.11).

There were three other great scholars. His excellency, our teacher and master, Rabbi Eliezer; his excellency, our teacher and master, Rabbi Solomon, and his excel-

to take their revenge against them since they broke their covenant and took their bows and swords from them.

And the head of the rabbinic court of the community was angered and he replied wisely, saying in fear, "If you destroy the nobles and also the Ukrainians in the hills and valleys, a bird will carry the word (Eccl. 10.20) and it will be heard in all of Poland. The leaders of Christendom will arise, God forbid, and they will kill all our brethren in the Diaspora.

We will give up our lives for the holiness of our Master and we will give to the Ukrainians all our worldly goods as a redemption for our bodies, maybe they will be compassionate toward us, the women, the children, and the babies. And if our sins testify against us (Jer. 14.7) and we are deserving of death because of our sins, we will stretch out our necks and accept our sentence.

Immediately the Cossacks entered the fortress and everyone stood in a narrow place. And there stood the Christian defender, that is Duke Czetwertyński, the [ir] adversary. And the Jews [4a] brought all their property to the courtyard and they gave their treasures with a heart broken and like earthen vessels (2 Sam. 17.28) and they cried to God in distress.

The Jews were put into custody. And they all stood with very bitter hearts, sobbing and in bitter mourning (Ezek. 27.31). And their hearts trembled and was [sic] covered like a fruit being ripened in the earth (see J.T., Berakot 4b). And they called one to another and said: "Who knows whether our fate is sealed. If they will keep their promise or whether it will change. And their distress was [great as] a palm tree (Songs 7.8).

Then on the third day the wicked ones [came] and covered the face of the earth (Exod. 10.5) as clouds, with bows, swords, cudgels, and bayonets. With black flags and strange noises, they fell upon the Jews who were weak, exhausted, and powerless (Isa. 40.29). And they killed the Jews with sharpened swords; the young and the old, parents and children.

very clearly, truly, and perfectly known that those Jews who were trapped in the town of Gomer sanctified the Special Name more than the other righteous and scholarly Jews in that also there came the defiled empty ones, like dumb dogs (Isa. 56.10), in a pact with the other nobles, and they [the Polish nobles] gave into their [the Ukrainians'] hands the Jews as peace offering from the sheep and they forced the Jews out of the town into the fields and vineyards (1 Sam. 22.7). And then the empty ones surrounded them as in a courtroom (see Sanhedrin 4.3) and they stripped them naked and sat them on the ground and the Jews were embarrassed and ashamed, [they were] silent "as a lamb led to the slaughter [and] like a sheep that before its shearers" (Isa. 53.7) [3a]. And then the empty ones spoke to the Jews words of kindness and comfort: "Why should you be killed, strangled, and slaughtered like a young bullock without a blemish for the sake of your God who has spilled his anger upon you without mercy? Would it not be good for you to worship our gods, the idols and icons, and we would be one nation. Together we will be complete and whole hearted (see Deut. 18.13). Then you will be free of us and you will live and all the property we will return to you and you will be very rich and powerful rulers." And the holy seed that is killed for God all the days was faithful. Disgusted with the life of this world, young men and women, the learned, the elderly and babes, gathered together. Young and old and children who had no [spiritual] blemishes, and they cried in a great and bitter cry to God who dwells in the heavens: "Hear Lord our God, the one God, King of the worlds, 'Because for You we are killed all the day.' (Ps. 44.23) 'Lord, the God of Israel, give a perfect lot' (1 Sam. 14.41 with Rashi's comments), we will not sit with vain men nor will we join with scoundrels (see Ps. 26.4)." And they admitted their sins and said, "We are guilty." They submitted themselves to Divine punishment and said, "The Lord's ways are perfect." And they chanted lamentations until their cry went up to the

help against the foe for vain is the help of man (Ps. 60.13).

. . . The events that happened took place thus: *At the beginning we gathered an army to fight against the Ukrainian army. We made a covenant to join with the nobles* because I said, "I will render vengeance to my enemies and to those who hate me according to what their hands deserve." And I said, "Come let us act wisely to be a help against the foe." But the help of man was vain because *they betrayed us, they changed the ordinance, broke the covenant.* And "Because you have joined" with the wicked "the Lord will destroy what you have done" (2 Chron. 20.37).

[p. 7b] Hear all the nations, the Lord is righteous (Lam. 1.18); a number of times I saw vengeance against my enemies (Ps. 58.11). With the nations doing great things, they sent a priest, with swearing and lying they broke all bounds and blood touched blood (Hos. 4.2).

"The Lord is righteous," His judgment is true and fair and we justify Him over us since a number of times I have seen vengeance against my enemies. *At the beginning we succeeded and our hand prevailed once, twice, and three times. Also at the end I saw vengeance against those very nobles who breached the oath, to curse the holy covenant (Dan. 11.30), to turn us over to the wicked ones; and there was one fate for all, they like me. And when they saw that they could not overcome us* since He made us strong, able to destroy nations, *they took crafty counsel (Ps. 83.4). They sent a Greek Orthodox priest to enter into a curse and into an oath (Neh. 10.30) that they would not do anything to the nobles if only they would turn over the Jews to their hands* in order that they not fight against them. And the oath was a lie and a deceit. They broke the rules of the oath until blood touched blood. Due to the great bloodshed the blood of the Jews touched the blood of the nobles since an hour or two after we were killed they also attacked the nobles in the fortress. And nothing remained from the house of Edom (see Obad. 18).

lency, our teacher, Rabbi Chaim. They exhorted the holy people to sanctify the Name and not to change their faith. All of them replied: "Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One. As there is but One in your hearts, so there is but One in our hearts."

After these things one of their intermediaries [p. 57] appeared, and planted a banner in the ground. He said to them in a loud voice. *"Whoever wishes to change his faith and remain alive, let him sit under this banner."* No one answered him. Thus he announced three times and no one responded. Immediately the gate of the garden opened and the infuriated mob rushed in and killed a large number of Jews. *Approximately fifteen hundred souls perished* by all sorts of terrible deaths. The three scholars, mentioned above, fell by the sword, may God avenge their blood. *Then the Ukrainians took ten rabbis and placed them in prison, in irons, to await their ransom for ten thousand gold pieces.* Among them was the scholar, our teacher and master, Rabbi Aaron, the son of the scholar, our teacher and master Rabbi Me'ir; the merciful God keep him and redeem him. The latter was the president of the rabbinical academy of the holy community of Lwów. And the Ukrainians knew that he was a very wealthy man and would ransom his son at any price.

After the slaughter of the Jews they proceeded to attack the fortress. And the nobles said to them: "Behold, you made an agreement with us, why do you repudiate your pledge?" And the Ukrainians replied: *"As you did unto the Jews, breaking your covenant with them, so shall we do unto you: measure for measure."* Those stationed on the wall began to shoot and the Ukrainians cunningly set the fortress afire burning it to the ground, killing all the nobles and countless others. They appropriated the spoil for a prey. *The wife and the two daughters of the above mentioned Duke were raped before him prior to his death.*<sup>4</sup> He had been a very [p. 58] stout man. When he sat in a chair he was unable to

The Jews fell on their faces in order that they not see the atrocities and the killing of their children. And the children cried out to the Lord their God. And they [the attackers] stood over them like army officers and *asked them if they would convert to Greek Orthodoxy. If so, they will live and if not they will die* like their fathers and fall on the corpses of their dead.

*Immediately they stretched forth their necks to be slaughtered* and they said, "let our blood be accepted as a sacrifice." And they gave praise and glory to God. And the cruel, wicked one remained steadfast in the slaughter, and he took the slaughtering knife to put them to the sword. The enemies shouted out "this is how to [ritually] slaughter," and the evil one was happy and played and shouted that great is the day of slaughter.

By the decree of God who decrees and fulfills [his decree] they slaughtered hundreds of babies and nursing infants, young boys and girls who clung to the fear of Heaven in the streets and marketplaces, *and one thousand five hundred righteous people* who observed the laws. Their blood was troubled like strong waters (see Isa. 57.20) for the sake of the holiness of the Creator of lands.

*And a small number of them fell under the bodies, faint with hunger* (Lam. 2.19) and thirst and stabbed; only the breath of life remained. And the Ukrainians went between those torn into pieces and said, *"Arise those who remain, go to the town and go in; do not remain hidden in the fortress because the fortress has been set ablaze."*

*Devoid of strength, the men arose and a few women went with them.* They were all exhausted, wounded, and weak and they came to the city hurting and seriously wounded. Poor and needy, impoverished and beggared. And the nobles drank the wine of the condemned (Amos 2.8) with timbrels and dances, happy and joyous. They were noisy and they [i.e., the Jews] were as if deaf.

And the Ukrainians went out and sent runners to the fortress with quarrelsome

heavens. And when the empty ones saw that the Jews were steadfast in their faith, they answered them with impudence and they threatened them: "How long will you will you stiffen your necks and destroy yourselves and be like murderers, for you yourselves are bringing about your murder and you are the cause of your killing and slaughter. And you will be sacrifices forever since you do not want to worship our gods on the high mountains." And the Jews said to them: "Why do you delay killing us for we will not listen to your voices and we will not say to the work of our hands [i.e., the work of man's hands], "you are our god," for our God is One on the earth and in heavens. The Lord our King will save us, and you today are messengers from Him, may He be blessed, to attack our souls, for doom is brought about by the doomed like you, our enemies whom are hated by us. And if you do not kill us, the Lord has many messengers regarding us. Our Master has many lions and bears. And you, those [who have been] prepared and readied for retribution, you will continue to vanquish us and to destroy us." And then the empty ones raised their hands against them and because of our sins killed them. And they killed many of our brothers, sons of the covenant, our sons, our daughters, our youth and our elderly. And their property was their prey (Esther 3.13, 8.11)—a very great booty. They threw our money into the streets for most of the wealthy [Jews] of the Ukraine had fled there to [be with] the rest of the Jews, for they said: "They are our brothers, our flesh." And the Jews who were previously there were also annihilated because of our sins.

They called to the nobles, "for in peace I had great bitterness" (Isa. 38.17). "I will pursue, I will overtake, I will divide the spoil" (Exod. 15.9), said the enemy.

My lust will be satisfied upon them, my hand will destroy them (Exod. 15.9), God had decided, therefore my taste did not remain in me and my scent was changed (see Jer. 48.11).

See O Lord for I am in distress (Lam. 1.20). They took my weapons from me, they expelled me from the fortress, they left my wealth for others (Ps. 49.11) and all the living substance that followed me (Deut. 11.6).

*... the nobles took all the weapons from me and expelled me from the fortress with totally empty hands. ... to leave us and abandon us and our money. ...*

They have heard that I sigh (Lam. 1.21); they left me hungry and thirsty (Ps. 107.5) from Monday to Friday and nevertheless their anger was not turned away from me (Isa. 5.25).

With my sighing and my heart faint since they left us hungry and thirsty from Monday to Friday and even though my strength was sapped due to hunger and thirst, his anger did not turn away from me.

Let all their wickedness come before you and deal cruelly with them (Lam. 1.22). They said that they would compromise with them at the cost of our lives and they took as a pawn ten of their prominent men. And on Friday the Lord prepared a festive meal, He bid their guests (Zeph. 1.7).

Let all their wickedness come before you since we were already suffering famine and thirst and they saw and knew that we had nothing but our bodies left and nevertheless they asked us to redeem ourselves from death. *And we compromised on 10,000 Polish gold pieces and they took as collateral ten leaders of the community and a number of rabbis and pious men.* And on the sixth day He spent his fury against us to destroy many people, a few thousand. And no doubt the Lord prepared the festive meal (sacrifice), to call the guests to meal of the Sabbath Queen to be a sweet smelling offering, a reminder to God in the

rise. One of the scoundrels, a former slave, who served in his flour mill approached him, and, removing his hat in mockery and jest, said: "What does the master desire of his servant?" Then he recalled to him the mistreatment of his serfs, the beatings, and the enslavement and he said to him: Stand up and I will sit in your chair and be your master." But the Duke was unable to rise. The slave then hurled him off the chair and on the threshold of the house *he brutally cut off his head with a saw*. As they did so did God repay them, *because they violated the pledge of the Jews*. When the nobles heard of this, they were stricken with remorse and henceforth supported the Jews and did not deliver them into the hands of the reprobates. And even though the Ukrainians repeatedly promised them that they would not do anything to them, only to the Jews, they no longer believed them. Were it not for this, there would have been no escape for the remnant of the Jews, God forbid. After three days of carnage the Ukrainians announced among the slain: *"He that is still alive may rise and need not fear, for the massacre is over."* Some three hundred individuals who had sought escape by mixing with the corpses, arose. They were starved and thirsty. Some of them had many but not critical wounds. With but the breath of life in their aching and weak bodies, fatigued, barefoot, and naked, they walked to the above mentioned city. The Ukrainian inhabitants of the city dealt kindly with them and sent them away.

and hawkish words. "Send out to us the property of the nobles and if you do not want to, we will all come and enter armed with swords and cudgels, bows and arrows. We will judge you decisively and we will know you with briers and thorns."

*"Your deeds and your retribution we will return on your heads as you did with Jacob your brother. They made a covenant with you and they guarded like you did and saved you a few times. And gall and wormwood (Deut. 29.17) was among you and you turned them over and we killed them before your eyes. Just as we killed them we will kill you."*

Lords and nobles stood like a wall and they fought against them and they came with a mighty hand, with many people and great noise. And they wisely *burned the fortress* and the smoke of the fire rose towards the heavens. And they totally destroyed the fortress. And the nobles had no strength to stand (Lev. 26.37).

The Ukrainians and all their hosts captured the nobles and their community and they killed them with their bows and swords. Before they killed the Duke and the Duchess the Ukrainians punished them according to their deeds and they raped their two daughters before them. And they raped the Duchess and they brutally cut off his head with a saw.

holy sanctuary.<sup>5</sup> And it is proper to learn from this difficult, terrible event that they endured. First, the attribute of poverty, that everyone should be completely devoid of their assets and everything that they have and be afflicted, sent out half starving and parched with thirst and no one gives food to them (Lam. 4.4), there is no supplier of bread and water; "and those who are for captivity, to captivity" (Jer. 15.2). And they gave the indemnity for their lives but it did not help and *they were all killed for the sanctification of His Name*, may He be blessed. *And in addition that they accepted the judgment with love of God, may He be blessed, to give their lives into their hands in order to preserve a remnant on the earth (Gen. 45.7) among the nations, in order not to make our smell odious (Gen. 34.30) if they were to have attacked those mentioned above who wanted to harm them.* [p. 8a] And they stood and were tested and tried in the great trial not to abandon our God, may He be blessed, during the days of affliction of hunger and thirst when they had nothing in the siege and in the distress of *the courtyard that is in front of the fortress. And they tempted them with words,<sup>6</sup> with their nothingness (i.e., religious beliefs), with a number of enticements, inducements, threats, and terrible exaggerations every day. And no one will be saved by their lies. "For the oppression of the poor, for the sighing of the needy, now will I arise," says the Lord; I will set in safety we at whom they puff* (Ps. 12.6) [*"and it pants towards] the end and does not lie"* (Hab. 2.3).

### Notes

1. A play on words; the Hebrew *damim* also has the meaning of "money."
2. The fourth of Tammuz fell on a Wednesday in 1648.
3. I have not included Shusburg's brief explanations of his use of biblical terms in the text but simply incorporated them into the translation of the stanzas. I have marked passages not included in the translation with an ellipsis.
4. Mesch's claim that Czetwertyński had no children and that Hanover was mistaken in this regard (*Abyss of Despair*, p. 9) is contradicted by Mielżyński's statement that one of Czetwertyński's daughters was said to have been killed. There were conflicting reports regarding the second daughter: one said that she had been taken by a Cossack to be his wife,



while a second reported her as also having been killed (Michałowski, *Jakuba Michałowskiego*, no. 61, p. 157).

5. The reference remains unclear. Dr. Haviva Pedaya has suggested to me that the mystical apocalyptic literature known in medieval Ashkenaz may be among the sources for this portrayal of the fate of the righteous. See, for example, *Bet ha-midrash*, ed. Adolph Jellinek (2d ed., Jerusalem, 1938), 137, that describes the sacrifice of the souls of the righteous in paradise on the Sabbath eve.

6. Shusburg makes a play on the Hebrew words that can also be translated as “with bread in their mouths.”