

Dr. Dirk Sadowski, Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research, Braunschweig

The German schools for Jewish Children in Galicia, 1782–1806: Moral instruction and school reality

With the establishment of a network of elementary schools under the supervision of the Maskil Herz Homberg (1749–1841) in the 1780s and 1790s, the Austrian state tried to impose its educative and disciplining agenda upon Galician Jewry. My paper will deal with different aspects of the teaching of German language in the classrooms – which was in fact moral teaching. For this purpose I will have a brief look on the textbooks for Jewish children that were not mere instruments of teaching how to read and to write, but functioned as media of inculcating social and moral values derived from enlightened universal norms and the reason of state. The Jewish children learned from these textbooks about the complexity of society, the interdependency between social groups, and about the duties and obligations in this society. Actions oriented to the non-Jewish world, whose normative horizon had previously been governed by Halakhah, were given a universal foundation by rational arguments and were embedded in the total social context. My paper asks about the effects that this kind of instruction could have had on Jewish children who simultaneously continued to visit the institutions of traditional education where they learned exactly the opposite.

In addition to this, the paper examines different phenomena connected to the “school reality” of this educative system imposed upon the Jews. There is evidence that school attendance was not as bad as the contemporary discourse, focused on deviant behavior and its punishment, suggests. There were three main factors that affected the participation of the children in the classes: infrastructural constraints as lacking space for all children of school-age, reproductive necessities like the need of children as additional breadwinners in the impoverished Jewish families, and corporative resistance, originating in the traditional life-world of Galician Jewry. Parents, religious teachers (*melamdin*) and community leaders resisted the leveling and disciplining measures of the state, which were embodied in the new school system.

Dr. Dirk Sadowski is research fellow at the Georg Eckert Institute for International Textbook Research at Braunschweig, Germany, and co-ordinator of the German-Israeli textbook commission. He studied Israel studies, Jewish studies and modern history at the Humboldt University and Free University in Berlin and at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem. From 2001 to 2009, he was research associate at the Simon Dubnow Institute for Jewish history and culture, Leipzig. In 2008, he received his PhD from the University of Leipzig with a dissertation on the Maskil Herz Homberg and the Jewish German schools in Galicia. His research interests are in the fields of Haskalah (Jewish enlightenment) and enlightened Jewish pedagogy, Christian-Jewish discourse and Hebrew printing from the 15th to the 18th centuries. Dr Sadowski also specialises in Israeli history and society.

Selected Publications: *Jüdische Geschichte im Schulbuch* (ed., together with Martin Liepach), Göttingen 2014; *Haskala und Lebenswelt. Herz Homberg und die jüdischen deutschen Schulen in Galizien 1782–1806*, Göttingen 2010; *The Jewish German schools in Galicia*

(1782–1806) – school reality and corporate resistance, in: *Jewish Culture and History* 13 (2012), 153–172; „Gedruckt in der Heiligen Gemeinde Jeßnitz“ – Der Buchdrucker Israel bar Avraham und sein Werk, in: *Yearbook of the Simon Dubnow Institute* 7 (2008), 39–69.