Contents

Preface: Pinsk: A Novelist in the Blottes  xvii
Mark Jay Mirsky

Preface: Introduction to Pinsk Translation  xxxiii
Moshe Rosman

List of Abbreviations  xlvii

Introduction by Mordechai Nadav  i

The Political History of Pinsk up to the Mid-Sixteenth Century  6
From Principality to Royal Domain  10

I. From the Founding of the Community
Until the Union of Lublin (1506–1569)  13

The Founding of the Community:
The Basic Privilege of Pinsk Jewry  13
The Jewish Quarter and the Direction of Its Expansion  18
Population Growth Estimate Based on the 1552–1555 and 1561–1566 Lustracije  23
Communal Organization  26
The Basic Privilege  31
Transition from Private Holding to Royal Domain  35
Adjudication  36
Taxes  37

Economic Life During the Era of Prince Feodor  38
Loans  40
Leases of Customs, Liquor, and Salt Monopoly Rights  43
Agricultural Properties and Other Real Estate  48
Commerce  51
Intensification of Economic Activity  55
Artisanry  58
2. From the Union of Lublin Until the 1648–1649

Chmielnicki Persecutions (1569–1648) 59

Development of the Community: Population Growth 59
Topography of Jewish Settlement 62
Expansion of Settlements in the Pinsk Vicinity 63

Legal Status: General Privileges 67
Pinsk's Magdeburg Privilege 71
The Pinsk Jews' Privileges 73
Jurydyki 75
Jewish Status in Practice 76
The Jews of Pinsk Within the Christian Environment 79

Economic Life 86
Latifundia Leasing: The Olewsk Leasehold 86
Arendy as a Source of Livelihood for Pinsk's Jews 98
Tax and Customs Leases 99
Liquor and Mill Leases 102
Commerce 103
The Timber and Grain Trade 107
Trade and the Status of the Pinsk Jewish Community 108
Large-Scale Commerce 111
Middling and Petty Commerce 112
Loans 113
Handicrafts and Hired Employees 115

The Kahal Organization: The Structure and
Competence of the Kahal 116
The Rabbi, Chairman of the Court 119
Adjudication 122
Taxes 124
Special Taxes and Levies 130
How Did the Kahal Finance Its Budget? 131
Relations Between Pinsk and the Surrounding
Communities 134
Pinsk's Place Among the Chief Communities 138

3. From the Chmielnicki Persecutions of 1648–1649
Until the Peace of Andruszow 141

The 1648–1649 Persecutions in Pinsk 141
The Penetration of the Cossacks into the Pinsk Region 142
The Capture of Pinsk 144
The Jews of Pinsk During the 1648–1649 Persecutions 146
   The Testimony of Jacob Rubinowicz 146
   The Testimonies of the Hebrew Chronicles 148
   The Townspeople and the Jewish Community 150
   The Flight of the Jews of Pinsk I 152
   Loss of Life 152

Renewal and Rehabilitation of Communal Life:
   Continuity of the Activities of the Kahal Leadership 156
   Economic Life 161
   Commerce and Credit 161
   Arendy 163

Pinsk During the Polish-Muscovite War (1655–1659) 163
   War Preparations 164
   The Attack on Pinsk and Its Capture 166
   The Occupiers and the Urban Population 167
   The Flight of the Jews of Pinsk II 168
   The Effect of the Events on the Townspeople
      and the Jews 171

1656–1659: Pinsk at the Center of Political Activity 173
   The Controversy over the Liquor Business 175
   Credit 176

1660 178
   The Capture of Pinsk by Mikhail Kurhan 178
   The Second Muscovite Occupation 179

1660–1667: Polish Rule Restored 180

The Life of the Jews of Pinsk in the 1660s:
   Demographic Changes 183
      The Spread of Bartending 185
      The Middle Class and the Wealthy 185
      Commerce 187
      Pinsk’s Hinterland 189
   The Change for the Worse in Christian-Jewish Relations 190
   Religious Hatred and Attacks Against Jews 191

4. From the Peace of Andruszow Until the Conquest
   of Pinsk by the Swedes (1667–1706) 193
      The Development of the Jewish Community: Demographic
         Growth and Geographic Expansion 193
      The Surrounding Vicinity 194
Contents

Economic Life 197
Commerce 197
The Affluent Class 198
Customs 201
Leasing of Estates, Liquor Rights, and Villages 205
Moneylending 209
Jews Lending to Christians 209
Kahal Loans 210
Loans to Individuals 217
Organization of the Kahal 219
Internal Problems of the Kahal Leadership 219
Pinsk as a Chief Community and the Dispute Between the Chief Communities 222
Internal Life 226
Education of Children 226
The Yeshiva 228
Study of Torah 229
The Synagogue 230
Daily Life 231
The Rabbis of Pinsk 232
The Image of the Rabbinate 235
Summary: The Pinsk Jewish Community’s First Two Hundred Years 236

5. From the Conquest of Pinsk by the Swedes Until the Second Partition of Poland (1706–1793) 242
The Jews of Pinsk at the Beginning of the Eighteenth Century 242
Population Growth 243
Jewish Population in Pinsk According to the 1766 and 1784 Censuses 244
The Pinsk Vicinity 251
The First Dispute with the Subordinate Communities 253
Renewed Conflict with the Subordinate Communities 257
Karlin and Its Ties to Pinsk 262
Debts 264
Debts of the Pinsk Community 271
Personal Debts 278
Economic Life 279
Contents xi

Taxes, Income, and Expenditures of the Kahal 288
  Head Tax 288
  Other Taxes 289
  The “Skhum” 291
  The Kahal Budget 293

Pinsk and Karlin—Hasidim and Mitnaggedim 294
  Rabbi Rafael Ha-Kohen (Hamburger) and Hasidism 295
  Rabbi Eliezer Ha-Levi 298
  The Maggid’s Letter to Rabbi Eliezer and Rabbi Hayyim 299
  Rabbi Levi Yitzhak ben Meir of Berdichev 301
  Rabbi Avigdor ben Hayyim (1785–1795) 304

6. From the Russian Annexation of Pinsk Until
Tsar Alexander III and the Bilu Movement (1793–1880) 312
  Rabbi Avigdor’s Battle with the Hasidim of
    Pinsk and Lithuania 312
  Rabbi Avigdor’s Renewed Battle with the
    Hasidim and the Kahal 322
  Saul Levin Karliner and the History of Pinsk-Karlin
    Jewry (1793–1834) 329
    Saul of Karlin 330
    Karlin’s Role in the Battle Between Hasidim
    and Mitnaggedim 331
    Economic Life 335
    The 1820s and the Beginning of Economic Revival 337
    The Economic Activity of Saul Levin Karliner 339
    Saul Levin’s Activities as a Community Leader 340
    Emigration to Eretz Israel and Aid to the
      Ashkenazic Community 344
    Saul Levin of Karlin: The Culmination of One Era
      and the Beginning of Another 345

Growth of the Jewish Population 346
  Legal and Political Status 350
  The Kahal 354
  Taxes 355
  Military Recruitment 359
  Economic Life After 1835 366
  Agents of Pinsk Merchants in Ukraine 374
  The Timber Trade 376
Contents

Industry 379
The Beginnings of Jewish Industry 380
Trades 381
Iwaniki 385
Pinsk's Economic Profile and the Changes of the 1860s 388
Migration to Ukraine 392
Economic Crisis 394
Welfare 396
The Haskalah 400
Rabbi Uziel the Judge 403
Reuben Holdhor and His Divrei Shalom Ve-Emet 404
Perushim 407
The Turning Point 410
Knowledge of Russian 411
Clerks 412
The Intelligentsia 414
The Circles of Maskil Writers 417
The Circle of Shomer 418
Newspaper Articles 419
Reading 421
Enlightened Members of Wealthy Families 422
Fundamentalist Circles 425
Educational Institutions 428
The Government School 429
Girls' Schools 435
Rosenberg's Private School 436
Secondary Education 437
The Gymnasium 439
Commercial School 441
Talmud Torah 441
The Pinsk Talmud Torah 442
The Karlin Talmud Torah 446
Hadarim, Melamdim 451
Societies and Benevolent Institutions 454
Pinsk Hevrah Kaddisha (Burial Society) and
Hevrah Ketanah (Small Society) 455
Pinsk Bikkur Holim (Society for Visiting the Sick) 455
Pinsk Hevrat Linah (Assistance to the Sick) 455
Pinsk Hevrot Limud Torah (Torah Study Societies) 455