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Jewish Population Losses in the Course
of the Khmelnytsky Uprising¹

Introduction

In 2003, I published a study on the population losses of the Jewish population of Ukrainian lands during the Khmelnytsky Uprising.² Since that time, many additional sources relevant to the topic have been brought to my attention. To the best of my knowledge, none contradict my thesis and many strengthen my claims. I hope to systematically reexamine these sources in the future and to incorporate them into my thesis. In addition, a number of researchers have dealt with some of the issues I raised and some of their points should be discussed and responded to. In this essay, I would like to reformulate more clearly what I claimed in my original article while relying on the many sources that I used at that time. I also want to address some of the responses to my thesis.

My basic claim is a simple one. On the basis of a wide variety of sources, it appears to me that the number of Jews who died during the course of the Khmelnytsky Uprising was probably less than 20,000, and it is unclear how many of these Jews died violent deaths and how many died in the wake of the uprising. These figures are much lower than is often posited and it is the goal of this essay to present the evidence.

There were no body counts during the course of the uprising and no “before and after” censuses. Thus, to come to any conclusions about the casualties it is necessary

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² See Shaul Stampfer, “What actually happened to the Jews of Ukraine in 1648?” *Jewish History* 17, no. 2 (2003): 207–227.

to compare the number of survivors with the size of the population before the uprising. As we shall see, there is no shortage of sweeping statements on the number of casualties but they have generally not been based on a systematic review of sources. Only a careful assessment of the available sources makes it possible to come to reliable results. It is this examination that yields my rather conservative conclusions.

The Jewish population after the uprising

We will never have precise data on the size of the Jewish population in Ukraine immediately after the uprising or before. No population or house lists for the whole region are known to have survived and without such sources, it is impossible to determine the size of a population. There were unquestionably many Jewish survivors because the impact of the uprising differed from region to region. Red Ruthenia was the least affected. Of a list of 16 major cities at the time only five – Jaworów, Narol, Czortków, Chełm, and Tarnopol – are known to have fallen to the Cossack forces.³ Three additional well-known communities that were not on the list, Brody, Bełz and Zbaraż, were also not captured. Thus, all or most of the Jewish residents of Red Ruthenia apparently survived.

Many Volhynian and Podilian Jews also survived. These regions suffered more than Red Ruthenia but less than the more eastern regions. Data from internal Jewish tax records indicates that shortly after the uprising, in 1655, Volhynian Jews were paying about a quarter of the entire tax load of Polish-Lithuanian Jewry.⁴ This is significant. The Jews of the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth had to pay a lump sum of taxes each year, which the Council of the Four Lands apportioned. This council was a national Jewish organization in which the various Jewish communities ruled by the Polish monarch were represented. In principle, the tax was supposed to be a head tax, so that the division should have been a relatively precise reflection of the size Jewish population and its distribution. Economic factors might skew the ratio of population to taxes, as the Council knew the conditions in each region and could take them into account. Areas with promising economic conditions attracted migrants, leaving some regions with inflated tax bills based on the past. However, short-term imbalances between the population and its economic potential evened out over time and the tax breakdown was often updated. Jewish communities were also always on the alert, to guarantee they were not required to pay higher taxes than their population warranted. Therefore, in the long run, the ratio of population to tax probably remained steady, and the share of the

³ Lwów, Jaworów, Żońkiew, Przemyśl, Sambor, Tarnogród, Lipsk, Narol, Tomaszów, Uhnów, Czortków, Halicz, Tarnopol, Luboml, Chełm, and Zamość. *Pinkas HaKehilot and Słownik Geograficzny Królestwa Polskiego* show that Jaworów, Narol, Czortków, and Chełm and Tarnopol fell, though in the latter case, most of the Jews managed to flee. Lwów, Żońkiew, Przemyśl, Sambor, Tomaszów and Zamość did not fall. Data is lacking for Tarnogród, Lipsk, Uhnów, Halicz, and Luboml.

⁴ To be precise, 279. See Israel Halperin, ed., *Pinkas Vaad Arba Aratsot* (Jerusalem: Mosad Byalik, 1945), 87, 88.

total taxes paid does give a rough demographic picture. The quarter share paid by Volhynian Jews, although perhaps exaggerated with respect to the large Jewish populations of Kraków and Podlasia regions, which were not taken into account in the 1655 list, suggests that Volhynian Jewry was not decimated. Had it been, this Jewry never would have paid so large a share of taxes.

External tax records also suggest that the destruction of Jewish life in Volhynia was far from complete. Fragmentary data on Jewish poll taxes in Volhynia in the years immediately after 1648 has reference to Jews in 77 towns in Volhynia in the years 1662–1676. In fact, more Jewish communities are known from the immediate post-Khmelnysky period than for the period prior to the uprising.⁵

There is also evidence for the speedy reconstruction of Jewish communities in Podilia, most of whose Jewish residents of these communities were more likely survivors than recent immigrants.⁶ In 1662, there were at least 19 communities plus scattered village Jews. This is somewhat over half of the number of communities that were found for in pre-1648 Podilia. We have data on tax payments from some of the Podilian communities in 1662, which was almost a quarter of the total paid by recognized Volhynian communities in that year (975 złoty in Podilia and 4149 in Volhynia). The Podilian list appears to be more incomplete than that of Volhynia, suggesting that the Jewish population of Podilia in 1662 was at least a quarter of that of Volhynia. If the post 1648 Jewish population in Volhynia was about half of the pre-1648 Jewish population of 16,000, and there is good evidence for that, as will be shown below it would appear that the Jewish population in Podilia after 1648 was at least 2,000.⁷ These estimates, which imply that the Jews of Podilia suffered much population loss than did those of Volhynia, fit with the picture received from the descriptive sources.⁸

Destruction of Jewish communities in the Kyiv and Bratslav regions was apparently more massive than in Volhynia and Podilia and the same was probably true with regard to loss of life. However, these regions did not necessarily have large Jewish communities even before the uprising. The peace treaty ultimately signed between the Ukrainian and Polish sides prohibited Jewish settlement in these regions. There is no reason to believe that every provision of this treaty was observed, but this certainly made it more

⁵ See the references to the varied archival sources in my forthcoming monograph.

⁶ Zenon Guldon, “Żydzi na Podolu i Wołyniu po zniszczeniach z połowy XVII wieku,” in *Żydzi i Szkoła* (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Jana Kochanowskiego, 1990), 109–126, Table 10, 118. See also Lukin – Вениамин Лукин и Борис Хаймович, *100 еврейских местечек Украины: Исторический путеводитель*. Вып. 1, *Подолія* (Санкт-Петербург: Александр Гершт, 2000), 28. It is not clear if the towns in both lists were the same. The issue of the geographic background of the Jewish population in the post-uprising Ukrainian lands is discussed below.

⁷ Our estimate of the pre-1648 population of Volhynia was 16,000. If half survived in Volhynia, this would be 8,000. A quarter of this is 2,000. Lukin estimated the population in Podilia at the time as 1500. A difference of 500 is not major. See Лукин и Хаймович, *100 еврейских местечек Украины*, 28, 41.

⁸ On this region in the year after the uprising and subsequently see Moshe Rosman, *Founder of Hasidism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996), esp. 49–62, who notes that much of the decline of Podilia took place after 1672 (52) and not necessarily as a result of the destruction in 1648–1650.

difficult for refugees from these towns to return. In fact, no substantial communities were founded or restored in the Kyiv and Bratslav regions in the decades after the uprising. The absence of communities in this period does not mean that all the Jews who had lived in them were killed. Some had escaped, for example, those listed in a document drawn on August 16, 1648 (now housed in the Lutsk archive), who had fled from Luszniv, a town in the Zhytomyr district of the Kyiv region.⁹ Jewish refugees were also noted in Kyiv in 1649, although their number and ultimate fate is not clear.¹⁰ No doubt, cases like these were not unique. In all, therefore, it seems that at least half of Volhynian Jewry, at least a quarter of Podilian Jewry and significant portions of Kyivan and Bratslavan Jewry appear to have survived and returned to their homes. Of course, not every survivor returned to his or her hometown. Now it is necessary to consider how many Jews were there in the Ukraine before the uprising.

The Jewish population on the eve of 1648

More is known about the Jewish population of pre-1648 Red Ruthenia than about any other region. Maurycy Horn made a careful study of the Jewish population in this region during the pre-Khmelnitsky period. He came to the conclusion that there were about 45,000 Jews living in towns and 9,000 in villages.¹¹ It is tempting to apply his relatively reliable findings, such as the ratio of the Jewish to non-Jewish urban population in Red Ruthenia, to generalize for all of the Ukrainian lands. However, this region was the most developed of these regions, and it was probably the most densely populated by Jews. Therefore, there is no reason to assume that what was true for Red Ruthenia was true for other regions or to extrapolate from size of the Jewish population in this region in order to estimate the size of Jewish communities in other regions.

There is some data on the size of the Jewish population in the Volhynia region before the uprising. The most important source is a house count made in 1629 and analyzed in the works of Baranovych.¹² In the lists preserved from that count, there is information

⁹ See the archive of the Lutsk Grodzki sud (f. 11, o. 1, spr. 14, ark. 72–73, akt 501) as cited in the internal guide to microfilms of this archive in the Central Archives of the Jewish People, Jerusalem (= *Perelik...*), #525 21, August, 1651.

¹⁰ Joachim Jerlicz describes how a group of Jewish refugees “were stripped naked, maimed, beaten and released thanks to the Metropolitan’s intervention,” in Kazimierz Władysław Wójcicki, ed., *Latopisiec albo kroniczka Joachima Jerlicza* (Warsaw, 1853), 94, 95, cited and translated in Yoel Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial: The Fate of the Jews in the Wars of the Polish Commonwealth During the Mid-Seventeenth Century as Shown in Contemporary Writings and Historical Research* (Boulder, CO: East European Monographs, 1995), 83.

¹¹ Maurycy Horn, *Żydzi na Rusi Czerwonej w XVI i pierwszej połowie XVII* (Warszawa: Żydowski Instytut Historyczny w Polsce, 1975), 75.

¹² Олексій І. Баранович, *Залюднення України перед Хмельниччиною. Ч. 1: Залюднення Волинського воєводства в першій половині XVII ст.* (Київ: Всеукраїнська академія наук, 1930) and Алексей И. Баранович, *Украина накануне освободительной войны середины XVII в. (социально-экономические предпосылки войны)* (Москва: Издательство АН СССР, 1959). An obituary of

on 114 cities and towns. There is no doubt that in many of these cities and towns there were Jewish communities but there are reports on the number of Jewish homes in only 12 of these towns. These communities were not the largest or most important ones. Apparently there was no requirement to list Jewish houses separately, and it was by chance that data on Jews was preserved in these locations. However, this data may be applied, with great caution, as reflecting the size of some of the Jewish communities.¹³ Since these counts were taken for tax assessments, there was no doubt some undercounting.¹⁴ At the same time, there is a limit on how much Jewish householders could hide from tax authorities. The error, if it exists, would probably be measured in tens of percents. Therefore, though partial, this data is still useful.

It is important to find a rough multiplier to estimate the size of the Jewish population on the basis of the house counts. Calculating a multiplier is not simple.¹⁵ Not only the families that lived in each house have to be taken into consideration, but there were also Jewish servants and additional non-family residents in the household. Householders could be young, childless couples or single adults or families with all the children resident. Shmuel Ettinger suggested five as the multiplier.¹⁶ Raphael Mahler used a somewhat higher multiplier of six in his study of the first real census of Jews that was carried out in Poland, in 1764, with a slightly lower multiplier for Ukraine.¹⁷ Mahler's data was based on data from a census carried out in 1764 – more than a hundred years after 1648. Yet there is no evidence that demographic conditions had changed during this period. The data he had for Ukrainian lands was not as detailed as that for Polish regions. Still, he found roughly 5.3 Jews per household in Volhynia, only slightly lower than in Poland. The 3.7 average he found in the region of Bratslav was indeed exceptional and may reflect errors in the sources.¹⁸

Baranovych, one of the few scholars who risked publishing data on Jews in the 1950s, appears in *История СССР*, 5:172.

¹³ Baranovych also brings data in Баранович, *Україна накануне*, 106, for Kiselin: 37 Jewish homes out of 72; but as he notes in Баранович, *Залюднення України*, 80, that the data is not from 1629, rather 1648.

¹⁴ On the problems in this account, see Irena Gieysztorowa, *Wstęp do demografii staropolskiej* (Warsaw: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 1976), esp. 185–186.

¹⁵ My forthcoming monograph will expand on this subject.

¹⁶ Shmuel Ettinger, “Khelkam shel ha-iehudim be-kolonizatsiia shel Ukraina (1569–1648),” *Zion* 21 (1956): 107–142.

¹⁷ Raphael Mahler, *Yidn in Amoylikn Poiln in Likhtfon Zifern* (Warsaw: Yiddish Buch, 1958), 182, and see Table VIII.

¹⁸ Mahler seems to have erred arithmetically and calculated on the basis of his data in table VIII (= #66). I calculated 3.64, which rounds off to 3.6. This makes absolutely no difference. Mahler was hesitant to accept the Bratslav data at face value, which meant to assume radically different family patterns distinguishing Jews in central Poland from those in the Ukraine. Besides, the data from Bratslav region lacks detail and cannot be checked for consistency. Mahler therefore assumed there were many inaccuracies and chose to use the same multiplier of six in the Ukraine as he used for Poland. This is reasonable, since demographic data that is strikingly askew from the norm is often too suspect to be reliable.

A rough estimate of the Jewish population of Volhynia can be made if we give careful consideration to the nature of urban hierarchies. The twelve Jewish communities for which we have house counts from 1629 were not a random sample of the total population and their size also varied. In every urban network there are a limited number of major communities and many more mid-sized and smaller ones. If we have a general idea of how many communities there were in each category and what the average population of communities in those categories was, we can estimate the total population. Errors with regard to figures on smaller communities will not be significant in the total, although the reverse is the case with regard to large communities.

Baranovych's data suggests that there were about 170 Jewish homes in large communities and about fifty homes in mid-sized communities. The number varied greatly in small communities. There were six major communities in the Volhynia region in the mid-17th century: Ostroh, Kremianets, Lutsk, Starokostiantyniv,¹⁹ Volodymyr and Lubartów. According to Baranovych's data, in Ostroh there were 229 Jewish homes, in Kremianets 169, in Starokostiantyniv 130 and in Lutsk 84. He did not find data for Volodymyr, but since in the Hebrew account known as *Tit Ha Yeven* this town was described as equal in size to Kremianets, the number of homes was likely the same or close.²⁰ In *Tit Ha'Yeven*, Lubartów was recorded as a major Jewish community, somewhere between Kremianets and Kowel in size. For this community as well, Baranovych found no data. Following the criterion stated above of accepting a 50% margin of error, one could estimate the number of homes there as midway between 169 and 80 and, hence, a reasonable figure.²¹

In all, there were, it appears, six major or large Jewish communities in the Volhynia region, totaling about 900 homes. As for mid-sized communities, *Tit HaYeven* lists about twenty of them,²² a figure that may conservatively be inflated by about 25% to guarantee against underestimating, as well as to encompass communities not listed in

¹⁹ This city was sometimes regarded as in Volhynia and sometimes as in Podolia.

²⁰ The number of householders listed in Shmuel Feibish, *Tit HaYeven* (Venice, 1650), seems unreasonably high. However, the relative size of populations the author attributes to different communities seems quite reasonable. For example, *Tit HaYeven* states that there were 1500 Jewish householders in Ostroh (which would mean a Jewish population of close to ten thousand) and 800 in Kremianets. This is a ratio of about two to one. According to Baranovych, there were 229 Jewish homes in Ostroh and 169 in Kremianets, a ratio of 1.4 to 1, not identical, but similar. *Tit HaYeven* puts the ratio between the Jewish populations of Kremianets and Kowel also at two to one. The ratio from Baranovych's data is the nearly identical 2.1.

²¹ Kowel, which was not regarded in Jewish sources as a major community, had 80 Jewish homes according to Баранович, *Україна накануне*, 106.

²² I included all the communities to which *Tit HaYeven* ascribed populations of 200–300 householders and half of those to which the author ascribed 100 householders. Of the first group, two are also found in Baranovych's list; Tulchyn (50 homes) and Dubno (58 homes). Of the 13 communities described in *Tit HaYeven* as having 100 householders, Baranovych mentioned three. Morawica had 24 Jewish homes, Ostrozek 55 and Kamin 12. It seems that most of the towns in this group had significantly smaller Jewish populations than the first group.

Tit HaYeven. The total is about 1500 homes. The median number of houses in small communities in Volhynia was 20. *Tit HaYeven* mentioned about 17 small communities in Volhynia. Inflating the number here as well by 25% to account for unknown communities generates a total of about 21 communities with 145 homes.

The estimated total for all communities in Volhynia is thus about 2700 homes, or households. Using the multiplier of 6, the total Jewish population there would be about 16,000. The real danger in this figure is in underestimating the number of small communities, so one could add 1,000 Jews to the 16,000. We must remember that Baranovych's data leaves much to be desired. But since no reliable documentary sources for the "true" number of Jews in Ukrainian communities have survived – they probably never existed – we must use the data he gathered.

The Jewish population of Podilia is even more problematic. Binyamin Lukin studied this region painstakingly – surveying archival and printed sources. He found references to 36 communities, and concluded that the Jewish population was about 12,000 on the eve of the uprising.²³ The same methodology of considering urban hierarchies can be applied to Podilia as was used for Volhynia, although it is not clear whether large communities in both regions were the same size. Podilia had four large communities: Medzhybizh, Bar, Sataniv, and Kamianets-Podilskyi.²⁴ According to *Tit HaYeven*, the large Podilian communities had fewer Jewish householders than in large communities of Volhynia. However, a house-count for Bar in 1645 showed 64 Jewish householders and 81 Jewish renters.²⁵ The total of 145 heads of households is similar to what Baranovych found for large communities in Volhynia. Lukin found 50 Jewish homes reported in Zinkov in 1642, which is in the range of medium sized communities in Volhynia.²⁶

To be safe, it is best to assume that large Jewish communities in Podilia averaged 150 householders each,²⁷ for a total of 600 homes in large Podilian communities. Adding in figures from smaller communities, there appear to have been about 10,000 Jews in Podilia.²⁸

²³ Benjamin Lukin generously allowed me to read his essay in proofs, "The Bush that was not Consumed" (in Russian) which has now appeared in his Лукин и Хаймович, *100 еврейских местечек Украины*. See pages 20–23 for lists of the 36 communities, the sources for them and the basis for the calculations. The estimate for 20,000 for Podilia (Podilia) and Bratslav (half in each) is on page 34 of the second edition.

²⁴ According to *Tit HaYeven*, there were 10,000 Jewish refugees in Kamianets when it was besieged by Khmelnytsky, an unlikely high figure, probably the product of typographical error.

²⁵ Zenon Guldon, *Żydzi i Szkoci* (Kielce: Wyższa Szkoła Pedagogiczna im. Jana Kochanowskiego, 1990), 121, citing archival sources. The distinction between householder and renters bears attention. If indeed, most Jews in most house counts were not recorded as householders, then estimates must take this into account. This distinction was not recorded elsewhere, and there is no way to confirm it, hence, it is not taken into account here.

²⁶ Лукин и Хаймович, *100 еврейских местечек Украины*, 24.

²⁷ This is what we found in Bar, which may have been an "average" large community. Conveniently, this was also the size of the average large community in Volhynia.

²⁸ If the ratio of large communities to middle sized and small ones was the same in Podilia as in Volhynia (1:5:4), that would give 15 medium sized communities (750 homes) and 12 small communities

Still less is known about the Jewish communities in the Bratslav region. Ettinger found a reference to 66 Jewish homes in Vinnytsia in 1604 and to 18 Jewish homes in Bratslav (the town) in 1616.²⁹ Baranovych stated that in the Bratslav and Kyiv regions “Ukrainian Jews were relatively few,”³⁰ estimating that the Jewish population in the Bratslav, Kyiv, and Chernihiv regions was no more than 20,000.³¹ Using the settlement information for Bratslav found in *Tit HaYeven*, it appears that similar to Podilia, Bratslav, had three major centers and 16 medium sized ones. The number of households *Tit HaYeven* reports for these medium sized centers is not uniform, 100 to 399 householders; it is also high. Relying, therefore, on figures like those of Lukin for Podilia, it appears that the Jewish population of the Bratslav region was similar to that of Podilia, about 9,000. The Jewish population of the Kyiv region seems to have been smaller yet. Ettinger found a reference to 100 Jewish homes in Bila Tserkva in 1646.³² *Tit HaYeven* mentions only two major centers there, including Bila Tserkva, and one middle sized community, as well as about 15 smaller ones. This would suggest a population of somewhat less than half of Podilia or Bratslav or in other words, about 5000.

In short: about 40,000 Jews appear to have lived in Ukrainian lands (excluding Red Ruthenia) before 1648.³³ What remains to be determined is how many Jews survived.

Calculating Jewish casualties: Direct calculation

Survivors included not only Jews present in the region when the uprising ended but also refugees, converts, and captives sent to Turkey. No primary sources give numbers of refugees. However, indirect information, like the decision at the 1652 meeting of the Lithuanian Jewish Council to support 2000 refugees for a year is instructive.³⁴ Some refugees were possibly able to support themselves. This would suggest even larger numbers of survivors living in Lithuanian lands. Refugees also made their way to Poland, although the fragmentary remains of the record book of the Council of the Four Lands supplies no numbers. Many refugees fled to what is today Romania, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and further west, but their number, too, is unknown.

(240 homes). This in turn generates the estimate of about 9000 ($6 \times 1440 = 8640$). This is 259 less than Lukin’s estimate. However, Lukin assumed a rural population of 209 that he added on to his estimate for urban population. I am not convinced that there was such a large rural population at this time.

²⁹ Ettinger, “Khelkam shel ha-iehudim,” 123.

³⁰ He added “They lived mainly in the northern regions of the Kijow and Bratslav [provinces] and in some towns of the Chernihov province.” Horn, “Rozwój demograficzny,” 67–84. The citation is from page 75. Księgarnia Neustein in Tel Aviv made this important article available to me.

³¹ Баранович, *Україна на кануні*, 108. Horn, “Rozwój demograficzny,” 76. Horn cites Baranovych but changes the “no more” (*ne bolee*) in Baranovych to “about” (*okolo*) in his paraphrase.

³² Ettinger, “Khelkam shel ha-iehudim,” 123.

³³ This is based on estimating 16,000 Jews in Volhynia, 9,000 Jews in Podilia, 9,000 in Bratslav and 5,000 in Kyiv, 39,000 rounded to 40,000. Ettinger’s estimate for the same region was 51,325 (*ibid.*, 124).

³⁴ Shimon Dubnov, ed., *Pinkas Medinat Lita* (Berlin: Einot, 1925), 110.

The Jewish population in Poland was about three times larger than that of Lithuania. Normally, population roughly reflects absorptive capacity, suggesting that about three times as many Jews, or six thousand, fled to the Polish lands as to Lithuania. If this estimate is high, the number of Jews who fled to Romania, Hungary, Bohemia, Moravia, and further west should compensate for any undercount. It appears then that the total number of refugees was at least 8,000.

Many Jews converted to Christianity. However, arriving at a reasonable estimate is not an easy task. A resident of Starodub reported in June 1648 that following the Cossack capture of many cities, there were Jews who converted to Orthodox Christianity and themselves joined the Cossack forces while Poles (*liakhove*) were not accepted as converts to Orthodoxy.³⁵ A later report, from December of the same year, stated “many Jews converted and live now in the cities together with the Cossacks.” Raba cites a Protestant pastor, who reported that the Cossacks killed “thousands of Jews. Those who remained alive converted to Orthodoxy and are tolerated in the country.”³⁶ No source known to me gives a precise number of converts,³⁷ but the plethora of reports suggests it was at least a thousand.

Some Jews were taken captive and sold in Turkey as slaves. Many or most of these were ultimately to be redeemed by co-religionists in the region. Natan Hannover spoke of 20,000 captives but this is clearly an exaggeration.³⁸ Israel Halperin proposed no precise figure, but his penetrating study concluded that thousands were enslaved and the number redeemed over 2,000. One source he cited mentioned 1500 already redeemed with many more waiting their turn.³⁹ Using Halperin as a base, and not Hannover, a figure of 3,000 seems to be a cautious and reasonable estimate.

If all of the estimates for survivors are pooled, it yields a very rough estimate of survivors — about 22,000. This encompasses 8,000 in Volhynia, 2000 in Podilia in addition to 8,000 refugees in other regions, perhaps 1000 converts, and 3000 captives. This

³⁵ *Регесты и надписи: сводъ матеріаловъ для исторіи евреевъ въ Россіи* (Санкт-Петербург: Еврейское историко-этнографическое общество, 1899), 1:880, 401 citing *Акты Южной и Западной Россіи*, 3:215. On the source of the report see Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial*, 129. The reliability of this “reporter” is not known.

³⁶ This is Raba’s translation from F. Babinger, ed., *Conrad Jacob Hildebrandt’s Dreifache Schwedische Gesandtschaftsreise nach Siebenbürgen, der Ukraine und Constantinopel (1656–1658)* (Leiden: Brill, 1937), 88. See also Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial*, 135.

³⁷ See most recently Edward Fram, “Bein 1096 le 1648/49 — Iiun mekhadesh,” *Zion* 61 (1996): 159–182; Jacob Katz, “Od al ‘Bein 1096 le 1648/49,’” *Zion* 62 (1997): 23–29; Edward Fram, “Veadain ein bein 1096 le 1648–1649,” *Zion* 62 (1997): 31–46.

³⁸ Natan Hannover, *Abyss of Despair*, trans. Abraham Mesch (1950; repr., New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1983), 45. It seems very likely that a systematic study of references to Jews from the Ukraine in Jewish (and non-Jewish) sources in Turkey would be fruitful. I benefited from the wide-ranging knowledge of Dr. Yaron Ben Naeh on Ottoman Jewish communities who showed me the rich potential of this literature.

³⁹ Israel Halperin, “Sheviiia ufedut bezezeirot Ukraina,” in *Iehudim ve-iahadut be-Mizrahk Eiropa* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1968), 212–249, esp. 227, 236, and 240.

is a bit more than half of the estimated pre-1648 Jewish population in Ukrainian lands. The number of casualties was thus fewer than 20,000,⁴⁰ perhaps 18,000. There is no doubt that many of these casualties were the product of illness, malnutrition and deaths on the road. I know of no way to distinguish between violent deaths and deaths that were the byproducts of violence. It should also be remembered if the number of refugees, converts or captives was underestimated, which is probable, the number of casualties would decline.

My own estimate of casualties is much lower than the numbers to be found in the Jewish chronicles. However, read carefully, these chronicles provide indirect support for our estimate. The high estimates of loss assume that tragic cases like those of Nemiriv and Tulchyn were representative of the fate of all Ukrainian Jews. However, the communities that the Jewish chroniclers commemorated were few and usually the same. The authors of the early chronicles were contemporary to the events and from the region. They should have easily been able to add many additional accounts, had they known of them. Their silence suggests there were no additional cases to add, or only a few additional ones, although admittedly, the chronicles may have had no interest in being comprehensive. External sources, which are fragmentary, add few cases of major destruction to the existing list. This suggests that the many Jews who were undoubtedly killed were killed in small numbers and in many places, but not *en masse* and not in the major centers of population. This reality fits a more moderate estimate of loss; a high one is reasonable only if many large communities were wiped out. The indelible impression on future generations of the pogroms that indeed did occur should thus not be confused *ipso facto* with an enormous scope of population loss.

Indirect calculation of Jewish casualties

These conclusions can be compared to an analysis of reliable information on the size of the Jewish population in the Ukrainian lands in the mid-18th century. In 1764, a census, the first of its kind in Poland-Lithuania, was made of the Jewish population in the Polish Lithuanian Commonwealth (including the Ukraine). This census appears to have been reasonably accurate. While backward extrapolation is tricky, it is also a useful tool – especially since it is based on an independent source. If such an extrapolation would contradict my estimate, this would suggest that there was a serious problem with the estimate. If, on the other hand, it accords with the estimate, it does not prove that the estimate was correct but it does strengthen the claim for its reliability.

According to 1764 census, the Jewish population in Volhynia, Podilia, Bratslav, and Kyiv was about 130,000. Mahler suggested that the data from this census should be corrected upwards by about 26% in order to make up for undercounting and include in-

⁴⁰ This figure does not take into account casualties in Red Ruthenia, Poland, and Lithuania, but since the fighting there occurred long after the outbreak of the uprising, Jews in these regions had time to assess the danger and flee.

fants.⁴¹ This would raise the total to about 165,000. To go backwards to the source population of 1650, from whom the Jews of 1764 were descended, it is necessary to estimate the relevant growth rate of the population.

The annual growth rate for Jews in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 18th century seems to have been around 1.2%.⁴² Applying this rate to the 17th century, the result is a “source” population of about 42,000. Sergio Della Pergola has suggested a rate of 1.1–1.2% for the century following 1650 and a rate of 1.5–1.6% for the century following 1765.⁴³ This would indicate a source population of about 45,000. Both figures are commensurate with, if slightly higher than the round number of 40,000 suggested above for the pre-1648 Jewish population but this is obviously far higher than our estimate for the number of survivors. In other words, this would imply that there were no casualties at all in 1648. It certainly would not fit with an assessment that the number of casualties was significantly greater than our estimate.

It appears necessary to conclude that not all of the 1764 population of the Ukrainian lands was descended from survivors. It must have included migrants or first generation residents of the Ukrainian lands. The larger the size of this group, the lower the number of survivors in the pool of ancestors. Nonetheless, it seems that the bulk of the 45,000 Jews in the Ukraine following 1648 were survivors, including refugees who had returned home, however bittersweet this return must have been. Many of the refugees had left behind property or had ties with Polish noble landowners. Restored quiet also brought with it the hope for reestablishment in a familiar setting in the first years after the uprising. At the same time, there was little reason for immigration by newcomers. The economic potential of the Ukraine was not immediately obvious, and, elsewhere, once the terrible years of the Polish-Swedish and Polish-Muscovite wars had ended, many economic opportunities opened up. It is not surprising, therefore, that references to significant immigration of Jews from other parts of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth to the Ukraine in the first years after the uprising do not abound. Whatever immigration there was, it seems, was internal, for instance, from places like Red Ruthenia, where relatively more Jews had survived, to other Ukrainian lands now short of manpower. However, in the early 18th century, it would have been reasonable for there to have been migration of Jews to Ukrainian lands and there are indications that this took place.⁴⁴

⁴¹ Mahler, *Yidn in Amoylikn Poiln*, 31 and 41.

⁴² See on this my article: Shaul Stampfer, “The 1764 Census of Polish Jewry,” *Bar Ilan* 24–25 (1989): 24–25, 55, and also 47.

⁴³ In a private communication.

⁴⁴ On this see my article: Шауль Штампфер, “Евреи в царской России в конце XIX в.: демографические аспекты,” в *История еврейского народа в России*, под ред. Исраэля Барталя и Ильи Лурье (Москва: Мосты культуры / Гешарим, 2012), 2:265–285. See also the evidence brought by Лукин и Хаймович, *100 еврейских местечек Украины*, 43–35, for local, short range immigration from Red Ruthenia.

The conclusion that many Jewish refugees from Ukrainian lands returned — or in other words, that much of the post-1650 Jewish population of the Ukraine was made up of survivors or their descendents, is bolstered by data from taxation. In 1662, the Podilian Jewish communities paying the highest taxes were Kamianets and Jazłowiec, both cities that Khmelnytsky had not captured.⁴⁵ Bar had been a major community before the uprising, but it no longer paid substantial taxes. According to the chronicles, Khmelnytsky destroyed this community.⁴⁶

The tax data suggests that communities, which could not rely on survivors, had a slow recovery and did not attract immigration. Jewish communities in towns that had not fallen in the uprising recovered, like the towns themselves, more quickly and were taxed accordingly.

Internal Jewish documentation, too, suggests that the number of Jewish migrants to the Ukrainian lands in the post 1648 years was limited. The Jews of Poland had to pay a yearly “poll tax.” This was collected by the Council of the Four Lands, the umbrella organization of the Jewish communities of Poland. This council assigned a quota or share of the tax load to each Jewish community and region. There were unquestionably attempts by powerful communities to push a disproportionate share of the tax load onto weaker communities. However, such attempts had their limits, allowing the use of the tax division roughly to indicate population distribution. Omitting the exceptional unexpected large fluctuation in payments from specific communities, it is possible to follow the changing share of the tax load that Volhynian Jews paid. According to available scattered records, Volhynian Jews paid about 11% of the total tax load of Polish Jewry in 1569, but only about 6% in 1578.⁴⁷

In 1655, only a few years after the uprising, Volhynian Jewry was already paying 15%. The share of Volhynia declined in 1714 to about 11% and even further, in 1715, to 9%. This does not necessarily indicate that the Volhynian Jewish population was shrinking. It is more likely that it indicated that the Jewish population in other areas was recovering from the Polish wars with Sweden and Russia.⁴⁸ Indeed, other sources, put the share in 1678 at 11%, decreasing in 1680, to 10%, and, in 1718, back up to 14%.⁴⁹ All in all, these figures suggest a stable and slowly recovering population. Large-scale

⁴⁵ Hannover, *Abyss of Despair*, 83. The question of the pre-1648 community of Kamianets is too complicated for analysis here.

⁴⁶ See, however, the sources brought by Саул Я. Боровой и др., ред., *Документы об освободительной войне украинского народа 1648–1654 гг.* (Киев: Наукова думка, 1965).

⁴⁷ Data on 16th century taxes are found in Table 1 (94) in Zenon Guldon und Jacek Wijaczka, “Die zahlenmaessige Staerke der Juden in Polen-Litauen im 16–18 Jahrhundert,” *Trumah* 4 (1994): 91–101, describing the sources of the data in detail.

⁴⁸ See Halperin, *Pinka Vaad*. For data on 1655 see, there, 88, and for 1714, 505. Dr. Yehudit Kalik informed me, in an oral communication, that her data on taxation shows relative stability for the payments of Volhynian Jewry.

⁴⁹ See Yoel Raba, “The Volhyn Regional Committee in 1700,” *Gal Ed* 6 (1982): 215–228 [in Hebrew].

immigration into Volhynia before 1740 should have been accompanied by a dramatic increase in this region's share of total internal Jewish taxation.⁵⁰

There could have been a large influx of Jews to the Ukrainian lands in the years immediately following the uprising. But, if this unlikely scenario did occur, it left no trace in the records of taxation.⁵¹

Finally, there is linguistic evidence for the substantial role of the pre-1648 Jewish population of the Ukrainian lands in the subsequent Jewish population of the region. The existence of a distinct dialect of Ukrainian or South Eastern Yiddish is well known and it has long been recognizable. Dialects are not created overnight. Had there been a massive influx of Jews from Central Poland or from Lithuania, they would have brought their characteristic dialects with them, and the language of their descendants would have closely resembled that used in their regions of origin. To claim that there were many migrants in the mid-17th century and that their descendants quickly created the dialect of Ukrainian Jewry is forced.⁵² The simplest explanation is that the long-term Jewish residents of the Ukrainian lands continued to live in the region. In other words, that the majority in the Jewish population was survivors. It therefore seems that the source population from which the 165,000 Jews of the 1764 census were descended was thus largely one that had been born and bred in Ukrainian lands. These Jews were not necessarily back in the Ukraine by 1662, when the tax records begin. The flow or returning refugees was likely slow but it was there.

Images and Realities

The impact of the uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky against the Polish regime on the collective memory of Ukrainian and Polish Jews was enormous.⁵³ Especially in the first years of the uprising, many Jewish communities in the Ukrainian lands, in Lithuania, and in Poland were destroyed. In subsequent generations, East European Jews "remembered" vividly how Khmelnytsky's forces massacred the helpless Jewish communities wherever they could be found. This image was preserved and transmitted in a number of ways. Chronicles were read, stories were told, and for centuries many Jews

⁵⁰ Alexander Feldman raised the possibility that in this case, as in other cases, that the payments referred to moneys collected from refugees, not individuals who actually lived in the region.

⁵¹ In 1753, Volhynian Jewry paid 27% of the total tax load of Council of the Four Lands though in 1764 this percentage went down again. At first glance, this suggests substantial in-migration at this time. In the same year, the Posen region and the Red Ruthenia region paid remarkably little (Halperin, *Pinkas Vaad*, 512). This fact needs explaining. There is little reason to assume a dramatic drop in their population that year, which was largely redressed by 1764. These short term, and extreme, shifts were probably more a reflection of creative bookkeeping than an issue of population.

⁵² This analysis was corroborated by Prof. Dovid Katz in a private communication in March 2002.

⁵³ See most especially the wealth of sources enabling broad research in Raba, *Between Remembrance and Denial*. See, too, Chone Shmeruk, "Yiddish Literature and Collective Memory – the Case of the Chmielnicki Massacres," *Polin* 5 (1990): 187–197, and the dissertation of Jakob Schamschon, *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Judenverfolgungen in Polen während der Jahre 1648–1658* (Diss., Bern, 1912).

in the Ukraine observed a fast day in memory of the victims. The Jewish perception of these events contributed both to their self-stereotypes and to their views of others, notably of the Ukrainians and Poles. There is no lack of descriptions of what happened to the Jews during the uprising. The Jewish chronicles depicted the Cossacks going from town to town and slaughtering the local Jews.⁵⁴

The accounts of the fate of the Jews during the uprising often described Jews fleeing to fortified cities, but this account was usually followed in the narrative by the arrival of the Khmelnytsky's forces and then the death of the Jews. If this had really been the case in every city, very few Jews could have survived those years, and, indeed, there are some very high estimates of Jewish casualties during that period.⁵⁵ However, these estimates are based on two problematic assumptions. To assume that Jews did little more than flee to nearby fortresses does not fit what we know about the Jews. Reliance on local strongholds was reasonable at the outbreak of the uprising. There was no reason for anyone to think that the Polish forces would be unable to deal with the forces led by Khmelnytsky, and most informed observers anticipated that the uprising would be swiftly repressed. However, it quickly became clear this was not the case and the forces of Khmelnytsky continued to advance and conquer cities. At that stage it became obvious that going to the nearest city was not sufficient to guarantee safety and that it was necessary to travel farther. Ukrainian Jews had survived and prospered until then by using their wits. They were hardly fatalistic types. To assume that Jews "waited" for the forces of Khmelnytsky to arrive and annihilate them is to presume they were highly imperceptive. Khmel-

⁵⁴ The most detailed of the chronicles, Shmuel Feibish b. Natan's *Tit HaYeven* (Venice, 1650) describes Khmelnytsky's slaughter of Jews as his forces moved from town to town. The title page is undated, but the time is probably the late 17th century.

⁵⁵ Jewish chronicles offer wildly varying estimates of the number killed in 1648–1650, which, in fact, must be extrapolated from the texts that give no explicit totals. Most popular is Hannover, *Abyss of Despair*. Bernard Weinryb, who himself puts the number at about 40–50,000, reports that Hannover indicates more than 80,000, Shmuel Feibish, *Tit HaYeven*, implies 670,000 (Bernard Weinryb, *The Jews of Poland* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1972), 194, 197). The Council of the Lithuanian Jewish community more modestly spoke, in 1650, of "several tens of thousands" (*ibid.*, 102). See also Gershon Bacon, "'The House of Hannover': *Gezeirot Tah* in modern Jewish historical writing," *Jewish History* 17, no. 2 (2003): 179–206, on modern Jewish historiography and its evaluation of events, and Bernard Weinryb, "The Hebrew Chronicles on Bohdan Khmel'nyts'kyi and the Cossack-Polish War," *Harvard Ukrainian Studies* 1, no. 2 (1977): 153–177. Jaroslaw Pelenski made perhaps the lowest estimate, roughly ten thousand. He wrote "...on the basis of comparative analysis, I wish to suggest that the number of Jews killed in the Khmelnytsky revolution amounted either to a minimum of 6,000 to 7,000, one-tenth of the figure offered by Hannover, or to a maximum of 12,000 to 14,000, approximately one-fifth of the figure claimed by Hannover" (Jaroslaw Pelenski, "The Cossack Insurrections in Jewish-Ukrainian Relations," in *Ukrainian Jewish Relations in Historical Perspective*, ed. Howard Aster and Peter J. Potichnyj (Edmonton: Canadian Institute of Ukrainian Studies, 1990), 31–42, esp. 36). Pelenski's estimate is cited in the recent survey: Валерій А. Смолій і Валерій С. Степанков, "Українська національна революція 1648–1676 рр. крізь призму століть," *Український історичний журнал* 1 (1998): 3–24; *Український історичний журнал* 2 (1998): 3–26; *Український історичний журнал* 3 (1998): 3–12.

nytsky's forces rarely entered a city by surprise. News traveled faster in Eastern Europe than military forces. The most obvious response to the approaching danger was to pack up and flee, irrespective of the loss of property and uncollected debts.

Moreover, no evidence exists to prove that Khmelnytsky and his forces planned to annihilate Ukrainian Jewry. Mass murder requires great planning and organization. Khmelnytsky would have had to assign fighters needed for the military struggle with the Poles to the task. However, high casualty estimates assume a systematic effort to kill Jews. Many Ukrainians intensely disliked Jews, whose prominent role as tax collectors and ties with the Poles likely increased this feeling. However, intense dislike is not obsession. It is therefore not surprising that there were a number of occasions where Ukrainian forces besieging a city spared the lives of the local Jews in return for a (large) payment by the local Jewish community. The chronicles also record cases of friendship between Jews and Ukrainians without implying this was exceptional. The Jews who lived in the area both before and after the uprising did not seem to regard relations between Ukrainians and Jews as significantly worse than relations between Jews and non-Jews elsewhere in Eastern Europe.

The authors of the Jewish chronicles were motivated by a desire to arouse emotions and to lead readers to consider the punishments God metes out to individuals.⁵⁶ Their descriptions had value only if they could lead readers to repent or to maintain the sacred memory of the victims. The more moving the description, the more likely it was to achieve its goal. Chronicles also aimed at encouraging readers generously to support survivors: here, the more dramatic the story, the better. Historical accuracy plays no role in either case. Precision might, in fact, be counter-productive. The more victims reported, the greater the horror and consequent repentance and generosity. Therefore, there is no *prima facie* reason to assume that the Jewish chronicles are, or were intended to be, precise. For example, they report far more casualties in Pinsk and Dubno than do the archival sources.⁵⁷ Many Jews clearly escaped. A letter written by an eyewitness in Bar raises similar questions.⁵⁸

The number of Ukrainian Jews (not including Red Ruthenia) who died during the years of the uprising led by Bohdan Khmelnytsky thus appears to have been no more than 18,000–20,000 out of a population of about 40,000. It was certainly a large number by any standard and the sense of shock and horror it engendered is unquestionable.

⁵⁶ See on this problem Edward Fram, "Creating a Tale of Martyrdom in Tulchin, 1648," in *Jewish History and Jewish Memory*, ed. Elisheva Carlebach, John M. Efron, and Davis M. Myers (Hanover, NH: Brandeis University Press, 1998), 89–112, and Fram, "Veadain ein bein 1096 le'1648–1649," 31–46.

⁵⁷ See Mordechai Nadav, "Kehilat Pinsk betkufa shemegzeirot TaKh-TaT ad shlom Andrushov (1648–1667)," *Zion* 31 (1996): 153–196, and Murray Rosman, "Dubno in the wake of Khmel'nyts'kyi," *Jewish History* 17, no. 2 (2003): 239–255.

⁵⁸ See Боровой, *Документы об освободительной войне*, 100. A letter by an eyewitness at Bar wrote that the attackers killed "kilkanaście Niemców w zamku z Żydami." The word *kilkanaście*, which means "some" or "a few" could apply to the Germans (Niemców) alone, or to the Jews as well. This is far from Hannover's chronicle (Hannover, *Abyss*, 80). Certainly not all the nobles were killed because one of them wrote the letter!

Yet not all of those who died were killed by the Ukrainian forces. Tatars allied with the Ukrainians were responsible for many of the victims, although how many is not known. Many Jews also died from disease and epidemics, malnutrition and other “non violent” forms of death. This number could easily have been equal to the number murdered.⁵⁹ All the observers say these numbers were substantial, but translating this notion into precise numbers is not possible.

This assessment of less than 20,000 Jewish casualties has been criticized in a recent study by Jits van Straten.⁶⁰ He quite correctly points out the difficulties involved in dealing with the data. He concludes that in 1648 there were between 370,000 to 500,000 Jews in the Ukrainian lands and that there were between 100,000 to 200,000 Jewish casualties. On paper everything is possible. However, he does not address the obvious question: Where could 400,000 Jews have lived in 17th century Ukrainian lands? The cities in the region were tiny by our standards today and the absorptive capacity of the rural population was very limited. Had the urban population been mainly Jewish, this would have been noted by contemporaries and reported in sources from the time – and it was not. Had Jews swarmed in the countryside, this also would have attracted attention – and it did not. Indeed, a determined population of 400,000 Jews might have been a serious threat – or possibly even a powerful ally for Khmelnytsky. It was because the Jewish population was so limited in number that they were open to attack. There is no escape from a much lower estimate of the population size in 1648 – and from much lower estimates of the number of victims. Tomasz Ciesielski in an important recent article makes precisely this point.⁶¹

If we look at the realities, it seems clear that the Jews of the Ukrainian lands soon enough, if not immediately, recognized the danger of the uprising and took steps to save themselves. Jewish chronicles report Jews fighting to defend besieged towns. However, most Jews resorted to flight, which is the real reason why so many survived, to return slowly when calm was restored. Within a century, the demographic impact of the uprising was hardly visible. The chronicles, true to their purpose of evoking emotion and repentance, omit mention of this reconstruction. The number of Jewish lives lost and communities destroyed was immense. However, the impression of destruction was greater than the destruction itself. Had Khmelnytsky intended to slaughter Jews indiscriminately and as an end unto itself, the number of victims would surely have been

⁵⁹ It is worth noting that the general population of Poland declined significantly in the second half of the 17th century, largely due to malnutrition, disease, and other non-violent death. See Jerzy Topolski, “Wpływ wojen połowy 17 wieku na sytuację ekonomiczną: przykład Podlasia,” in *Gospodarka Polska a Europejska w 16–18 wieku* (Poznań: Wydawnictwo Poznańskie, 1977), 125–166, esp. 136–139.

⁶⁰ Jits van Straten, “Did Shmu’el Ben Nathan and Nathan Hanover Exaggerate? Estimates of Jewish Casualties in the Ukraine during the Cossack Revolt in 1648,” *Zutot* 6, no. 1 (2009): 75–82.

⁶¹ Tomasz Ciesielski, “The Jews in Times of War and the Social and Political Riots in the Southeast of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the 17th and 18th Centuries: Contribution to the Research,” *Biuletyn Polskiej Misji Historycznej* 9 (2014): 267–290. The article is available here: <http://apcz.pl/czasopisma/index.php/BPMH/article/view/BPMH.2014.011>.

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higher. What made the destruction loom so large was the knowledge that so many communities no longer existed. The Jewish chroniclers wanted to memorialize a lost world. The mid-17th century was a terrible time for everyone in the Ukrainian lands; Jews were not the only ones to die, but they did suffer more than others.

What this “suffering” meant in specifics this essay has tried to outline. Its conclusions, thanks to the nature of the available sources, are perforce tentative. Nonetheless, the overall picture, the commensurability of the various tentative trials, leads to a measure of certainty that these conclusions will bear the test of time and, even more, the test of future, hopefully more precise, investigation.