

Stefan Litt

Pinkas, Kahal, and the Mediene

The Records of Dutch Ashkenazi
Communities in the Eighteenth Century
as Historical Sources

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Pinkas, Kahal, and the Mediene

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Century as Historical Sources

by
Stefan Litt



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Stefan Litt
September 2007

INTRODUCTION

What is a Jewish community? What is it for? How does it form? How does it work? Who starts it? Why? Who sets the rules? Who imposes them? What makes one community thrive and another decline? The historical evidence is often scarce and the detail sporadic, but one source that provides significant clues to the workings of a community is its *pinkas*. In a nutshell, in the early modern Ashkenazi world, this is a community's administrative record: its statutes and legal rulings, often accompanied by a host of other information. This study examines the *pinkassim* of four provincial Ashkenazi communities in the Dutch Republic of the eighteenth century.

A handful of scholarly works have been published about the larger of these peripheral communities, mostly based on material from administrative archives that generally reflect the perspective of non-Jews. In 1991 Jozeph Michman commented on the lack of research into the history of Dutch Ashkenazi Jews before the early nineteenth century:

The entire field of Jewish traditions and customs, of halakhic and moralistic literature, for whose understanding a thorough grounding in Hebrew and Yiddish is essential, remains neglected. All the focal points of Jewish existence during the pre-emancipation period, and even during a large part of the nineteenth century, remain terra incognita; research tends to be necessarily restricted to socioeconomic descriptions of widespread hardships of the Jewish existence.¹

Today, fifteen years on, the situation has improved slightly, as historians have begun to examine the Yiddish or Hebrew of the Jewish sources, raising the quality of their work significantly. Unfortunately, not all of these scholars are professional historians, a fact that is reflected in a lack of rigour in questioning the sources, which a more experienced historian might have employed.

Neglect has also been the fate of the surprisingly rich corpus of Jewish community sources. In the Netherlands, most of these are in

¹ J. Michman, 'A Decade of Historiography of Dutch Jewry', in: J. Michman (ed.), *Dutch Jewish History Vol. III: Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Jerusalem 1993), pp. 9–17, esp. 10–11.

Yiddish or Hebrew, at least those that predate the 1820s. Which, given the absence of expertise in these languages, is presumably why they have been neglected. Even the principal documents of Amsterdam's Ashkenazi community have yet to be analysed systematically. In fact this problem is not unique to the Netherlands; Jewish material in other European countries suffers from a similar disregard.

This study of the *pinkassim* of four Dutch communities attempts to remedy the situation by combining the two areas, examining the common characteristics of *pinkassim* and their value as historical sources. Previous studies in the context of the binational 'Yiddish in the Netherlands' project, recently released in Amsterdam and Dusseldorf, have revealed an astonishing number of *pinkassim*, *takkanot* (regulations) and other material from numerous Jewish communities and *hevrās*, most of which are kept in public archives in the Netherlands.² It became clear that not all of these documents could be examined during the time available for this project. In several sources, the historical information encompassed a considerable period before 1795, the year of the French occupation of the Low Countries, which saw the introduction of far-reaching administrative changes. This was therefore taken as a cut-off date, limiting the amount of material and number of communities included in the research. At the same time the distribution of the earliest *pinkassim* in the Dutch Republic proved fortuitous. For this study the following communities were therefore selected: Middelburg in Zeeland, The Hague in Holland, Leeuwarden in Friesland and Oisterwijk in what is now North Brabant, then part of the Generality lands (States Brabant). The earliest *pinkassim* from Middelburg and The Hague begin in the 1720s, that of Leeuwarden in 1754 and the latest, Oisterwijk, in 1764.

In this study, following a brief description of the general historical background of the Dutch Republic and its Jewish population, the *pinkassim* of these four communities are examined to show how they can shed light on various aspects of Jewish institutions and Jewish life. Numerous questions arise concerning community leadership, elections, rabbis and their power and influence, the position of officials within the community structure, taxation, *hevrās*, population development and demography. Much still remains unknown regarding administrative

² R. van Luit, *Mediene Remnants: Yiddish Sources in Dutch Archives Outside Amsterdam* (forthcoming).

traditions and community leadership in the early modern period of Ashkenazi Jewry, particularly in the Dutch Republic. Scholars have researched these questions in relation to some German, Polish and Italian communities,³ but these insights have never been combined to create a cohesive picture. The comprehensive approach of this study provides new insights into many of these aspects. In addition, considerable obscurity still surrounds the origins and movement of Ashkenazi Jews in the Dutch Republic, their contacts with other communities and any regional organisations that may have existed (regional organisations [*bnai medine*] were common in Germany and Poland, from which many Dutch Jews originated in the eighteenth century). Another key question is the impact of historical events and social change in the Dutch Republic of the eighteenth century on Jewish communities and their internal organisation and, not least, the way these are reflected in the official records.

This book does not attempt to offer a definitive history of the Jews in the locations discussed. That would require a parallel study of the undoubtedly rich corpus of external sources, a work already been done by scholars. By focusing exclusively on internal material it shows how new insights into community affairs can be gained by examining these largely neglected records. *Pinkassei kahal* provide an intimate glimpse into the administrative work of Jewish community governors. Comparing them reveals some important previously unnoticed aspects of Ashkenazi institutions in the eighteenth century. A closer examination of the actual *pinkassim* also provides new information about the genre itself. Scholars have occasionally expressed a ‘comprehensive understanding’ of *pinkassim*, however this study reveals how little is actually known about this source material and about its characteristics.⁴ Complete text editions are rare,⁵ indeed no Dutch editions exist. Some suggestions are

³ These questions have been explored in articles accompanying editions of *pinkassim*. Detailed works have appeared about the administrative structure of Tikocyn in Poland (M. Nadav [ed.], *The Minutes Book of the Jewish Community Council of Tykocin 1621–1806*, 2 vols. [Jerusalem 1996]), Padova in Italy (D. Carpi [ed.], *Minutes Book of the Council of the Jewish Community of Padua, 1577–1603; 1603–1630*, 2 vols. [Jerusalem 1973]) and Schnaittach in Germany (M. Hildesheimer [ed.], *Acta Communitatis Judaeorum Schnaittach* [Jerusalem 1992]).

⁴ The only available general description of this type of source, based on Ukrainian examples, is A. Rechtman, *Yiddish Ethnography and Folklore* (Buenos Aires: YIVO, 1958), in Yiddish.

⁵ In addition to the examples in f. 3, see also: Y. Boksenboim, *Pinkas Kahal Verona, 1539–1630*, 3 vols. (Tel Aviv 1989); A. Haller, *Das Protokollbuch der jüdischen Gemeinde Trier*

therefore offered in conclusion regarding the nature of *pinkassim*: Chapter 2 (Keeping a *Pinkas*) reviews different concepts of Dutch-Ashkenazi *pinkassim*, whereas the section below (What is a *Pinkas*?) discusses new insights into these internal Jewish sources.

State of Research

The history of the Jews in the Dutch Republic was the subject of research long before the Second World War and the Holocaust, which all but destroyed European and Dutch Jewry. Most scholars tended to focus on the Sephardic Jews of Amsterdam, The Hague and a few other Dutch towns. Their history exercised a greater attraction: the story of a small, rather exotic minority, originally from southwest Europe, a story of converts and apostates. In addition, their wealth suggested success, which is naturally more pleasant to research and describe. Yet it was not long before those rich and successful Sephardi Jews became a minority among Dutch Jews in general, as the rapid growth of the Ashkenazi communities began.

The first general academic work about Dutch Jews of any significance was by Hendrik Jacob Koenen,⁶ which appeared in 1843. In fact this comprehensive volume was one of the first publications about the Jews of any European nation. It was the result of a competition for a treatise on the history of the Jews of the Netherlands organised by the Provinciaal Utrechtsch Genootschap van Kunsten en Wetenschappen in 1840.⁷ Koenen won first prize. He described the story of the Jews of the entire region; beginning with their early history and concluding with the reorganisation of the Jewish communities after Napoleon. Koenen's work is academically sound, with clear references to primary and secondary sources, which gives the book an almost modern appearance.

(1784–1836) (Frankfurt am Main 1992); S. Litt, *Protokollbuch und Statuten der Jüdischen Gemeinde Friedberg (16.–18. Jahrhundert)* (Friedberg 2003), (*Kehilat Friedberg II*); J. Meisl, *Protokollbuch der Jüdischen Gemeinde Berlin (1723–1854)* (Jerusalem 1962).

⁶ H. J. Koenen, *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland* (Utrecht 1843).

⁷ J. Zwarts, 'Hoe Koenen's "Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland" ontstond', in *Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad* (10 June, 1 and 8 July 1927); J. Meijer, *H. J. Koenen, Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland: Historiografische analyse* (Heemstede 1982). Cited in R.G. Fuks-Mansfeld, 'Arduous Adaption', in: J. C. H. Blom, R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld, I. Schöffers (eds), *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford 2002), [p. 237 and n. 34, p. 424].

He even mentions some Jewish centres outside Amsterdam, including a chapter on the Jews in The Hague.

In 1929, Jacob Zwarts published a volume containing chapters on the history, folk art, religion and religious studies of the Jews in the Netherlands, also including an examination of the smaller communities outside Amsterdam.⁸

In 1940, just before the Germans occupied the Netherlands, the first part of a planned two-volume history appeared, edited by Hendrik Brugmans and Abraham Frank.⁹ The war put an end to the study of Jewish history and so the second volume never materialised. The first volume can still be found in libraries and its broad discussion of Dutch Jewish history remains impressive. It contains several articles and essays on Dutch Jewry, including one about communities outside Amsterdam, again by Zwarts. His extensive article brings together most of what was known in the 1930s about the smaller communities and their history.

Hartog Beem, a prominent member of the Leeuwarden community before and after the war, played a leading role in research into the history of the Jewish communities outside Amsterdam, especially of his native Leeuwarden. In fact, he was the first to publish a work on a provincial community based to a significant extent on internal Jewish sources.¹⁰ He also used official sources and found connections between these two groups of material. Beem's interests were not limited to Leeuwarden and Friesland. On the contrary, he also collected a large amount of information about other Dutch communities. This provided the groundwork for an Israeli-Dutch project entitled *Pinkas HaKehillot*, which was published in Hebrew in 1985 and in 1992 in Dutch. It encompasses articles about each Dutch community, with some basic statistics and bibliographies. In 1999, a second Dutch edition was published,¹¹ which demonstrates its impact. Although the article on Amsterdam takes precedence in the volume, much information about smaller communities also appears and was updated for the two Dutch editions.

⁸ J. Zwarts, *Hoofdstukken uit de Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland* (Zutphen 1929).

⁹ Hk. Brugmans and A. Frank (eds), *Geschiedenis der Joden in Nederland*, vol. I (Amsterdam 1940).

¹⁰ H. Beem, *De Joden van Leeuwarden: Geschiedenis van een Joods cultuurcentrum* (Assen 1974).

¹¹ J. Michman, D. Michman and H. Beem (eds), *Pinkas: Geschiedenis van de joodse gemeenschap in Nederland* (Amsterdam 1999).

The most recent scholarly history of the Jews of the Netherlands, published in 1995 (an English edition appeared in 2002, paperback in 2007) also comprises a collection of articles by various scholars from several countries.¹² Most of the contributions discuss general aspects of Dutch Jewry, so that only a limited amount of information is available about specific places, apart from Amsterdam.

Alongside these general works on Dutch Jewry a number of local monographs and articles about Ashkenazi communities have also appeared, generally emulating Beem's work on Leeuwarden. On The Hague there is a relatively early, comprehensive study by Désiré Samuel van Zuiden about the city's Ashkenazi community.¹³ It appears to rely on both Jewish and non-Jewish archival sources. Various other communities are described in brief articles, some of which have made use of Jewish sources.

Regular symposiums on Dutch Jewry have produced a number of volumes of proceedings. Beginning in 1989,¹⁴ these contain articles on different aspects of Dutch-Jewish history, although, again the focus is mainly on the Jews of Amsterdam.

To date no comparative study of the institutional history of early modern Dutch Jewry has been attempted.¹⁵ Moreover, no effort has been made to explore Dutch *pinkassim* in detail,¹⁶ or to compare their composition and the traditions regarding the keeping of these community documents. All of which is reason enough to justify an investigation into this large and relatively poor body of Jews living in the Dutch Republic.

¹² Blom e.a., *op. cit.*

¹³ D. S. van Zuiden, *De Hoogduitsche joden in 's Gravenhage* (The Hague 1913).

¹⁴ J. Michman and T. Levie (eds), *Dutch Jewish History Vol. I: Proceedings of the Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands, 1982* (Jerusalem 1984). Additional volumes appeared in 1986 and 1991. Later symposiums did not continue the series.

¹⁵ The situation is apparently no better regarding other regions with large Jewish populations. These gaps illustrate the considerable hiatus that remains in research into early modern Jewry.

¹⁶ Some excellent editions of *pinkassim* from other European regions exist, many of which approach the study of their structure and content in similar ways. A comparative examination of a number of *pinkassim* from different regions is required to gain a deeper insight into the different local and regional traditions and concepts relating to the keeping of records. Hopefully my forthcoming comprehensive catalogue of European Ashkenazi *pinkassim* from between 1500 and 1800 will provide a helpful tool for research.

*What is a Pinkas?*²

The phenomenon of *pinkassim* has yet to be investigated comprehensively. Few attempts have been made to define a *pinkas kahal*.¹⁷ These manuscripts were the official legal¹⁸ documents of the autonomous Jewish communities and regional organisations of early modern Europe. They appear in varied form wherever Jews lived in autonomous communities. There are apparently no real *pinkassei kahal* in England, where no self-governing Jewish communities ever existed, and where no formal community structure was established in the eighteenth century.¹⁹

Many *pinkassim* feature the same basic contents: elections, regulations, membership matters, accounts and financial matters, community institutions (including synagogue, ritual bath and cemetery), charity, real estate and disciplinary measures. These seem to have been the basic concerns of these autonomous Jewish communities, indeed they were the basic administrative issues of any social group in early modern Europe. Many of these topics can be found in records of town councils, guilds and religious groups of the period,²⁰ with some differences according to the nature of the institutions. The custom of keeping the records of the community in an official book was therefore not specifically Jewish. It is remarkable that no medieval Jewish *pinkassim* have yet been found. Not even fragments, which, despite all the persecutions and expulsions, would presumably have survived if such volumes had ever existed. Perhaps no regular records were kept, although decisions of communities were certainly recorded in the Middle Ages, as examples show.²¹

¹⁷ See Rechtman's discussion of *pinkassim* in *op. cit.* This is based on Ukrainian material and is not representative. The reliability of Rechtman's analysis is uncertain. *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (Jerusalem 1971) offers a brief explanation, which nevertheless defines the genre well; see vol. 13, s.v. *Pinkas*.

¹⁸ Nadav, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

¹⁹ T. Endelman, 'Jewish Communal Structure in Britain from the Resettlement to the Present' in *Studien zur jüdischen Geschichte und Soziologie: Festschrift Julius Carlebach*. (Heidelberg 1992), p. 1. I am indebted to the author for sharing his knowledge of the sources of English Jewry. The surviving English *pinkassei beit knesset* are certainly deserving of investigation.

²⁰ See, e.g., H. Meinert and W. Dahmer (eds), *Das Protokollbuch der Niederländischen Reformierten Gemeinde zu Frankfurt am Main 1570–1581* (Frankfurt am Main 1977); H. Schilling (ed.), *Die Kirchenratsprotokolle der Reformierten Gemeinde Emden 1557–1620*, 2 vols. (Cologne 1989, 1992) in which he offers a thorough introduction to the records of this community and to the manuscript in general.

²¹ See the document about a special contribution of the Jews in Worms from 1377; F. Reuter, *Warmaisa: 1000 Jahre Juden in Worms* (Worms 1984), p. 62.

The first surviving *pinkassim* appeared in the first half of the sixteenth century in Germany and Italy.²² It seems that the custom of keeping these records was copied from the surrounding societies and the emerging pre-modern states, which began to intensify their administrative and legal organisation in the early modern period.²³ This is reflected in the many documents and records written in this period which had no medieval counterpart. Some Jewish communities may have been required by local rulers to keep records, although no law to this effect is known from this early period. The sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Padua *pinkas* uses the word 'parte' for each item, which is typical Italian administrative parlance.²⁴ This clearly indicates the adaptation of non-Jewish administrative customs for Jewish usage. Moreover, the Yiddish of the manuscripts examined here, particularly from The Hague and Leeuwarden, is obviously influenced by local administrative terminology, based mainly on Latin.

In almost every case the *pinkas* records present only the conclusions of issues; there are no summaries of meetings and almost no records of disputes or differences between governors.²⁵ This applies to almost all the *pinkassim* examined here and seems to have been a generally accepted principle. It illustrates again the official character of these manuscripts, which were not intended to preserve the process by which decisions were made. As the *pinkassim* examined here show, not all the decisions of a community's governors were recorded, presumably in order not to reveal too many internal issues to public view, and not least to the local authorities. There was also a tendency to focus on matters which showed the governors in a favourable light and demonstrated their (real or aspired) power. This was presumably common knowledge, handed down from one generation to the next, although to date no rules have been found for the keeping of official Jewish community records.

Three of the Dutch *pinkassim* examined here begin with *takkanot*, the community statutes, unlike Ukrainian *pinkassim*, which, according

²² See the *pinkassim* of Verona in Italy, and Friedberg and Frankfurt in Germany. Also the old *pinkas* from Padua started at this time; see Carpi, *op. cit.*, p. 60.

²³ See, for example, the development of the early modern state in Germany, which was accompanied by new institutions that soon produced astonishing quantities of records and documents; H. Raabe, *Reich und Glaubensspaltung. Deutschland 1500–1600; Neue Deutsche Geschichte*, vol. 4 (Munich 1989), pp. 69–70.

²⁴ Carpi, *op. cit.*, p. 57. Also a number of records in the earliest *pinkassim* from Verona show the same term; see Boksenboim, *op. cit.*, vol. 1, *passim*.

²⁵ See Carpi, *op. cit.*, p. 57.

to Rechtman, rarely show comprehensive statutes at the start of the volume.²⁶ The Tykocin *pinkas*, while it does not have a complete set of regulations on its initial pages (or elsewhere), it does include some clusters of *takkanot*, enacted on specific occasions, and often dealing with specific issues. And while the Friedberg manuscript contains no *takkanot*, a separate book of statutes was kept by the community from 1664 to 1723.²⁷ The Padua *pinkas* also includes regulations, but not at the start.

Statutes were important to the community. This is evident from their prominent place within the community records. *Takkanot* were never secret texts. On the contrary, in the course of the early modern period they emerged as the constitutions of autonomous Jewish communities around Europe. It therefore became important to publish and understand these texts. As a result—in Ashkenazi communities—almost all were written in Yiddish, the *lingua franca* of the Ashkenazi world. Examples exist in Hebrew, but the Yiddish tradition seems to have been far stronger.²⁸ All the *takkanot* in the Dutch *pinkassim* discussed here are in Yiddish.

The regulations of The Hague, Middelburg and Oisterwijk communities show that they were enacted at a turning point in local Jewish history. They were either formulated at the start of the community's independent existence, or following a major dispute in the community which led eventually to the need for a restatement of basic principles. It is hardly surprising therefore to find the community's regulations at the beginning of its *pinkas*, thereby emphasising their importance.

The length of these compilations varies from place to place. Compared to other eighteenth-century European *takkanot*, Dutch regulations tend to be rather short. Judging from those examined to date, most seem

²⁶ Rechtman, *op. cit.*, p. 208. He explains that *pinkassim* of various *hevras* started with their statutes, while communities tended not to formulate comprehensive *takkanot* in advance, but enacted them as required.

²⁷ See Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), pp. 161–196. The regulations were enacted in 1664 after a reorganisation of the community in the 1660s.

²⁸ The earliest preserved and comprehensive *takkanot*, from Cracow (1595), were written in Yiddish; see Bałaban, 'Die Krakauer Judengemeinde-Ordnung von 1595 und ihre Nachträge', *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-literarischen Gesellschaft* 10 (1912), pp. 296–360; 11 (1916), pp. 88–114. The same is true of the comprehensive regulations of the Friedberg community (1664–1723); see Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]); and the most comprehensive collection of community laws from Fürth (1770), still unpublished; CAHJP, D/Fu1/41. In addition to these representative examples, there are many more from smaller places, mostly written in Yiddish.

to contain no more than 100 paragraphs. There also appears to be a linear connection between the age of a community and the number of paragraphs in its regulations: the older a local Jewish history, the more it had experienced and the more this was reflected in the statutes.²⁹ Besides these constitutional compilations, many amendments and additions are also to be found in the various *pinkassim*.

With the exception of the first Oisterwijk manuscript, all of the *pinkassim* examined here were kept more or less chronologically, with some minor glitches. This linear chronology was not an essential part of the *pinkas* tradition. The old Friedberg and Frankfurt *pinkassim* lack a chronological order and some eighteenth-century examples from Bavaria are similarly haphazard.

Pinkassim occur in a variety of formats: from large folio volumes to smaller octavo books. Most were paper, although Rechtman records some Ukrainian parchment manuscripts.³⁰ It seems, however, that this material was rarely used because of its cost. Examples survive of parchment or leather bindings, which was not unusual for the period.

Sometimes labels were placed on the cover, giving the title: *pinkas shel k"k*... The Leeuwarden example is an exception with its alternative title *sefer zikhronot* (book of commemorations). This is an unusual title and it is unclear whether it reflects a different intention for its function and content.³¹ In the event there was no difference.

Pinkassim were usually written in Yiddish and Hebrew. All of the Dutch examples investigated here were kept in Yiddish, with some Dutch and Eastern Yiddish influences. Only rarely was Hebrew used: Hebrew texts invariably deal with religious matters, such as rabbis and synagogues. In the second half of the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of records began to be written in the local vernacular, especially when the subject involved contact with non-Jews.

Only a few illustrations have been discovered to date. The official and legal character of the document seems to have discouraged decoration.

²⁹ See also the comparison between the *takkanot* of The Hague, Middelburg and Friedberg in S. Litt, 'Tradition versus Neuanfang: Die Statuten der jüdischen Gemeinden Friedberg (Hessen), Den Haag und Middelburg aus der ersten Hälfte des 18. Jahrhunderts im Vergleich', in: A. Gotzmann and S. Wendehorst (eds), *Juden im Recht: Neue Zugänge zur Rechtsgeschichte der Juden im Alten Reich* (Berlin 2007), *passim*.

³⁰ Rechtman, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

³¹ Amsterdam *pinkassim* bear the same name; see D. M. Sluys, 'De protocollen der Hoogduitsch-joodsche gemeente te Amsterdam', *Bijdragen en Mededeelingen van het Genootschap voor de Joodsche wetenschap in Nedeland* 4 (1928), p. 116.

No illustrations are found in the Dutch *pinkassim* discussed here, although the front page of a late *pinkas* from Den Bosch includes some decoration.³²

It seems that in particular in Eastern Europe *pinkassim* were highly valued among the members of a community. They were even said to have mystic powers,³³ although no such qualities cling to the *pinkassim* of Central Europe. Undoubtedly, however, Jewish communities saw their *pinkassim* as valuable historical and cultural documents, to be preserved at all costs. This may be why we still find many *pinkassim* in libraries, archives and collections, while much of the other written material in Jewish community archives has been destroyed or lost.

Sources

The *pinkassim* that form the focus of this study differ considerably in style and format. This in itself shows that there were no strict rules for *pinkassim* in the Ashkenazi world. Although common characteristics existed, the diversity of the *pinkassim* examined here is striking.

The Hague

The oldest *pinkas* of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague is also the most impressive of its kind. Its folio format is unusually large: 27 × 38 cm and 7 cm thick. It consists of 267 folios, only a few of which are blank. It is kept at the Hague Gemeentearchief (municipal archive). The community began using the volume in 1723. Prior to this the *parnassim* had apparently used another *pinkas*, because one of the first records mentions a ‘small *pinkas*’ referring to a matter dating from 1722.³⁴ This small *pinkas* has not survived. Another important manuscript relating to the period before 1723 is a ‘book of announcements’, which contains numerous public notices read in synagogue, in particular for the years

³² Stadsarchief’s Hertogenbosch 13/1. My thanks to R. van Luit for drawing attention to this manuscript.

³³ Rechtman, *op. cit.* where Rechtman reports on the belief in some Ukrainian towns that the house where the community *pinkas* was stored was protected from fire, or that a woman would have an easy delivery in the house. Another popular belief was that whenever a woman was struggling with a complicated delivery, the *pinkas* was brought to her house and put under her pillow to make the birth easier.

³⁴ Gemeentearchief (GA) Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 18.

1709 and 1710.³⁵ The comprehensive nature of the collection suggests that besides this and the small *pinkas*, the community probably had no other administrative document at that time.

Records were kept with especial neatness in the *pinkas* and their order suggests that the community's tasks were well organised. The chronological sequence of the records is almost undisturbed. The only exception being lists of signatures of new members in the first part of the volume. Apparently a number of pages were left blank for future additions.³⁶ These encompass several pages, the last of which, dating from 1798, is also the final insertion in the volume (regular records stop in the summer of 1785).³⁷ Clearly, the old *pinkas* was still being consulted even though a new *pinkas* had been started in 1796.³⁸ There is no indication about what happened during the years 1785–1795, since there is no extant *pinkas* containing the records of those years.

While the contents of the *pinkas* relate mainly to internal questions about community administration, it is evident that these are the official records of an important urban community. The volume contains the regulations and records of the annual elections, loans and deposits, the renting of the market hall where kosher meat was sold, the names of members who had seats in synagogue, the employment of community officials, financial matters, contacts with other Dutch communities and even donations for Jerusalem, Tiberias, Safed and Hebron, the four traditional communities in the Holy Land. At the start of the volume, a copy is inserted of the community's original statutes, dating from 1701.³⁹ These eighteen paragraphs were drawn up on behalf of the Ashkenazi Jews of The Hague, who lacked the experience to enact their own *takkanot*, by two prominent Sephardi Jews, Manuel Levi Duarte and Moses Pinto. A second set of Ashkenazi *takkanot* is found twice in the *pinkas*: an authenticated version, signed and sealed, was bound into the volume, while a copy was included in the volume's regular pages.⁴⁰ It was occasionally necessary to add paragraphs to the regulations: often these extra *takkanot* dealt with matters involving the synagogue service or the public conduct of Jews in The Hague. Uniquely, the *pinkas* includes

³⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 790.

³⁶ See, e.g., *ibid.*, fol. 18, 18v.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 37v.

³⁸ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 2.

³⁹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fols. 1–5.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, fols. 6–16.

a set of measures to combat promiscuity among young women dating from 1778. It seems that this had become a public concern and the governors felt that action was required.⁴¹ Another subject dealt with in the *pinkas* is contact with The Hague's Sephardi community.

It was the duty of the secretary or *ne'eman* (trustee) to record decisions and regulations in the *pinkas* (the task of *sofer* or scribe, writing religious documents, was carried out by the cantor). Most of the records are accompanied by the signatures of the annually elected *ne'eman*. Since Tobias Boas⁴² led the community for a considerable period, many of the *pinkas* records were written by him (as *ne'eman*). None of the other Dutch *pinkassim* examined here reveal this same custom of electing a secretary responsible for the *pinkas* each year. In The Hague, records referring the current *ne'eman* would be signed by a *parnas* or the *gabbai tzedakah* instead.

As in other eighteenth-century *pinkassim*, Yiddish was the preferred language in The Hague. Nevertheless, there are some texts in Hebrew concerning the rabbis, the synagogue, prayers or halakhic rulings.⁴³

Middelburg

The oldest Middelburg *pinkas* contains 190 completed pages and is also in folio format (20.5 × 32.5 cm). The manuscript is kept at Zeeuws Archief (Zeeland provincial archive) in Middelburg. It also starts with the *takkanot* of the community, enacted in 1725.⁴⁴ They are similar in length and structure to those of The Hague. Here again some pages with the signatures of new community members follow the regulations. Otherwise the *pinkas* appears rather monotonous. After the first section it consists mainly of brief records about elections of governors and appointments of officials. There was a rapid succession of cantors, these also served as scribes and, in most cases, secretaries of the *pinkas*. Unlike the other *pinkassim*, the Middelburg *pinkas* contains a high proportion of

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 240, 240 v.

⁴² He was perhaps the leading figure in The Hague's Ashkenazi community, the head of one of the wealthiest banking houses and trading companies in eighteenth-century Europe.

⁴³ On the use of different languages see M. Aptroot, 'Yiddish, Dutch and German among Late 18th-Century Amsterdam Jewry', in: J. Israel and R. Salverda (eds), *Dutch Jewry: Its History and Secular Culture (1500–2000)* (Leiden 2002), pp. 201–211.

⁴⁴ Zeeuws Archief Middelburg, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 1–12. The *pinkas* is not paginated so a virtual pagination is used here, starting with page 1.

texts in Hebrew, especially in the first decades. The presence of Hebrew in many records is surprising. Even the records of the annual elections of the *parnassim* are drawn up almost entirely in Hebrew.

Another significant item is the annual list of *pletten*, naming the Jewish households who—depending on their means—were required to feed the resident and itinerant Jewish poor various times in the year. These lists are unique to the Middelburg *pinkas*; no similar records are found in the other *pinkassim* examined here.

Further occasional records concern the use of the remaining sites in the old cemetery and the new section dating from 1742.⁴⁵ In 1759, turmoil broke out in the community. A fierce debate erupted about the legitimacy of the newly elected governors, which came to a head when Middelburg's burgomasters took over responsibility for the elections and the authority of the governors within the community.⁴⁶

After 1769, the *pinkas* becomes little more than a cashbook with a few insignificant exceptions in the 1790s.⁴⁷ This section ends in 1816. A number of pages were completed starting from the left. These bear the names of new members from the time of the Batavian Republic (1795–1806), as well as financial matters. The second surviving *pinkas* starts in the late 1790s, thus the official duties of the governors were presumably written in a different *pinkas*, or perhaps they were neglected and so no need was felt to record them. Only a short record, dating from 1787, shows that some matters were still discussed by the governors. This involves a decision to restore the reading of psalms in synagogue, as in other communities.⁴⁸ Why this was inserted amid records written some 40 years earlier is unclear.

Leeuwarden

The *pinkas* of the Ashkenazi community of Leeuwarden, kept at Tresoar, Friesland's provincial archive, provides a vivid picture of Jewish life there. The wide range of details sheds light on almost every aspect of Jewish affairs. It opens in 1754, so it is not the oldest manuscript examined here, but it remained in use until 1880 without significant interruption. A second section also exists, with several records between

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 94.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 130, 131.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 40.

1880 and 1924. This makes it the most substantial volume of all four communities. The final pages (about 20 percent) are blank. Moreover, it seems that the current binding is not the original cover. Apparently the volume was restored and part of the process involved cutting the edges, occasionally removing the first or last letters of the lines.

As the cover states, the volume was called *sefer zikhronot*. This name is sometimes used for documents of this type,⁴⁹ but it is not common. The volume's size is rather unusual too. It is 16 cm wide and 40 cm in length. Each of the numerous records has a separate number. These were apparently used from the start and served in later records for reference. In the first section, to 1796, only 13 cases occur in which a number was omitted or where two numbers are given. The chronological order of the *pinkas* is certainly no coincidence.

The format and the numbering of the records are not the only unusual aspect of the Leeuwarden *pinkas*. A striking aspect is that Hebrew plays almost no role in the *pinkas* during the eighteenth century, while it was central in Middelburg. In Leeuwarden, Yiddish was the language generally employed for records, while Dutch was also used quite early. The first Dutch record dates from 1758.⁵⁰ In almost every reference to matters involving the local authority or non-Jews the record is in Dutch.

Totalling around 350 records until the spring of 1796, these pages cover many fields of community life. Numerous decisions by the governors concern kosher food, cheese-makers, poor relief and so forth. Elections were recorded in 1765⁵¹ and thereafter annually; every minor change in the election procedure was noted. The revenue and donations of the *Eretz Yisrael* fund are also recorded meticulously. It seems that the Leeuwarden community was often visited by emissaries from the Holy Land. From 1787 on, a list of Jewish men from Leeuwarden who contributed was included in the *pinkas*⁵² each year, at first in Yiddish and Dutch, later only in Dutch.

Interestingly, most of the records were not signed by the secretary; this task was fulfilled by the cantor. And unlike the *pinkassim* of

⁴⁹ See e.g., the extant *pinkas* of Amsterdam's Ashkenazi community for 1738–1764, also called *sefer zikhronot*. This manuscript is kept at Amsterdam's municipal archive. See also Sluys, *op. cit.*, p. 115.

⁵⁰ Tresoar (Friesland provincial archive), *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record 45.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, record no. 107.

⁵² *Ibid.*, record no. 272.

The Hague and Middelburg, the Leeuwarden manuscript does not contain the community's *takkanot*. An additional volume was kept containing the regulations. This volume, which presumably no longer exists, is mentioned several times in the *pinkas*.⁵³ The present manuscript is referred to frequently by Hartog Beem in his history of Leeuwarden's Jewish community.⁵⁴

Oisterwijk

The small Jewish community of Oisterwijk left some unique examples of community manuscripts: two *pinkassim* and a *memorbukh*, all dating from the eighteenth century. They offer a comparatively rich source of information about this rural community which was never to become one of the larger provincial Jewish centres. These three quarto manuscripts are not only important, they are almost the only sources for this Jewish community. They also form a key source for Jewish history in the Republic's southeast region in general, since they are the oldest internal documents of any community in Brabant in the eighteenth century. Unlike archival material from other Dutch Jewish communities, the three manuscripts are currently in the collection of the Bibliotheca Rosenthaliana in Amsterdam.

Pinkas 1 (Ros 282 a)

The first *pinkas* is the Jewish community of Oisterwijk's oldest document, with records dating back to 1764. The first pages contain the statutes of the regional organisation in the eastern section of the territory of North Brabant, the *meierij* of Den Bosch of that year, comprising 14 paragraphs of regulations for the Jews of Oisterwijk, Waalwijk, Schijndel, Dinther, Veghel and Eindhoven.⁵⁵ The next record is a list of signatures of members who acknowledged the regulations of the Oisterwijk community in 1764.⁵⁶ Unfortunately, the text of these first statutes is not included and was apparently lost, which indicates that there was probably a separate book containing the regulations, or a number of single pages

⁵³ *Ibid.*, record no. 141, 267. The second reference, dating from 1787, refers the articles 110–113. This indicates the volume of regulations, at least twice those of Middelburg and The Hague.

⁵⁴ Beem, *op. cit.*

⁵⁵ Ros 282 a, pp. 1–8.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

bound together. Until 1772, the manuscript consists mainly of annual accounts. Only one decision by the governors is recorded, dating from 1768, written and signed (like the regional statutes) by Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe, rabbi of the community and region.⁵⁷

Interestingly, the Jews of Oisterwijk preserved an old custom of enacting single *takkanot* as the need arose. These are found in early Jewish sources and represent the traditional way in which community regulations were codified before extended statutes emerged in the early modern period. The first Oisterwijk *pinkas* includes two small groups of regulations referred to as *takkanot* in the text.⁵⁸ Other records deal again with the annual accounts and some decisions by the governors. Compared to the second *pinkas* (and examples from other communities), elections of governors (here called *gabbaim*) are rarely mentioned. The regional organisation is referred to once again in 1783, when a meeting (**יום הוועד**) of representatives of the six communities of the *meierij* took place at Oisterwijk.⁵⁹

A decision taken in 1779 changed the character of the *pinkas* for the following decades: henceforth every new member had to be registered in the book upon payment of half a rijksdaalder.⁶⁰ After this few accounts and decisions were recorded, but many new members were registered. One reason for this change was clearly the adoption of a second *pinkas* starting in 1782. For the Jewish years 5545 to 5549 (1784/85 to 1788/89), 5554–5555 (1794/95) and 5556 to 5562 (1795/96 to 1801/02) the first volume remained entirely unused. For some reason the function of the two *pinkassim* changed during the years 5550 to 5553 (1789/90 to 1792/93): some blank pages in the first *pinkas* were used for accounts,⁶¹ while throughout this period new members were registered in the second book. The volume terminates in 1826.

The records in the first *pinkas* were written up by the rabbi. Later, either the cantor and *ne'eman* kept the *pinkas*. All records are written in a Yiddish that remained relatively uncorrupted by Dutch.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p. 9.

⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 26 (1772), 48–49 (1775).

⁵⁹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 50.

⁶¹ Ibid., pp. 45–46.

Pinkas 2 (Ros 282 b)

The second *pinkas* opens in 1781 with the new statutes of the community.⁶² It is striking how manuscripts of this type often start with statutes, a fact that sometimes suggests a new beginning in the development of the community. It is clearly no coincidence that the character of the first book changes completely almost immediately. There can be no doubt that the governors considered the second *pinkas* the community's central record from the moment it started. For subsequent years this represents the sole source of relevant information for the history of the Oisterwijk community: elections, decisions, contracts with community employees, additional *takkanot* in the traditional style and, from 5550 (1789/90), records, mainly financial, of the *hevra kadisha* (burial society).⁶³ The affairs of the community and the *hevra kadisha* seem to have merged and so its finances were also recorded here. Symptomatic of this interaction is the fact that records regarding the *hevra* were also written by the community's *ne'eman*.

For a while (1793–1797) the second *pinkas* also included records about new members. The last to be recorded here is probably the most interesting: a certain Sanwil bar Feibel Kleve was accepted on condition that he would not be considered for any synagogue honours for two years and that he would refrain from the kind of shameful acts he had indulged in previously.⁶⁴

The chronological order of the second *pinkas* is mainly linear with one exception on page 19. Here a record was added dating from 1802, while the pages before and after contain items for the year 5544 (1783/84). The *pinkas* remained in use until 1813.

Unlike the first *pinkas*, the person who wrote the second manuscript was almost invariably the community's *ne'eman*. All these secretaries wrote in uncorrupted Yiddish, unlike those who wrote in the *pinkassim* of other Dutch communities, such as The Hague and Leeuwarden, where Dutch influence is clearly evident, particularly in the use of words relating to municipal affairs. This and the almost total absence of references to local authorities, may indicate a lack of interaction between Jews and non-Jews in Brabant and particularly in Oisterwijk. Moreover, Oisterwijk was a far younger community with less possibilities for influence from outside.

⁶² Ros 282 b, pp. 1–16.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 39.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

Pinkas 3 (Ros 283)

The third volume from Oisterwijk is an interesting mixture of several ingredients. The text is written on 57 folio pages, not always on both sides. The first section, written by Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe, is actually a *minhag* book starting in 1770. It lists all the ritual and everyday customs of the small community, preserving them for posterity. Interestingly, in the first lines the rabbi announces his intention to copy the *minhagim* into the *memorbukh*, a volume of names of persecuted communities and martyrs mostly dating to the medieval period. However, the *memorbukh* starts only on folio 30, so that in Oisterwijk the concept of a *memorbukh* was apparently more than a *sefer haskarat neshamot*, but also included a record of community customs.⁶⁵ The rabbi also described the condition of Jewish ritual life when he was appointed to Oisterwijk and the *medine* (the regional organisation) in 1757. Since there was no synagogue he visited the large communities in Amsterdam, The Hague and Rotterdam to collect money from Sephardim as well as Ashkenazim.⁶⁶ The following pages contain *misheberakh* prayers for various officials and customs relating to the synagogue, Torah reading, *Kaddish* and so forth.

Another long section lists the **תיקונים ומנהגים קהילתנו**, the regulations and customs of the community, comprising 21 original paragraphs and two later additions.⁶⁷ These would usually have formed part of the general statutes in other communities. They include paragraphs about the governors' authority, ritual matters for the synagogue and services, financial aspects of members' contributions and admission of new members.

The first half of the volume was apparently written in chronological order between 1770 and 1772, while the second half, apart from the *memorbukh* section, is a disorderly jumble covering a century between 1770 and 1870.

The first half and the *memorbukh* were written by Rabbi Süsskind, while the other records were written by different secretaries. Most of

⁶⁵ This seems to be an isolated phenomenon. None of the well-known Bavarian *memorbukhs* contain the same combination of *minhag* and history; see M. Weinberg, *Die Memorbücher der jüdischen Gemeinden in Bayern*, vol. 2 (Frankfurt am Main 1938), pp. 158–160; and his article 'Untersuchungen über das Wesen des Memorbuches', in *Jahrbuch der Jüdisch-Literarischen Gesellschaft* 16 (1924), pp.253–320, in which he describes various similar manuscripts.

⁶⁶ Ros 283, folio 1 v.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 18–21 v.

the records are in Yiddish, except the prayers and the *memorbukh*, which are, needless to say, in Hebrew.

*Historical Background of the Netherlands from the Seventeenth to the
Late Eighteenth Century*

Much has been written about the fascinating and unique history of the Dutch Republic, its Golden Age from the late sixteenth to the early eighteenth century, and its subsequent decline.⁶⁸ A number of aspects of Dutch history of this period are particularly relevant to Ashkenazi Jewish life in the United Provinces and the Generality lands.

Politics and Society

Following the rebellion of the Northern Netherlands against Spain and the Union of Utrecht in the 1570s, the Dutch Republic pursued a revolutionary course both socially and economically. International and internal circumstances favoured the formation of a republic, unique in the European context. The Republic's economic situation improved dramatically after 1590, vastly increasing its financial power. As a result, the size and equipment of the army and navy increased, which enabled the Dutch to make significant advances against the Spanish.

In the early seventeenth century the Dutch Republic emerged as a new military, economic and commercial superpower. Even parts of Germany bordering the Republic came under the influence of the States General, such as East Friesland in the late sixteenth century. By 1609 the Republic's institutions had largely taken shape and little change occurred until 1795. The provinces of Holland, Zeeland, Gelderland, Utrecht, Friesland, Drente and Groningen formed a cross between a federation and a confederation. Each province had its own assembly, from which representatives of the Church were mostly excluded. The joint assembly of the combined provinces was the States General, which met regularly in The Hague from 1585. The States General's executive was the Raad van State or States Council, comprising twelve represen-

⁶⁸ This is not the place to mention all of the books written about the Netherlands. This summary is based on the recent standard work by J. Israel, *The Dutch Republic: Its Rise, Greatness and Fall 1477–1806* (Oxford 1995).

tatives of the provinces and the two stadholders. The stadholders were the Republic's highest military authority and the post was generally held by a member of the Orange dynasty. A number of periods without stadholders occurred in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, which generally ended in military disaster and a cry for strong leadership. It was not until 1747 that the office of stadholder was united in one person: William IV. Henceforth the stadholderate became hereditary in both the male and female lines.

Following the Golden Age of the seventeenth century, the Dutch Republic descended into political and economic stagnation in the eighteenth century, accompanied by a dramatic decline in population. Only the three biggest towns, Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague maintained their size or incurred only a minor loss; every other town experienced a severe reduction. The spiral of economic malaise and falling population set the seal on the Republic's declining importance in Europe. By the late 1770s, it became clear that the Dutch would have to find a new role among the European powers of Britain, France, Austria and Prussia. The Republic had become too weak to play the international superpower, to acquire lucrative colonies or to dominate world trade. Active Dutch support for American independence revived old tensions and led to the fourth Anglo-Dutch War between the two trading rivals in 1780–1784. Unlike the previous clashes, this war ended in disaster for the Republic, fully exposing its weakness.

Compared to other European countries in the eighteenth century the Dutch Republic offered a far more liberal atmosphere. Many enlightened philosophers praised the Dutch for the mildness of their censorship, which enabled them to find publishers for their work among the printing houses of the Republic. Tolerance and comparative freedom for the individual attracted many philosophers on their travels through Europe.⁶⁹ This unique atmosphere was one of the contributing factors to the success of Jewish life in eighteenth-century Holland.

As these international events played out the Dutch Republic became embroiled in a revolution. This civil movement echoed similar events in Switzerland and America, opposing the House of Orange and its supporters. The Patriotists declared the inhabitants of the Republic to

⁶⁹ See S. Schama, 'The Enlightenment in the Netherlands', in: R. Porter and M. Teich (eds), *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge 1981), pp. 54–71, *passim*.

be the Dutch people, encompassing all faiths and religious minorities. They also demanded an improvement in the position of the Generality lands which were still treated as dependencies of the States General and had yet to attain the status of province. In support of this movement, a civil corps emerged separate from the regular army.

In 1786, the strongholds of the Patriotists were in the provinces of Utrecht, Holland and Overijssel, whereas the Orangists held sway in Zeeland, Friesland and parts of Gelderland. When the Patriotists arrested Princess Wilhelmina however, a new element came into play: Friedrich Wilhelm II of Prussia, brother of Wilhelmina, intervened and brought a swift end to the revolution. Yet the situation never calmed down completely, so that French revolutionary troops received an enthusiastic welcome from the Patriotists when they entered the Dutch Republic in 1795.

With the establishment of the Batavian Republic the old institutions of the Dutch Republic began to change, although under the new veneer old structures often remained the same. While restrictions against Catholics, Mennonites and Jews were abolished, discrimination did not in practice end. Meanwhile, the British took full advantage of these changes and the Republic's weakness to occupy one Dutch colony after another. This resulted in an almost total breakdown of the Republic's global trade and put paid to the Dutch preeminence among Europe's shipbuilders.

Napoleon ended the short-lived Batavian Republic and created the kingdom of the Netherlands, making his brother Louis Bonaparte its first king in 1806.

Population

In the two centuries after the 1570s the population of the Dutch Republic went through dramatic changes. In the early seventeenth century, the country's cities quickly expanded, especially the coastal towns of Holland. Amsterdam's population grew from 30,000 in 1570 to 140,000 in 1647 and to 220,000 in 1720, eventually declining to 180,000 in 1815.⁷⁰ Amsterdam was followed by Leiden and Haarlem and in fourth place came Middelburg, which in 1570 had a population of 10,000. In 1647, this had tripled to 30,000 and remained at this level for almost a hundred years. It declined slightly to 25,000 in 1749, even-

⁷⁰ See tables in Israel, *op. cit.*, pp. 328, 621 and 1007.

tually reaching a low of 13,000 in 1815. A similar pattern can be seen in Rotterdam, Delft, Enkhuizen and Dordrecht. The Hague was only a small town in 1570 with some 5,000 inhabitants, growing dramatically to 18,000 in 1647 and 30,000 in 1700, reaching a peak with 32,000 inhabitants in 1732. This remained almost unchanged until 1815, when The Hague was the third largest town in the Netherlands.

The enormous population growth was generated mainly by migration from the Southern (Spanish) Netherlands and from rural areas to towns, as well as migration from Germany. In 1620, the majority of migrants were from Germany. These came mainly from the poorer sections of the population, most were Lutherans, Calvinists and Jews. The population increased rapidly in Holland and Zeeland, while towns in the other five provinces grew more slowly.

Religion

The dominant religion in the Dutch Republic was that of the Reformed Church, which became the country's national Church. Other groups, such as Catholics, Lutherans, Mennonites and Jews, experienced discrimination, especially in the seventeenth century. Holland and Utrecht, and the towns of Friesland were Catholic strongholds. Few Catholics lived in the province of Zeeland or the eastern provinces.

After 1630, Dutch society became more liberal, as reflected for example in the growth of a Jewish community in Amsterdam and some other major towns. The Reformed Church maintained its dominant position in the eighteenth century, but increasing tolerance stimulated a rapid growth among other minorities. Ashkenazi Jewry experienced an especially remarkable expansion in the eighteenth century, mainly caused by the immigration of Jews from Germany. These Jews were mostly poor and earned a living peddling, to the annoyance of non-Jewish shopkeepers. Ashkenazi Jews did not concentrate exclusively in urban communities. Many Jews lived in villages in Holland, Groningen, Drente and parts of Overijssel. In Drente, Jews formed the second largest faith after the Reformed Church.

The Jewish Population in the Dutch Republic until the Eighteenth Century

The history of the Jews in the Dutch Republic can be divided in two periods: the medieval period and the more familiar modern era, commencing in the early seventeenth century. During the High and Late

Middle Ages, Jews lived in a number of towns, chiefly in the east and southeast of the region.⁷¹ However, by the fifteenth century these urban communities had ceased to exist, although Jews could still be found in the Northern Netherlands until the second half of the sixteenth century. Spain's restrictive policies towards Jews brought this first period of Jewish presence to an almost complete end around 1570.⁷²

Following the expulsion and mass conversion of Jews on the Iberian peninsula at the close of the fifteenth century, a group of formerly Jewish merchants, now called New Christians, settled in Antwerp in the early sixteenth century. Regarded as Portuguese, this community grew rapidly as their trade flourished in Antwerp. However, they were frequently accused of secretly following Jewish rites in their homes. These accusations led eventually to restrictions on further or continued settlement and so eventually they were forced to look for a calm and tolerant environment elsewhere. Some made their way to the Northern Netherlands, which had by then broken away from Spanish dominion.

The Dutch Republic proved ideal for these successful and respected Portuguese New Christians, who now began to return to the Jewish faith openly. As a result, a number of Sephardi Jewish communities could be found in Amsterdam in the early seventeenth century, which united to form the celebrated Portuguese community in 1639.⁷³

There had already been an attempt to regulate the legal position of the Jews in Amsterdam in 1616. A decree by the burgomasters warned Jews against offending the Christian religion, against converting Christians to Judaism, against having sexual contact with Christians and to conform to the law of the land. The decree also included a prohibition against building synagogues.⁷⁴ Yet some of these injunc-

⁷¹ On the medieval period see the comprehensive work by C. Cluse, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in den mittelalterlichen Niederlanden*, Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden A, vol. 10 (Hanover 2000).

⁷² Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 14. See also D. M. Swetschinsky, 'From the Middle Ages to the Golden Age, 1516–1621', in: J. C. H. Blom e.a. (eds), *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford 2002), p. 48. Reference is made here to an old Jewish settlement in Appingedam in the province of Groningen which is said to have existed uninterrupted since 1563. However, the documentary basis for this assumption seems uncertain.

⁷³ All these facts are well-known among scholars, so there is no need to discuss this further here. For a general survey of the numerous monographs and articles about the early history of the Sephardim in Amsterdam, see Swetschinsky, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

⁷⁴ Huusen, *op. cit.*, p. 33.

tions soon lapsed. After all, some Christians did convert to Judaism, as did the New Christians who came to the city for the very purpose of returning to Judaism. Moreover, within decades there were synagogues in Amsterdam.

In 1619, the States of Holland decided that each city should be entitled to draw up its own regulations regarding Jews,⁷⁵ a practice that was taken up by most of the other Dutch provinces and cities. Jews were able to purchase citizenship, but this did not include all the rights that a Christian enjoyed. Jews were still excluded from many areas of the economy (principally the guilds), although they were tolerated in international trade. The Jewish community also had a measure of autonomy and were regarded as a separate nation, and as such, as subjects within Dutch society.⁷⁶

Unlike in other European countries, in the Dutch Republic Jews were not required to pay lump sums (*Schutzgeld*) to the city or the Republic as a whole. Indeed, Dutch Jewish communities did not have the kind of corporate status those of Germany and Poland were given.⁷⁷

Naturally, news about the new Jewish colony in Amsterdam, and later about other cities, soon reached other Jewish communities in Europe. Consequently, Ashkenazi migrants began to reach the Dutch Republic in the second decade of the seventeenth century, encouraged not just by news of the successful Jewish settlement, but also fleeing the Thirty Years War in Germany and, in the 1640s and '50s, the Chmelnicki pogroms and the Nordic wars in Eastern Europe. The first migrants benefited from Sephardi prosperity and were in many cases able to find a way to make a living.⁷⁸ Increasing numbers of Ashkenazim arrived in Amsterdam and soon overshadowed the Sephardim in numbers, but not in wealth and commercial success. In 1635 the first recorded services were held by Ashkenazim, and after 1639 the first organised community.

Between 1660 and 1673, Ashkenazi Jews formed two communities: the German (Hoogduits) and the Polish. Eventually, Amsterdam forbade the separate Polish community, leading to the reunification of the city's Ashkenazim.⁷⁹

⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 35–38.

⁷⁷ The significance of this idiosyncratic position is discussed below.

⁷⁸ See Israel, *op. cit.*, pp. 87–89.

⁷⁹ Y. Kaplan, 'The Jews in the Republic until about 1750: Religious, Cultural and

Jews also established communities outside Amsterdam and, as in the metropolis, Sephardi communities often preceded the Ashkenazim. In the second half of the seventeenth century Sephardi communities appeared in Kempen, Amersfoort and Nijkerk, as well as The Hague, Rotterdam and Middelburg. Most lasted for just a few decades and only The Hague's remarkable Sephardi community continued well into the eighteenth century.⁸⁰

By the early 1700s, many Ashkenazi communities were being formally established in provincial towns and villages. Amsterdam later acquired the Yiddish name Mokum (place), while the country's other communities came to be known as the *medine* (country). While the vast majority of Dutch Jews continued to congregate in the Republic's largest and wealthiest city, the numbers of communities and individuals outside Amsterdam grew. The processes and events described in the *pinkassim* reflect the early history of the Jews in four of these communities: The Hague, Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk.

The Hague

Sephardi Jews were already living in the Dutch Republic's capital in the early seventeenth century. Unlike Amsterdam, their number remained small and the first community was only established in 1692. A second Sephardi group subsequently established a separate community and in contrast to Amsterdam, both continued to exist side by side until 1743.⁸¹

In 1674 Ashkenazi Jews began to arrive in The Hague. At first Ashkenazim attended Sephardi services. However, the rapidly growing number of Central and Eastern European Jews led to the establishment of a separate community in 1701. While the first statutes of the community were drawn up and authorised by two Sephardim, the Ashkenazim were soon able to dispense with Sephardi guidance. In 1720 they opened their first synagogue⁸² and enacted their first independent statutes in 1716. The revision of these statutes and the start of the uninterrupted use of a *pinkas* in 1723 reveal the stability

Social Life', in: J. C. H. Blom e.a. (ed.), *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford 2002), pp. 121, 126.

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 128–131.

⁸¹ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), pp. 364–365.

⁸² Ibid., pp. 365–366.

of the Ashkenazi community, which comprised between 170 and 200 members.⁸³ A leading figure in the Ashkenazi community was Hayyim (Hayman) Boas, indeed the Boas family, especially Hayyim's son Tobias, dominated the community in the course of the eighteenth century.

Middelburg

Zeeland's capital attracted Jews even before The Hague. As early as the mid-sixteenth century there are indications of the presence of New Christians and from the early seventeenth century there are signs of Jewish life in Middelburg, then one of the Republic's leading cities. The first mention of a synagogue dates from 1641. After the reconquest of Brazil by the Portuguese from the Dutch in 1654, forcing its flourishing Jewish community to flee the Inquisition, some families settled in Middelburg and expanded the local Sephardi community. However, decline set in during the final quarter of the seventeenth century and in the early 1700s many Jews moved to Amsterdam and The Hague. The final year of the Sephardi community, 1725,⁸⁴ was also the year of a significant administrative turning point for the Ashkenazim, when they enacted their statutes and began to record the decisions of the governors in a *pinkas*.

Growing numbers of Ashkenazi Jews had begun to arrive at the close of the seventeenth century. The community seems to have expanded rapidly, for permission was granted to build a synagogue and to consecrate a cemetery in 1704.⁸⁵ When the Sephardi community was wound up in 1725, its remaining members joined the Ashkenazim, which became the sole Jewish community in Middelburg and Zeeland. At the time there were probably no more than 100 Jews in Middelburg.⁸⁶ This suggests that the Jewish presence in the southwest of the Dutch Republic was rather modest: indeed, the *pinkas* records reveal that Jewish life was plagued by problems throughout the eighteenth century.

⁸³ See the list of heads of households who signed the community regulations of 1723 in Van Zuiden, *op. cit.*, p. 28. He listed 39 names and by multiplying these by a factor of 4.5, based on the average family size in other European communities, one arrives at the above result. Van Zuiden seems to have used a Dutch translation of the *takkanot*, since many names differ slightly from those in the *pinkas*.

⁸⁴ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 477.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 478.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 476, table. The 13 families of 1705 may have risen to about 20 in 1725. This remains, of course, speculation.

Leeuwarden

The foundations of Jewish life in The Hague and Middelburg were laid by Sephardi Jews; in Leeuwarden, where no Sephardi community was ever founded, the beginnings of Jewish settlement were established by Ashkenazim who arrived in the mid-seventeenth century. Few sources are available for this initial period, but it seems that these Ashkenazi Jews migrated from Emden, the capital of East Friesland in Germany.⁸⁷ However, official municipal records first refer to a Jewish family in 1670.⁸⁸

By 1700 a considerable number of Jews must have been living in Leeuwarden, since there is an indication that organised services were being held (requiring a quorum of ten men).⁸⁹ Leeuwarden's location close to Germany, and therefore close to older and larger Jewish communities such as Emden and Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek, supported the rapid growth of the local Jewish population.

By around 1720 the community had its own rabbi: Rabbi Jacob Emmerich.⁹⁰ In the mid-eighteenth century a dispute occurred regarding the new rabbi, Rabbi Nahman of Emden. This raged for several years and was eventually resolved by the burgomasters in favour of the appointed rabbi. The affair led to a reorganisation of the community and its administration, resulting in the opening of a *pinkas*, the *sefer zikhronot*.⁹¹ Some years previously, between 1744 and 1747, a new synagogue had apparently been erected,⁹² by then the growing community had over 100 members.

Oisterwijk

Compared to the other three communities, the rural community of Oisterwijk began comparatively late. The first traces of an Ashkenazi Jewish presence appear shortly before 1739. In subsequent years growing numbers of families arrived and in 1760, only four years before the first

⁸⁷ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 449. Hartog Beem, who studied the history of Leeuwarden community, follows earlier scholarly works and maintains that the first Jews probably came from the province of Holland, Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 1.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 2–3.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–28.

⁹² *Ibid.*, p. 26.

records in the oldest *pinkas*, there were about twenty Jewish families.⁹³ During those first years, the Jewish community's organisation centred on the *Reis hevra*, the *Hevra kadisha seadat zekeinim*, which was founded in Amsterdam to provide services to Jews living in places without a permanent Jewish community. It supported two travelling synagogues and was mainly active in the Generality lands, especially in Brabant, where local and regional fairs attracted Jewish merchants and traders.⁹⁴

Brabant was predominantly Catholic and had been part of the Spanish Southern Netherlands until the first half of the seventeenth century. In the seventeenth and early eighteenth century opportunities for Jewish settlement were consequently less favourable in this region. Nonetheless, there is clear evidence that a number of small Jewish communities existed in the *meierij* of Den Bosch in the mid-eighteenth century. Oisterwijk community was the largest of these. They soon established a regional organisation, similar to the typical German *Landesjudenschaften* of early modern Jewish history.⁹⁵

Jewish Autonomy in Ashkenaz and in the Netherlands

Jewish self-rule in the early modern period had its roots in the high Middle Ages. The major Jewish communities in the cities along the Rhine had received their rights from local rulers, generally bishops, and in some cases from the emperor. The principal model for Jewish life under Christian rule was the original charter granted to the first Jewish inhabitants of Speyer by Bishop Ruediger in 1084.⁹⁶ It gave the Jews the right to live as an autonomous community, under separate jurisdiction according to Jewish law. In return for the rights and protection of the bishop, the Jews had to pay taxes and contributions. This and the subsequent history of relations between Christians and Jews meant that the financial element became the basic Christian concern.

To preserve the right to live as a separate group practicing a religion divergent from that of the surrounding population Jews needed a collective leadership. In the tenth century, sources record the first mention

⁹³ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 496.

⁹⁴ J. Bader, *Oorspronkelijk in Oisterwijk... De oudste joodse gemeente in Noord-Brabant (1757–1857)... Thans te Tilburg: De joodse gemeente Tilburg (1813–1873)* (Breda 1995), p. 2.

⁹⁵ See also Chapter 7.

⁹⁶ Marcus, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

of *parnassim*, the governors of a Jewish community.⁹⁷ In fact, in these early years, communities were generally run by their rabbis, who were actively engaged in adapting *halakhah* to the administrative tasks of managing a community. R. Yehuda Hacoen of Mainz expounded on the community's duties outlined in the *Tosefta*: the erection of a synagogue, the purchase of a Torah scroll, and the employment of communal officials.⁹⁸ R. Gershom Me'or Hagola and R. Joseph Tov established two more basic rules to make up for the lack of halakhic guidelines regarding *parnassim* and communal administration. The first, **הפקר בית דין הפקר**, meant that each rabbinical court was able to fix new rules according to local and current needs, as long as these did not conflict with *halakhah*. According to the second, **יפתח בדורו כשמואל בדורו**, a governor's authority and competence was not based on his person, but on his office. These rules gave governors a broad mandate, based on halakhic authority. In the Ashkenazi communities of the medieval and early modern period these rules became a widely accepted.⁹⁹

In the later Middle Ages the rabbi's role in the administration of a community declined, while the role of the *parnassim* increased. Several synods of Ashkenazi communities in this period encouraged this tendency by establishing a clearer definition of a community.¹⁰⁰ Changes in the circumstances of Jewish life as the consequence of the expulsions at the beginning of the early modern period resulted in many congregations being unable to employ a rabbi. Only the large communities could afford the expense.

Almost all the early modern Ashkenazi communities were governed by *parnassim* or *gabbaim*. The size and requirements of a community might lead to the creation of other offices such as *tovim* and *memunim*, appointed to assist governors in specific areas of administration. Early modern corporative thinking and the requirement that every individual belong to a clearly defined group, provided governors with additional power: individuals who opposed the decisions of the *parnassim* could be threatened with exclusion from the Jewish community. The only option for those who were unable to find their place within a community, and still wished to stay in their village or town was to become a Christian.

Many communities in Germany and Poland appointed a *shtadlan*, generally regarded as the community's principal governor who mediated

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 101–102.

⁹⁸ Ibid., p. 103.

⁹⁹ Rosman, *op. cit.*, pp. 28–29.

¹⁰⁰ Marcus, *op. cit.*, pp. 111–112.

for the community with the Christian authorities. Since Jewish communities were part of the general administrative framework of a territory, the *shtadlanim* became indispensable, and in the often unstable conditions of Jewish life the *shtadlan's* role could be vitally important.

It was generally the *shtadlan* who negotiated the tax that the community had to pay. This would frequently be imposed as a lump sum, to be divided among the members of the community according to their ability to pay. This required an assessment of individual assets and tax revenues. Where supracommunal structures existed, such as the *Landesjudenschaften*, this led to the convening of assemblies of representatives from the various communities. While the imposition of additional demands was humiliating and often led to heated debates in communities, the mechanism of compromise and consultation would clearly have helped integrate and strengthen the cohesion of the community.

Despite the general decline of their position, rabbis were naturally leading personalities within their community. In the complex reality of Jewish life in Central Europe in the early modern period it was not always possible for every community to employ a rabbi. Communities that could afford the expense usually gained esteem within the Jewish world as a result. A well-educated rabbi with a good reputation could raise the community's reputation. Yet a famous rabbi might also be regarded as a rival by the community's governors. They would have to accept his authority, and his power might be resented within the community's leadership. The issue of rabbis and *parnassim* has always been complex.

It is the *pinkasim* that bear witness to the administrative work of the governors of Jewish communities: the record of their resolutions and *takkanot*, available for public scrutiny. It seems that they were adapted from non-Jewish administrative forms and presumably they helped the governors of communities increase their power and effectiveness.

Since the roots of most of the Ashkenazim living in the Dutch Republic lay in Germany and Poland, it seems probable that they brought the administrative customs of these areas with them when they arrived in the Low Countries. Administrative structures and autonomy within Dutch communities is a subject that still awaits further study. However, it seems clear that the lack of a requirement in the Dutch Republic to belong to a particular religious group¹⁰¹ led to a distinctive local style of community administration, compared to communities in

¹⁰¹ Michman, *op. cit.* (1995), p. 159.

Central European countries. Governors of Dutch communities did not have the kind of sanctions their counterparts elsewhere could employ: the threat of a ban or indeed expulsion that would leave a person without the means to conduct a normal life. In the Republic, those who came into conflict with the *parnassim* were able to find alternative and individual solutions to their situation in society at large, provided they were willing to sacrifice their membership of the community. The first and possibly most famous example is Baruch Spinoza, who lived a peaceful life after his banishment from Amsterdam's Sephardic community in the seventeenth century. Changing social realities in the second half of the eighteenth century therefore seem to have forced the governors of Ashkenazi communities in the Dutch Republic to find alternative ways to retain their power.

CHAPTER ONE

GOVERNING A JEWISH COMMUNITY

Patterns of leadership within Jewish communities go back many centuries and have their roots in ancient Jewish society. Yet the superficial framework is not in itself typically Jewish; it appears in many communities with a common religion or denomination, particularly in those that existed in a diasporic situation. What distinguishes Jewish communities, apart from their particular practices and the specific functions that their officials fulfil, is the way in which appointments to positions of authority are organised. At the top of the hierarchy of a Jewish community are the governors, known generally as *parnassim* and *gabbaim*. Their jobs vary widely from one community to another, from purely formal figurehead to hands-on functionary in community tasks, from philanthropic patron to administrative ‘bureaucrat.’ In many Jewish communities more than one individual may function as *parnas*. Where *parnassim* share the principal position according to a monthly rota they are known as the *parnas ha-hodesh*. These governors are elected by the members, the *ba’ale battim*: the tax-paying heads of families who were eligible to vote.¹ Whereas in most of the communities investigated in this study a nucleus of governors seems to have been essential, other offices were less so. Naturally more officials served in large communities, including the relatively numerous treasurers for example, secretaries and representatives of different community institutions.²

Leadership of Jewish communities in the Dutch provinces was not significantly different in character from the familiar forms of leadership of the medieval period and of well-documented communities in Germany, Poland or elsewhere in the early modern period. These basic patterns remained stable for hundreds of years, and are repeated in the

¹ M. Breuer and Y. Guggenheim, ‘Die jüdische Gemeinde, Gesellschaft und Kultur’, in: idem (eds), *Germania Judaica*, vol. III/3 (Tübingen 2003), p. 2091.

² See E. Zimmer, ‘Government and Leadership in the Communities of Germany in the 16–17th Centuries’ in Grossman, A. and Y. Kaplan (eds), *Kehal Yisrael: Jewish Self-Rule Through the Ages*, vol. 2: *The Middle Ages and Early Modern Period* (Jerusalem 2004) and Y. Kaplan, ‘Mokum and Medine: Jewish Autonomy in the Dutch Republic’ in idem, pp. 311–327.

four eighteenth-century Dutch communities examined here. Yet many local idiosyncrasies surface when analysing the *pinkassim*. Unlike earlier periods, the office of *shtadlan*, who mediated between the community and the non-Jewish authorities, hardly occurs here, although there is no doubt that influential persons fulfilled this intermediary position in these communities.³ The comparatively liberal climate in which Jews lived in the Dutch Republic reduced the need for an active intermediary between the Jewish community and the non-Jewish authorities, or *shtadlan*. Indeed the transparency in matters relating to elections, electors, candidates and terms of office, reflects an awareness among community members of both Jewish tradition and the basic rules of public administration as it developed in the early modern period.

In each case election procedures and duties of governors are described, more or less precisely, in the community's *takkanot*. Apart from Leeuwarden, most of the early *takkanot* of the four communities remained in place. So it is possible to examine how these rules were observed through the *pinkas* records.

Parnassim and Their Functions

The Hague

Unlike other communities the structure of the leading circle of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague remained relatively stable. The leadership consisted of two *parnassim* and a *gabbai tzedakah* (treasurer), all full members of the community. There was also a *ne'eman*, who was responsible for the records and, therefore, for keeping the *pinkas*. Officially his position was only advisory; he was obliged to take part in meetings of governors, but could not vote.⁴ This description, given in the *takkanot* of 1723, expresses to a large extent the situation reflected in the *pinkas*. Almost every record was signed by the *ne'eman*. Only when a decision was taken in his absence would another governor sign instead. Yet the fact that it was often a member of the Boas family that held

³ As demonstrated below, Tobias Boas was among those who took responsibility for direct negotiations between the Hague community and the municipality, province or state.

⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, regulations, paragraph 12.

the position of *ne'eman* (instead of being a *parnas*) suggests that while he may not have had the right to vote, he was not without influence.⁵

After finishing his term, the *gabbai tzedakah* submitted an annual report of the community's finances to the *parnassim*. Several records detailing the reports reveal that he kept a separate *pinkas* for financial matters. The *parnassim* were placed in charge of all the duties for a month at a time. A newly elected *parnas* began his term as *parnas ha-hodesh*⁶ immediately upon election. This system remained in place in The Hague at least until 1784/85, when the last elections were recorded in the *pinkas* before the political changes of 1795.

The Hague *takkanot* of 1723 called the board of governors its *regirung*⁷ not a *kahal*, which is the word normally found in other internal Jewish sources elsewhere. This is interesting since it reflects external influences on the self-image of the Jewish elite in The Hague.

Occasionally the community assembled a committee of all its governors, and other leading members might be consulted and given voting rights on specific matters. According to the *takkanot* of 1723 this was required when choosing a new rabbi, beadle or cantor.⁸ Changes to the regulations also required a larger quorum. The *takkanot* specifically states that in previous years' *parnassim* were not required to participate. Even so, this often happened, as in the following example: a decision, taken in the autumn of 1734, not to employ a rabbi for the next ten years due to lack of funds:⁹

היום אור ליום ד' א' חשון תצ"ה הבן
אלופים פרנסים גבאי צדקה ונאמני הקילה ישנים וגם חדשים אצליהם לזון
רופן שבעה אנשים כשרים בעלי בתים יחידים דקהלתינו יצ"ו כפי תקון
דקהלתינו יצ"ו [...]

This case and others show that important decisions were made by a larger group of the community's leading members and not just by the small group of incumbent functionaries. This custom is not unique to

⁵ See below, section: *Families and Individuals in Community Leadership*.

⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, regulations 1717, paragraph no. 2. Although the *parnas* starting the rotation is mentioned only in these articles and not in those of 1723, presumably this custom was retained in later decades. The institution of the *parnas ha-hodesh* is recorded in other places and different periods.

⁷ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, regulations, paragraph 5.

⁸ *Ibid.*, paragraphs 35–37.

⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 81.

the Jews of The Hague or other Dutch communities.¹⁰ The leadership structure in The Hague seems to have been effective and was preserved by the community for many decades. The Ashkenazim of The Hague therefore provide an outstanding example of this pattern. In the other communities investigated here repeated discussions were held about the role, influence and size of the leadership.

Middelburg

The Jewish community of Middelburg was far smaller than that of The Hague. This was doubtless due to the town's position on the southwestern coast of the Northern Netherlands: situated on an island, the sea and the Spanish Netherlands were its closest neighbours and the town's golden age had ended long before.¹¹ The Jewish community's small size was reflected in its modest entourage of governors. Until 1739, two *parnassim* took responsibility for all the duties, including financial matters. In the spring of 1739 the first annual election was held for a third *parnas*. Although the relevant record in the *pinkas* does not explain why, it does mention that the elections were held in compliance with an order of the burgomasters.¹² This and subsequent developments within the community's elite show that the leadership of the Jewish community was a controversial subject in Middelburg. Unfortunately the records of the *parnassim* reveal too few details about the issues. This corresponds with the general reserve in the records of the Middelburg *pinkas*. By 1759 this interference had developed into complete control over the leadership of the Jewish community by the local authority. Apparently this was not to protect non-Jewish interests, but to settle disagreements among members of the community.¹³

As in The Hague, Middelburg's governors coopted other prominent members of the community for their meetings on various occasions. For example, for the often recorded election of a *shatz ve-ne'eman* (can-

¹⁰ Similar cases in Friedberg in Hesse (Germany) from the early seventeenth century reveal the same pattern, Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), p. 12, as do other Dutch communities.

¹¹ A. H. Huusen, *Historical Dictionary of the Netherlands* (Lanham 1998), p. 110. The decline of the city's economy probably favoured the development of the Jewish community.

¹² Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 49. Smit, 'Middelburg', p. 12 claims that the *takkanot* of 1725 mention the dependence of the *parnassim* on the confirmation of the burgomasters. Interestingly, the Yiddish paragraphs do not agree.

¹³ See below, section: *Election Procedures*.

tor and secretary) when more than the two or three *parnassim* would be called to take part:¹⁴

בהתאסף ראשי עם יחד בצרוף כל יחידי סגולה יו' א' א' ניסן תפ"ח
נתקבל למז"ט התורני הר"ר יהודה ליב בהמקובל כמהור"ר עזריאל ז"ל
מקראטשין להיות אצלינו שץ ומץ ונאמן הקהילה

Clearly the *yehidei segulah* are the leading members of the community.

Gabbaim are rarely mentioned in Middelburg. In 1748 a *gabbai*, apparently responsible for financial matters, was elected together with the *parnassim*.¹⁵ After 1762, the *pinkas* regularly reports a *gabbai tzedakah* responsible for the cemetery. It seems that his task was to supervise the burial ground, including the funding of funerals and graves. As the *pinkas* records become more superficial in later years, it is unclear whether the *gabbai tzedakah* was a full governor or not. From 1769 he is mentioned in the election records. Prior to that, the office is mentioned only in the accounts.¹⁶ This may reflect a rise in status.

Leeuwarden

For many decades the situation was quite different in Leeuwarden. Several records in the *pinkas* reveal a lively debate about who should lead the community, the length of terms of office and procedures for appointment. The titles differed too, at least in the first half of the period recorded in the *pinkas*. Here, a governor was known as a *manhig*; only after 1768 were they increasingly referred to as *parnassim*.¹⁷ At first, Leeuwarden's Jewish community did not record the elections of their governors; indeed they appear to have managed without elections until 1765.¹⁸ Until then there were at least three *manhigim*,¹⁹ representing the most prominent and influential members of the community. Their

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 23.

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 63.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 114.

¹⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 135 provides the first mention of the title *parnas*, but later retains the title *manhig*. See Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 34.

¹⁸ Considering the precision of the *pinkas*, it is unlikely that the elections would have been omitted by the *manhigim*. Beem does not refer to the problem at all.

¹⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 82 is signed by five persons who decided on a new rotation for the *manhigim*. They may all have been *manhigim*. Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 30, also examined a Dutch version of the short *tak-kanot* of 1755, after which seven governors are mentioned each year. The leadership previously comprised only three men.

status allowed them to serve almost without limit. Although this is not the general pattern in Jewish communities, it does appear from time to time. It seems to occur mainly among new (and small) communities.

The first election record dates from 1765.²⁰ From then on, the leadership consisted of four governors and was eventually reduced to three. This remained unchanged until the close of the eighteenth century. Nothing is reported about other officials, although a larger quorum is again found for certain types of decisions. On 7 Adar 5530 (spring 1770), the old and new *manhigim* decided (here together with the rabbi) to change the rules concerning elections.²¹ The same group, excluding the rabbi, was consulted when a new rabbi was chosen in 1769.²²

Oisterwijk

Compared to the other communities discussed here, the small, rural community of Oisterwijk developed at a far slower pace. General records began to be kept much later; records about elections were first recorded in 1776.²³ For previous years, the names of governors can only be found in the annual *heshbonot tzedek* (accounts). These show that their title was *gabbai*. The leadership comprised two *gabbaim*,²⁴ and almost always there was a *goveh* in charge of financial matters. Apparently this was not an elected post, but remained for many years in the hands of Mordekhai ben Simha, who seems to have been one of the key figures in Oisterwijk. He often served as *gabbai* too. Due to the community's small size he may have occupied both offices simultaneously, reflecting the shortage of suitable candidates. The *minhagim* of the community, recorded in 1770, explain that the *goveh* could remain in office as long as the community was satisfied with him.²⁵

²⁰ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 106. See Appendix 2, no. 24.

²¹ *Ibid.*, no. 147. Interestingly, Leeuwarden was the only major community of the day to involve its rabbi in administrative questions.

²² *Ibid.*, no. 142.

²³ Ros 282a, p. 35.

²⁴ According to the *minhagim* of 1770, the newly elected *gabbai* was the *gabbai tzedakah*; Ros 283, fol. 18, paragraph 1. In reality that *minhag* was ignored: none were called *gabbai tzedakah*, and former *gabbaim* rarely stayed on for a second year. Only in the 1790s did this custom become a pattern.

²⁵ Ros 283, fol. 18, paragraph 18. Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 5, obviously misinterpreted the Yiddish text of the *minhagim*, when he points out that one of the *gabbaim* was in charge of the finances. That was the task of the *goveh*.

In 1775, the community enacted a set of *takkanot* that changed the composition of the leadership by adding five more members to the two *gabbaim*.²⁶ These had to be consulted on every question and even had the right to make decisions without the *gabbaim*. The new regulations stipulated that three months after the enactment of these additional paragraphs, the *gabbaim*, together with these five members, had to formulate new *takkanot*. But no new or revised *takkanot* are found in any of the three *pinkassim* following this decision, so the enlarged board probably did not fulfil this task.²⁷

Unfortunately the election records after the enactment of these *takkanot* do not mention the names of those who appear only once.²⁸ It is unclear, therefore, whether this larger body functioned for a longer period. The comprehensive *takkanot* of 1782 mention three additional members who could be consulted in case of disagreements among the *gabbaim*.²⁹ In addition, there is some evidence for the continued existence of the enlarged board in a record in the second Oisterwijk *pinkas*. In 1784, the governors employed *Hazzan* Sussman for a further year. The first lines read:³⁰

היום יום א' ט' שבט תקמ"ד לפ"ק איזט גבליבן אצל כל הקהל בצרוף
אדונינו אב"ד נר"ו בבית שלום בר שמחה [...]

At the end of the text are the signatures of the two *gabbaim*, the secretary, the rabbi and five persons whose signatures are grouped together (possibly the additional members). A further five signatures follow the text. One of the signatories, Gabriel ben Meir, had been *gabbai* several times before. Here it was not just the governors who made the decision, but again other members were asked to give their opinion on the important question of choosing a cantor. According to the secretary, this enlarged board was described as *kol ha-kahal*.

The basic structures of these four communities reveal a number of common features. Firstly, each community had only two or three main governors or *parnassim*. Other members might participate in their meetings: *gabbaim* and *ne'emanim* in The Hague and partly in Middelburg,

²⁶ Ros 282 a, p. 43.

²⁷ See below, section: *Authority of the Leadership and its Acknowledgement*.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 5–6; paragraphs 7 and 9. These men are called here simply *shlosha anashim*.

³⁰ Ros 282 b, p. 20.

or additional members with controlling authority in Oisterwijk and in the early years in Leeuwarden. The age of large committees in Dutch provincial communities was clearly over or, indeed, had never started.³¹ Moreover, the offices of secretary and treasurer were not always elected posts: it was only in The Hague that the entire board was chosen by election.

Election Procedures

Electors, known as *boverim*, or *kesherim*, and of course *ba'ale battim* of the community, i.e., full members and taxpayers, chose the governors in all four communities discussed here.³² Most election procedures were complex. Naturally, the regulations themselves describe an ideal situation for this issue. The *pinkassim* also reveal how communities complied with their rules: by comparing the records of the *takkanot* to those of the actual elections, various conclusions may be drawn regarding the similarities and differences of the four communities.

The Hague

Despite slight variations in the regulations for elections of *parnassim*, no major changes are found in the three eighteenth-century *takkanot* of The Hague. The first *takkanot* of 1701, stipulate in the second paragraph that the *parnassim* should be elected by men of good reputation who have been *ba'ale battim* for at least three years. The statutes emphasise that this was in line with the regulations of Amsterdam, which served as a model text for these first *takkanot*.³³ The names of those eligible for election were written on paper and placed in a ballot box. Two names were pulled out of the ballot box to determine the electors, together with the retired *parnas* of the previous year and the *parnas* whose term was about to expire. They elected a respectable person to be the next *parnas*.³⁴ Since almost no records survive from the early period of

³¹ Most of the major German communities, such as Frankfurt, Worms and Friedberg, had a large leadership council. Often these consisted of ten or twelve *parnassim*. No comprehensive data exists as yet about small and medium sized communities in Germany.

³² This *modus operandi* was common in the early modern Jewish world.

³³ These early Amsterdam regulations have apparently not survived.

³⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 1.

the Ashkenazi community, we do not know whether these rules were observed during the fifteen years in which they remained in effect.

The *takkanot* of 1716 define the procedure as follows: the two *parnasim*, the *gabbai tzedakah* and the *ne'eman* placed the names of all the *ba'ale batim* in a box. They pulled out five names, who were not allowed to be related to each other. These five men served as the electors. Each wrote two names of candidates for the vacant posts. The *ne'eman* read each vote to prevent electors voting for themselves. After the vote, the *ne'eman* read out the names of the elected persons in the presence of the *parnasim* and electors. The person with the most votes was appointed the new *parnas* and the runner-up became the new *gabbai*. In case of a tie lots were drawn.³⁵

A comparison between the first two statutes shows that the later set explains the procedure in greater detail, while the earlier version fails even to state how the electors voted. The first regulations, written by Sephardim, apparently assumed that the procedure would be familiar to the electors. Perhaps, by the time the Ashkenazi community came to write their own *takkanot* they had discovered through experience that the procedure needed to be outlined in less ambiguous terms: presumably, coming from different backgrounds, not all the electors and *parnasim* shared the same familiarity with electoral procedures.

The *takkanot* of 1723 did not vary greatly from the previous regulations. However, some small, but significant changes were introduced. The fifth paragraph states that only the names of *ba'ale batim* who had passed a pre-selection process were to be placed in the ballot box. They had to be accepted by a majority of the *parnasim*. This selection preserved the social homogeneity of the electors, who would presumably vote for candidates from their own circle. The five ballots were chosen by the *ne'eman* from the pool of names. Once again it was stipulated that the electors should not be related. Then each wrote the names of two candidates on a piece of paper in the presence of the *ne'eman* and the retiring *parnas*.³⁶ The *parnas* and *gabbai* voted next.³⁷ Here, the text emphasises that this was a requirement of the burgomasters who had apparently approved the procedure upon inclusion of this detail.

³⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, fol. 41v, 42.

³⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, regulations.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, paragraph 6.

The candidate with the most votes was elected *parnas* for two years; the runner-up became *gabbai tzedakah* for one year.

How the electoral procedure worked in practice is reflected in the phrasing of the election records, which remained relatively constant during the eighteenth century. Only the names of the electors and of the candidates changed. In addition to electing new governors, the *hatan Torah* and *hatan Bereshit* were also chosen on these occasions.³⁸ In most of the records throughout the period the electoral regulations were adhered to. This suggests that there was no real opposition to the procedure within the community. To date we have no explanation for the general interruption in the records after 1785. Disputes may have occurred within the community linked to the Patriotist disturbances that have yet to be discovered by scholars.

Some tied votes occurred, as foreseen in the *takkanot*, involving either two or three candidates and forcing lots to be drawn:³⁹

אונ' בפונדן גווארן ג' דעות פֿר ר' איצק ב' ר' יעקב, ג' דעות פֿר ר' בער
פאס אונ' ג' דעות פֿר ר' ליב עמדן [...]
וועלכֿה ג' מען בקלפֿי גיטאן אונ' איז ארשט ארוז קומן ר' איצק ב' יעקב
פֿר פרנס, אונ' ר' בער פאס פֿר גבאי צדקה, רק וויל ר' איצק הנ"ל זיין
קנס געבן וויל, איז למזל טוב ר' בער פאס פרנס גווארן אונ' ר' ליב עמדן
הנ"ל גבאי צדק [...]

This example also highlights a problem faced by all the communities: how to respond when a candidate refused his appointment. Occasionally members of the Hague community declined to accept an appointment. The precise reasons are rarely mentioned. Sometimes, this may have been personal: old age, or a lack of time due to business commitments or an anticipated absence the following year.⁴⁰ In 1782, Shmuel Ofen refused the office of *gabbai tzedakah*. He was obliged to pay a fine of 50 guilders for rejecting the appointment. Since he was the fifth person to reject the office, the elections were halted for that day. The next day, Ofen told the governors that the reason he had rejected the post was that his brother was the community's beadle, which would

³⁸ See e.g., the example from 1730: GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 65.

³⁹ Ibid., fol. 94 v, dating from 1737.

⁴⁰ Y. Kaplan discovered the same phenomenon in the Sephardic community of Amsterdam in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. He gives similar explanations and even claims that the communal affiliation of the elite weakened, which led, ultimately, to repeated refusals to serve in several community positions; Y. Kaplan, 'Deviance and Excommunication in the Eighteenth Century', in: idem, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden 2000 [a]), p. 149.

have meant that his family would have been responsible for all the expenses of the community. So the *parnasim* offered a compromise: he would instead be responsible for the expenses the following year, which Ofen accepted.⁴¹

The Ashkenazi community of The Hague was invariably beset by financial problems, as were most communities in Europe. In 1774, the situation became especially severe when a committee of all the governors discovered that the community's funds had dropped to a dangerously low level.⁴² This problem had to be solved by the new *gabbai tzedakah*. None of those elected agreed to take on the responsibility. The first candidate for *parnas* also refused to accept his appointment. Eventually the seventh (!) person agreed to fill the post of *gabbai tzedakah*; in fact the election had to be repeated twice before Leib bar Nathan accepted the vote.⁴³ This drama occurred despite a number of new *takkanot* that were enacted by the governors and seven additional members in 1761. These regulations raised the fine for rejecting an appointment drastically: 100 guilders for rejecting the office of *parnas*, and a similar amount for rejecting the post after three years.⁴⁴ A 50 guilder fine was imposed for refusing the post of *gabbai tzedakah*. For those who had held the post before, the fine was 25 guilders. To ensure that a person would not be elected by a single vote (if the rest of the eligible members rejected an office) the *takkanot* stipulated that the election should be repeated.⁴⁵ These regulations earned the community 350 guilders in 1774, the year these elections were held. Paradoxically, the reason for the many refusals—the appalling financial situation—resulted in a partial relief of the community's predicament.

Middelburg

The electoral procedure for the Middelburg community is described in the *takkanot* of 1725, although only in the last paragraphs of the

⁴¹ Ibid., fol. 254.

⁴² Ibid., fol. 227.

⁴³ Ibid., fol. 229 v; see the table in Appendix 1.

⁴⁴ This three year suspension after rejecting an appointment is found among Polish Jewish communities; see Rechtman, *op. cit.*, pp. 208–209, citing the example of the *takkanot* of Chmelnik, unfortunately again without a date.

⁴⁵ Ibid., fol. 175, 176. The same *takkanot*, consisting of 18 paragraphs, include decisions regarding the refusal of the role of *hatan Torah* or *hatan Bereshit* and fines for such a refusal and questions relating to honours in synagogue and their prices.

regulations.⁴⁶ Presumably that subject was not of primary importance at this time. The procedure was as follows: on the first evening of the intermediate days of Sukkoth, the retiring *parnassim* wrote the names of respected members on slips of paper and put these in a ballot box. Three names were drawn. These were the *kesherim* (electors). The *kesherim* cast two votes each and the person with the most votes was the new *parnas*. No new versions of the statutes are found in the *pinkas*, so we know nothing about any subsequent proposals to change the procedure. However, the election records in the *pinkas* indicate that the local authority became increasingly involved in the process and eventually took over the appointment procedure completely.

An undated revised Dutch version of the statutes provides some additional information about elections in Middelburg.⁴⁷ Paragraph 39 notes that the local authority was empowered to appoint new *parnassim* from among the nominees made by the current governors, provided that all former *parnassim* were present. The next paragraph states that a *parnas* could be re-elected immediately after finishing his term, but in that case the new *parnas* would govern before him as *parnas ha-hodesh*, thus ensuring that a *parnas* would not serve for two consecutive months.

In practice, elections began in the usual way in Middelburg, but went off in a unique direction in the mid-eighteenth century. Apparently the community followed the procedure outlined in the *takkanot* of 1725 for the first decade. However, the election record of 1737 shows that the first step, the selection of electors, was now no longer carried out according to the regulations. The electors were chosen by the two retiring *parnassim*, two members, whose names are not mentioned and by a certain Hayyim Cohen, who had served repeatedly as elector in previous years. Why he participated in this election remains unknown. These five persons then chose a number of electors, who made their appointments as required.⁴⁸

It is characteristic of the Middelburg *pinkas* (and of *pinkassim* in general) that almost no details about the discussions that took place within the community are recorded. Middelburg's municipal records reveal little more about the time when suddenly three *parnassim* were elected

⁴⁶ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, regulations, paragraphs 45–48.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, no. 6. The fact that these regulations refer to three governors, shows that obviously they were composed after 1739 possibly even after 1758.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, no. 1, p. 46.

in the spring of 1739.⁴⁹ Instead of explaining this adjustment, which remained in effect throughout the period, the 1739 election regulation is even more brief than those preceding the change.⁵⁰ Apart from the extra *parnas*, elections followed the usual pattern for the next 20 years.

In 1757, Gad bar Hayyim, a highly respected member of the community, who had been *parnas* several times previously, refused to accept the vote and the post of *parnas*.⁵¹ He paid the comparatively low fine of three rijksdaalders and was barred from being a candidate or a *parnas* for the next three years. Unfortunately, the sources reveal nothing about what happened in the following months and whether Gad's rejection was connected to these events. It seems that a general unrest engulfed the community. The electoral procedure must have been involved somehow since these were the community's last recorded independent elections until the end of the Dutch Republic. In the autumn of 1758, Middelburg's burgomasters appointed three governors without any community elections taking place,⁵² a procedure that continued until the records in the *pinkas* end. The three governors were apparently respected and experienced men of mature age, wisely chosen to restore peace to the community. One of them was Gad bar Hayyim, who had actually been barred from the office of *parnas* after his rejection of the post the previous year.

Parallel sources are found for these events in the municipal archives. They describe differences of opinion within the community that forced the local authority to annul the elections of 1758 (which were not recorded in the *pinkas*) and to appoint the three governors.⁵³ It is hardly surprising that some members of the community were reluctant to accept *parnassim* appointed by non-Jews. When, shortly after

⁴⁹ D. F. Blom, 'Geschiedenis van Joden in Middelburg in de spiegel van de (kerk) geschiedenis', PhD thesis (Brussels 1987), examines the files of the town council in Middelburg and does not refer to any problems or disputes around 1737–1739. The *pinkas* does not explain why elections were held in spring instead of autumn. Usually, elections were held in either Adar or Tishri when most members were at home for the holidays. New elections were held again at Sukkoth, the following autumn.

⁵⁰ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 49.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 89.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 94. See the edited record in Appendix 2, no. 19. Possibly the mentioned undated Dutch *takkanot* reflect the changed procedure.

⁵³ Blom, *op. cit.*, pp. 92, 93. On page 93, Blom quotes the decision of the burgomasters, in which the three governors are mentioned by their Dutch names, which differed from the Hebrew names: Jonas Nathan Cohen (Joel bar Yehuda Josef Nathan Hacohen), Jacob Hendriks (Gad bar Hayyim) and Levi David (Yehuda Leib ben David of Dessau).

their appointment, the new governors asked the former *parnassim* to sign various documents and papers, the latter refused. Once again the burgomasters intervened and ordered all the members to come to the community's assembly room.⁵⁴ No record remains of this meeting: it is unclear whether this is due to the general confusion or because it was convened by the local authority.

Ten years later it was the local authority that appointed the governors of the Jewish community, as related in the *pinkas*. This is the last record relating to the community's elections and appointments in the *pinkas*: [..] בחירת אלופי הפרנסי' ע"י השררה יר"ה.⁵⁵

This decline in the community's administration was accompanied by a change in the character of the *pinkas* after 1758, which became little more than a cashbook. It seems that henceforth the governors paid little attention to the administrative rules since the community had ceased to be fully autonomous.

Leeuwarden

Leeuwarden's detailed *takkanot* have not survived. We only know about a Dutch collection of regulations submitted to the burgomasters in 1755.⁵⁶ According to these statutes, there were now seven governors instead of the original three. Unfortunately, Beem, who refers to the statutes in his history of the Jews of Leeuwarden, reveals little about the procedure of the elections. There is some indication that no actual elections were held until 1765, when the *pinkas* first reports these.⁵⁷ Presumably one of the aims of the new *takkanot* was to institute regular elections. The regulations were written in a *sefer takkanot*, which is mentioned several times in the *pinkas*.⁵⁸

The second version of Leeuwarden's regulations, mentioned in 1787, was far more detailed than those of other Dutch communities, includ-

⁵⁴ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 94. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 21.

⁵⁵ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 113. Interference by non-Jewish authorities in the affairs of Jewish communities also occurred elsewhere in the eighteenth century. In Niederwerrn, a small rural community in Franconia, even the *takkanot* were enacted by the local rulers; see the community *pinkas* in the Central Archive for the History of the Jewish People, D/Ni5/2.

⁵⁶ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), mentions these short statutes of only 25 paragraphs, p. 30.

⁵⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 107. I was unable to locate the text in the archival collection.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, record nos. 141, 267.

ing more than 113 paragraphs. Matters relating to the *manhigim* and elections were dealt with in the section starting with paragraph 100. Since the statutes are now lost, we do not know how the three candidates for *manhig* were chosen. We only have a single record dealing with elections of 1765 explaining the nominations for the next elections in 1768.⁵⁹ Each election record begins with the three nominated persons eligible for election. This suggests a kind of pre-election procedure, of which we now know nothing. A late record written in 1795 indicates that the procedure for nominating candidates was not traditionally open to the public.⁶⁰ It seems candidates were not subject to restrictions by the *takkanot*, since there are several cases in which candidates appear in successive years (and still remained unelected).⁶¹

In Leeuwarden, electoral practice differed from The Hague and Middelburg. They started holding elections comparatively late in the community's history. It seems that originally the *manhigim* were the sole electors of members of the community's committee of governors. When one *manhig* decided to leave Leeuwarden permanently in 1765, the others proposed to elect a replacement. However, the candidate was related to one of the *manhigim*. The record states that this had not been unusual formerly, but now it raised considerable opposition within the community. So seven members voted to elect two new *manhigim*, in addition to the two incumbents. A year later, two other former *manhigim* were required to replace the retiring functionaries.

Having four *manhigim* could be problematic, given the possibility of a tied vote. In that case they were required to consult three other members of the community selected by lot to join the *manhigim* to arrive at a majority decision. The same long record that records the changes of 1765, also stipulates that after three years, each *manhig* had to nominate one candidate and three electors had to choose two of the candidates. The two with the most votes would be the new *manhigim* for two years. The record also states that a serving *manhig* was not eligible for reelection, but had to wait one year before being reelected.⁶²

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, record no. 106.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, record no. 336.

⁶¹ See the tables of governors in Appendix 1.

⁶² Tresoar, *Jewish communities and institutions*, no. 1, record no. 106. This record is one of the longest in the whole manuscript. It was signed by Rabbi Nahman Segal, rabbi of the community, the *manhigim* and three other persons. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 24.

In the spring of 1767, the three governors abandoned the original guidelines for the size and membership of the committee. Clearly they were unable to maintain their quorum of four, since only three men signed the records of 1767. The text states that henceforth one *manhig* would be elected each year. The appointment was to be for three years and each *manhig* was responsible for one of the three branches of the community's finances: *tzedakah ma'ot* (poor fund), *ma'ot be'arakhah* (community taxes) or *bikkur holim* (sick fund).⁶³ This record provides an insight into the financial affairs of the Leeuwarden community and shows that the *manhigim* shared responsibility for complex financial matters. That two *manhigim* were responsible for charities demonstrates a greater differentiation of funds and the need for some sort of shared supervision.

The late 1760s were years of administrative change in Leeuwarden. During Pesach 1769, the *manhigim* decided to move the election date from the first day of the previous Jewish month of Adar to the third intermediate day of Pesach. This was because at the start of Adar many of the community's members had been away, whereas most were at home for Pesach. The record⁶⁴ confirms that there were three *manhigim*, as had been stipulated two years earlier. In a change from paragraph 114 of the *takkanot*, the record states that a candidate who had refused a position could now be nominated again the following year, instead of waiting for three years. Eventually a paragraph from the old *takkanot* was revived: a retiring governor could be re-nominated immediately, without interruption. Interestingly, from 1767 to 1769 there were only two *manhigim* in Leeuwarden: Yuspa Levi and Itzik ben Menahem Mendel Kirchhan, both of whom signed this decision, dated Pesach 1769.

Half a year later, the decision was revoked in an amendment and the period of suspension for refusing an appointment was restored along with the former election date. The record concludes that these changes entirely nullify record no. 141.⁶⁵ This amendment was signed

⁶³ Ibid., record no. 127. See the edited record in Appendix 2, no. 25. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 31.

⁶⁴ Tresoar, *Jewish communities and institutions*, no. 1, record, no. 141. This record is a clear example for the use of references in Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot*. Here, both references to other records in the *pinkas* are included and even those to paragraphs of the old and new *takkanot*. That shows the remarkable awareness of the governors regarding administrative procedure.

⁶⁵ See the five lines of text at the end of the page, without a separate number.

by the same two *manhigim* so that most of the proposed changes were presumably rejected by the community. The text offers no further explanation or detail.

During the elections of Adar 5530 (spring 1770), new detailed regulations were enacted by the *manhigim*, for the first time consulting the rabbi.⁶⁶ A short unambiguous record states that at a meeting of past and present governors it was decided that the new *manhigim* would be elected by seven electors chosen by lot by the rabbi. The electors would vote for two new governors. Immediately after the election the governors would draw lots to decide which of them would serve for two or three years. Henceforth, in each month of Adar, one new *manhig* would be elected, as detailed in the *takkanot*. Rabbi Katriel Yehuda Leib and the two *manhigim*, Itzik ben Menahem Mendel Kirchhan and Yuspa Levi signed the new regulation. The rabbi, who apparently wrote the text, used phrases which suggest that there had been a debate about the issue within the community, particularly towards the end where the language hints at an attempt through this measure to bring a dispute to an end.

Although no sources exist relating to the nature of the dispute and the arguments of the protagonists, the sheer number of changes suggests that the elections and leadership were themselves important issues in those days. Interestingly, the rabbi used his position to act as a mediator and it seems that his involvement in this issue established his preeminence in Leeuwarden in the following years. At the time of the decision, Rabbi Katriel had been in office for only a few months, but the documents show that he soon acquired respect among the Jews of Leeuwarden.⁶⁷

Elections were held a few days after the decision. Two *manhigim* were elected, one for two years, the other for three years. Presumably because of the exceptional case of a vote for two governors, this time there were four candidates.⁶⁸

A year later, new elections were held according to the new rules. However, the two elected candidates refused their appointment as *manhig*, so that the governor who should have retired, was asked to continue

⁶⁶ Tresoar, *Jewish communities and institutions*, no. 1, record no. 147. Despite the plan to move the elections to the intermediate days of Pesach, they were once again held in the preceding month of Adar.

⁶⁷ See also Chapter 3.

⁶⁸ Tresoar, *Jewish communities and institutions*, no. 1, record, no. 148.

for a second term. In order to avoid similar occurrences in future, the fine for rejecting a vote was raised sharply to 100 guilders.⁶⁹

Apart from a number of similar refusals, the leadership question remained stable for the next 25 years. In the final years of the Dutch Republic the debate about the electoral procedure restarted, reflecting the political upheavals of that year. A Dutch record in the *sefer zikhronot* reports a roll-call vote in September 1795.⁷⁰ The members of the community were asked to state their opinion concerning a proposed new system of elections. According to the proposal, each member paying a weekly tax of at least three stuivers would be eligible for election, not just the candidates chosen by the *parnassim*. This proposal was far more democratic and adheres to the revolutionary ideas that inundated the Republic in the late 1790s. However, a large majority of members rejected the new procedure and voted to retain the old system. This is far from surprising, given the general reluctance among Jews in the Republic to support the new ideas of the period.⁷¹ On the other hand, it also indicates that most of the taxpaying Jews in Leeuwarden were content to retain the traditional electoral system.

Oisterwijk

The rural community of Oisterwijk enacted their first regulations in 1765. Unfortunately the text was lost, so that we now only know that it existed.⁷² Some paragraphs in the *takkanot* apparently dealt with the annual electoral procedure, since in 1775 additional regulations were enacted by the community, including the decision to augment the leadership with five additional members.⁷³ This indicates that by 1775 and maybe before, members were already directly electing the *gabbaim* of Oisterwijk.

In 1770, Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe of Oisterwijk recorded the community's *minhagim*. He included a few brief references to the elec-

⁶⁹ Ibid., record no. 151.

⁷⁰ Ibid., record no. 336.

⁷¹ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), pp. 58–59. According to the authors, about 90 percent of Dutch Jews supported the House of Orange. This may reflect their attachment to the *ancien regime* and its rules.

⁷² Ros 282 a, p. 10, is a list of signatures of *ba'ale battim* in Oisterwijk who acknowledged the text of the *takkanot* of the same year.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 43.

toral procedure without explaining this in detail.⁷⁴ According to this description, each year one *gabbai* was elected, while one of the former governors could continue in office for a second year.

The only statutes to survive complete, dating from 1781, confirm the contents of the earlier *minhagim*. Each year, at Chanukah, a new *gabbai* was elected.⁷⁵ It seems that these *takkanot* were recorded following disputes within the community, since the paragraph also mentions the names of the new *gabbaim*, elected by majority vote in 1781. It is unusual for statutes to include this kind of detail. Here again, it remains unclear who could vote and what the voting procedure was; it is not explained in any of the three surviving *pinkassim*.

Only a few details remain regarding the electoral practice and the changes it underwent in Oisterwijk. The *takkanot* of 1781 suggest that a change in the structure of the community leadership was proposed with the creation of the office of *parnas* and *shtadlan*. This is the only time a *shtadlan* is explicitly mentioned in any of the *pinkassim* examined here. The post was to be created alongside the two *gabbaim*. In addition, the governors were to be given legal authority for internal cases.⁷⁶ Remarkably, this decision is the first paragraph in the new regulations of that year. In the end, it was never put into effect, since the man designated to be *parnas* and *shtadlan*, Leib Rofe of Den Bosch, declined the honour.⁷⁷ In 1783, one of the *pinkassim* notes that lots were drawn to establish which of two *gabbaim* would continue in office and which would not.⁷⁸ This suggests that it was a normal procedure.

There was a general decline in the community of Oisterwijk towards the end of the eighteenth century.⁷⁹ This is reflected in the leadership issue. In 1793, a new member of the community was welcomed, Leib Klev. Unusually, he was admitted on condition that he would serve as *gabbai* of the community for one year.⁸⁰ This kind of development could only happen in a period of decline, which forced the governors to take

⁷⁴ Ros 283, fol. 18.

⁷⁵ Ros 282 b, p. 2.

⁷⁶ Ibid.

⁷⁷ Ibid., the remark about the rejection of Leib Rofe is written in the margin of the page. Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 12, n. 1, does not mention the paragraph's deletion following the rejection of Leib Rofe.

⁷⁸ Ros 282 a, p. 34.

⁷⁹ See Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 10. This focus of Jewish life in the area declined, while Den Bosch became increasingly important as an urban centre.

⁸⁰ Ros 282 a, p. 44.

unusual steps to keep the community going. Clearly the community no longer had enough members eligible for election.

The events recorded in these *pinkassim* indicate that elections caused little debate in The Hague or Oisterwijk. No discussion of the subject is found in the former and the same rules were followed throughout the period. Oisterwijk seems also to have avoided any long and fierce debates about elections, although their procedure underwent some changes.

Developments in Leeuwarden and Middelburg differed enormously. In the former there was a clear tendency towards almost 'democratic' electoral procedures, whereas in the latter the opposite happened: autonomous elections were eventually dispensed with by the local authority since no agreement could be reached within the community.

Thus there is no common and general tendency among the communities examined here. Moreover, communities sometimes developed in opposite directions. At least in this regard, therefore, there was less uniformity among the Ashkenazi Jews in the Dutch Republic than might have been expected.

Terms of Office

In general, the *pinkassim* reveal no common line among the communities, indeed within the entire Ashkenazi world, regarding the term served by a governor. This was presumably a decision taken by each community individually and subject to change over time. However, terms of office remained almost unchanged in each of the communities examined here throughout the period under discussion.

In The Hague, the regulations of 1723 state that *parnassim* remained in office for two years, whereas the *ne'eman* and the *gabbai tzedakah* were elected for one year.⁸¹ During the entire period covered by the *pinkas*, there were no changes to the terms of office in The Hague. The *parnassim* were elected alternately each year, so they never began at the same time. Apparently, this prevented any major administrative disturbances, the absence of which is noticeable in the *pinkas*.

A similar rotation existed in Leeuwarden, where the governors of the community served for three years. Here too, the annual elections

⁸¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, statutes, art. 6.

were held for a single *parnas*,⁸² providing for a similar alternation as in The Hague. Only one deviation from that rule is mentioned in the *sefer zikhronot*. This occurred when the new system of elections was introduced in 1770, when one *manhig* was elected for only two years, and the other for three years, in order to preserve the rotation system.⁸³

In Middelburg terms of office were outlined in the *takkanot* of 1725. The two articles concerning governors and elections state that incumbents served for one year. However, it was possible to serve a second term immediately after the first.⁸⁴ In reality, until 1758 not one governor served for more than three successive years. In 1758, a new phenomenon occurred: governors appointed by the burgomasters remained in office far longer. Jacob Alexander Süsskind ben Israel served as *parnas* for thirteen years without interruption.⁸⁵ The direct influence of the local authority on Middelburg's Jewish leadership does not seem to have encouraged the trend towards 'democracy' found elsewhere, and in many cases outside the Dutch Republic.

In Oisterwijk, according to the regulations of 1782, the *gabbaim* were elected for two years.⁸⁶ Before these *takkanot* were enacted the situation was apparently different, since there were only a few cases in which they remained in office for more than one year.⁸⁷ After 1782, the community adhered to the *takkanot* and the *gabbaim* remained in office for at least two years.

In general, no major deviation from the regulations occurred regarding the terms of office in the four communities, which was a reasonable length of time in each case. As long as a community exercised autonomy and was able to maintain its administration no cases emerged of rule by single individuals. However, the *pinkassim* reveal the influence that prominent families could exercise on their communities.

⁸² Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 141 and 147. Record no. 141 mentions a *sefer takkanot*, which is not preserved.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, record no. 148.

⁸⁴ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 7, paragraphs 45, 46.

⁸⁵ See the table of *parnassim* in Middelburg in Appendix 1.

⁸⁶ Ros 282b, p. 3, paragraph 2.

⁸⁷ See the table of *parnassim* in Oisterwijk in Appendix 1.

Families and Individuals in Community Leadership

A review of the individuals who served as *parnas*, *gabbai* or *ne'eman* reveals that some served for more than one term. Indeed, the *pinkas* records show that sometimes families were able to control the administration of their community for many years. From an examination of the election results over the entire period and, where records are interrupted, the signatures of the annual records and accounts, it is possible to see where power remained in the hands of certain individuals, and where power was more equitably distributed.

The Hague

The Hague is the best source of data among all the communities. Between 1723 and 1785 all the elections were recorded in the *pinkas*. This forms the basis for the three tables listing the names of all those who held office in this period.⁸⁸ The officials are listed according to chronological appearance, except for members of the famous Boas family.⁸⁹ It might be expected to find members of this influential family in prominent positions throughout the period and indeed the evidence confirms this. Members of the Boas family are therefore given at the top of each table, providing a rather surprising result: every year, throughout the entire period, at least one member of the family held a post in the leadership of the community! Four generations of this famous banking family participated in serving the community and if not for the bankruptcy of their firm and the political upheavals of the late eighteenth century, they might have continued even longer. Apparently, only the restrictions of the *takkanot* concerning re-election of officials prevented members of the Boas family retaining the office of *parnas* for as long as they wished.

⁸⁸ See Appendix 1.

⁸⁹ The history of this leading family has yet to be researched completely. A number of Dutch articles by Van Zuiden, written in the first half of the twentieth century, are the main source: 'De val van een Haagsch bankiershuis', *Die Haghe* (1919/20), pp. 112–126; 'Iets over Tobias Boas en zijn relaties met het stadhouderlijke hof', *Die Haghe* (1932), pp. 53–68; 'Nog meer over Boas', *Die Haghe* (1933), pp. 135–146; 'Nog iets over Boas', *Die Haghe* (1935), pp. 61–64 [for details see bibliography]. More recently: I. B. van Creveld, 'De Haagse familie Boas tijdens het ancien régime', *Misjpoeg* 10 (1997 [a]), pp. 49–66.

According to the regulations, however, it was possible to be appointed to a different post at the end of a term of office. Thus a *parnas*, after completing his two years, might continue immediately as *ne'eman* (who had no voting rights) and could thereafter accept an appointment as *parnas*.⁹⁰ The tables show this to have been one of the tactics of the Boas family, especially Tobias Boas, who served as *ne'eman* for ten years. The Hague *pinkas* contains many records and signatures by Tobias Boas.

Another tactic was to alternate between generations. The statutes prevented close relatives serving simultaneously.⁹¹ So father and son often alternated in office, at least when there were sons eligible for election. During the 1720s and '30s Hayyim Abraham Boas and his son Tobias Boas frequently alternated in office and between 1751 and 1771 we find the same phenomenon with Tobias Boas and his son Abraham. Interestingly his second son Shimon, who played a major role in the bank, never served as an official of the community.

In 1783, the community's rules appear to have been enforced less stringently. Thus Abraham Boas and his nephew Hayyim ben Shimon Boas were able to serve simultaneously as *ne'eman* and *gabbai tzedakah*.⁹² On the other hand, they may have been elected at the same time because these offices held less prestige and because of the family's reputation.

None of the records of the four communities examined here shows as clearly how a single family could dominate the affairs of a Jewish community. While certain conditions may have pertained within the community to enable the Boas family to achieve this dominant position, being probably the wealthiest Ashkenazi family in the Dutch Republic clearly helped. Their deep involvement in the leadership of the community was certainly prestigious and enhanced the family's reputation. Other Hague families occupied similar positions, but in most cases comparatively less information is available regarding these families. For example, Meir ben Moshe Yitzhak Emden and Leib Emden were probably related; they alternated in office in a similar way between 1725 and 1738.

Another interesting aspect is the way individuals rose to leadership positions. The tables show that the normal route was first to be elected

⁹⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, *takkanot*, paragraph 15. See above, section: *Terms of Office*.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, paragraph 5.

⁹² *Ibid.*, fol. 255.

as *gabbai tzedakah* or *ne'eman*, before eventually becoming a *parnas*. Almost every career that shows up in the tables started with one of these two posts. Equally interesting is the apparent unpopularity of the financial appointments.⁹³ This post was often given to beginners, and the results were sometimes disastrous. None of those who are recorded as *parnas* ever returned to the position of *gabbai tzedakah*.⁹⁴ Tobias Boas managed to avoid ever having to serve in this post, but his son Abraham started his career in the community as *gabbai tzedakah* in 1750.⁹⁵ There are several indications that the Boas bank supervised the community's main financial affairs, so that the Boas family fulfilled the *gabbai tzedakah*'s duties without having to hold the position.

This *cursus honorum* seems to be unique to The Hague and is not found as clearly in any of the other communities discussed here. In fact the leadership in Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk was based around a different structure, generally including no other office besides *parnas*. But the phenomenon was not unique to the Dutch Ashkenazi world, as various Ukrainian *pinkassim* examined by Abraham Rechtman show. Most of the manuscripts he reviewed contained a *takkanah* of סדר ההדרגה, an order of rank, which stated that no one could be elected to a senior position without first serving in some minor office.⁹⁶ Rechtman also showed that the leadership always included various less influential individuals, starting from less important posts and rising to the highest position in the community.

The existence of this pattern in Eastern Europe reveals a high degree of administrative sophistication. It is also remarkable to find the same pattern in The Hague, suggesting that it was the first Ashkenazi Jews to arrive there from Poland who apparently brought this custom to The Hague. The order of rank remained valid throughout the eighteenth century without being mentioned explicitly either in the regulations or in the records of the community.

⁹³ Thus in some elections several individuals refused to accept this office, as described above.

⁹⁴ There is one exception, when (Süsskind) Wolf Beer Pos became *gabbai tzedakah* in 1754, having served for two years as *parnas* six years earlier. GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 153 v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 137.

⁹⁶ Rechtman, *op. cit.*, p. 210. Unfortunately Rechtman omits the dates of certain *takkanot* in *pinkassim*, making it impossible to state whether these regulations also applied in the eighteenth century.

The evidence of the community records also shows an awareness among the electors about who was eligible for particular posts as a consequence of their age and experience. Moreover, the fact that no former *parnas* was ever chosen to serve as *gabbai tzedakah* (which was theoretically possible if electors were allowed to vote freely) shows that the ballots were not as secret and fair as the regulations suggest. On the contrary, there appear to have been tacit agreements among the electors—who included the governors—regarding who to nominate as candidate and who to elect. Indeed, it seems that there were unofficial pre-elections in which governors coordinated their interests and desires to facilitate the required result. This pattern was not unusual and as has been shown to have been common in Polish and Ukrainian communities.⁹⁷

Some of the members of the Ashkenazi community of The Hague were apparently considered sound secondary and tertiary level functionaries since they were never elected to any of the leading posts. A striking case is that of Leib Emden, who served as *gabbai tzedakah* five times and three times as *ne'eman* between 1725 and 1738, but never served as *parnas*. A later example is Hirsch ben Tobias Rees, who served three times as *gabbai tzedakah* and once as *ne'eman* between 1762 and 1767.

The following table lists individuals who served for multiple terms in The Hague. Tobias Boas leads with 30 years, followed by his son Abraham with 26 years in total. No other member of the community served for as many years as the two bankers; a fact that demonstrates again the prominent role of the Boas family within the Hague community.

This table is based solely on data obtained from the *pinkas*. We do not know exactly who occupied these posts between 1700 and 1722 or between 1786 and 1795, so that some individuals, such as Hayyim Abraham Boas, who was one of the most prominent persons in the early years of the community, may have served rather longer.⁹⁸

Leib Tiehl and Ephraim Tiehl, who were probably related, represent another group of individuals who led the community for many years, but a huge gap separates them from the Boas family, which once again

⁹⁷ See also Nadav, *op. cit.*, p. 118, no. 185: paragraph 7 explicitly mentions the order of rank. These *takkanot* of Tykocin were enacted around 1700–1720.

⁹⁸ See Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), p. 33: The first prayers of the Ashkenazi *minyān* were held at his house.

Table 1: *Terms of governors in The Hague, 1723–1786*

Name	<i>Parnas</i>	<i>gabbai tzedakah</i>	<i>Ne'eman</i>	total years
Tobias Boas	20	–	10	30
Abraham Boas	20	1	5	26
Leib Tiehl	12	–	4	16
Meir ben Moshe	8	3	2	13
Yitzhak Emden				
Hirtz bar Abraham	6	3	3	12
Ephraim Tiehl	4	3	3	10
Salman ben Jacob	8	–	1	9
Shahut				
Itzik Leiden Segal	6	1	2	9
Hayyim A. Boas	8	–	–	8
Leib Emden	–	5	3	8
Aberle Levi	8	–	–	8

emphasises the uniqueness of Tobias Boas and his clan. A third group is represented by Meir ben Moshe Yitzhak Emden and Leib Emden, who may also have belonged to the same family. The distribution of their terms of office differs from the other two groups, because Meir and Leib Emden served more often and exclusively as *gabbai* or *ne'eman*. Little is known about the others mentioned in the table and almost nothing about their affiliations. Presumably, however, all of them belonged to the community's upper echelons, because—and this is true of all communities, not just The Hague—to be a governor of a community required excellent connections and a sound financial base, particularly given the responsibilities of leadership within a religious minority that even in the Dutch Republic was not completely integrated into society at large.

Middelburg

A similar situation pertained in Middelburg. Here too a number of influential members served as governors for long periods, yet the pattern is less striking than in The Hague. There are several possible reasons for this. Firstly, there was no single family in Middelburg as dominant as the Boas clan. Secondly, for almost one third of the period appointments were made by the burgomasters and no elections were held. This provides a warped representation of the situation and there is no way of knowing how the community leadership might have developed without the intervention of the local authority. Unlike The Hague, *parnas* was

almost the only office. So there was no evident hierarchy or *cursus honorum* as in The Hague. Yet like The Hague, some electors in Middelburg are recorded in successive elections. Since there were no other offices, the names of the electors are also included in the Middelburg tables⁹⁹ revealing that a kind of ‘career’ was indeed possible in this community’s leadership, beginning usually with the rank of elector.¹⁰⁰

This table shows that in the period in which the community held independent elections, almost every *parnas* had been an elector before being elected. But it also shows another striking fact: it was not considered a problem that a person might serve as an elector and become *parnas* in the same election, implying that he had probably voted for himself, a situation that might be regarded in a modern election as problematic.

An analysis of the individual terms of office shows that Middelburg also had some prominent governors, although this phenomenon was not as striking as in The Hague.¹⁰¹

Table 2: *Terms of governors in Middelburg, 1725–1786*

Name	Years as <i>parnas</i>	Elector
Joel bar Yehuda Joseph Nathan Hacoheh	14	4
Jacob Alexander Süsskind ben Israel	13*	–
Gad bar Hayyim	10	5
Shimshon bar Meir Abraham	8	7
Meir Boas	8	5
Tobias bar Moshe	8	2
Kalman ben David Hammerstein	7+1 as <i>gabbai</i> **	5
Aharon Hayyim ben Gad	6*	–
Leiser Shliesser bar Jacob Segal	5*	–
Isaac Levi	5	2
Juda bar Aharon Halevi	5	9

* Served after 1759, when the local authority ran the appointment procedure, so was not mentioned before as an elector.

** In 1748 the office of *gabbai* was also included, see chapter 1, section: *Parnassim and their Functions*.

⁹⁹ See the tables for Middelburg in Appendix 1.

¹⁰⁰ In Tykocin the office of elector was regarded as one of the first stages in the career of a community official according to the *סדר ההדרגה*; see Nadav, *op. cit.*, p. 118, no. 185, paragraph 7.

¹⁰¹ The number of years, however, cannot be considered reliable. There are some years about which we have no information concerning the governors.

The intervention of the burgomasters makes the situation in Middelburg unusual, since the city did not encourage rotation among the governors. The city's main concern was to guarantee stability and to prevent major problems arising in the community. It was only the direct influence of the non-Jewish authorities that allowed the uninterrupted reign of Jacob Alexander Süsskind ben Israel for thirteen years. While the situation would have been quite different without the local authority's intervention, it seems that this was the force preventing a total breakdown of the community structure.

As in The Hague, leadership functions in Middelburg were also divided between generations of the same family, although less obviously so. Moreover, the recorded names do not show there to have been any dominant families among the Jews of Middelburg. The only unambiguous case is that of Gad bar Hayyim and his son Aharon Hayyim ben Gad, who followed his father in 1765, several years after Gad had retired as *parnas*. Some decades previously it seems that the father of Jacob Alexander Süsskind ben Israel, Israel ben Alexander, had served as an elector between 1738 and 1746, but never as *parnas*.

Leeuwarden

In the Ashkenazi community of Leeuwarden the only offices recorded are those of *manhig* and *parnas*. The *sefer zikhronot* lists all the candidates for each election and it is clear that only respected individuals could be nominated for the position of *parnas*.¹⁰²

The Leeuwarden tables cover just part of the eighteenth century, since elections only began in the 1760s. Therefore only the thirty years reported in the *pinkas* can be considered. Here too some of the early governors may have held office in previous years.

Nomination for office was not the equivalent of holding the post of *gabbai tzedakah* or *ne'eman* in The Hague, or even to the brief position of elector in Middelburg. So nomination offers no definite indication about a candidate's status within the leadership. It may however be significant if a person was considered for a leading position on several occasions. The tables illustrate that some individuals were elected on their first candidacy. Others were 'eternal candidates', who were never chosen to lead the community. Anshel Levi, for example, was a can-

¹⁰² See the tables for Leeuwarden in Appendix 1.

didate six times without ever being elected. And Aharon ben Hayyim Rofe stood seventeen times but only served once as *parnas* between 1781 and 1784.¹⁰³ He was elected again in 1790, but in the end he declined the honour.¹⁰⁴

A review of the individuals who served as governor in Leeuwarden reveals a situation not unlike Middelburg. Some served several terms as governor, but there is no single outstanding family that dominated the community like the Boas family in The Hague.

Table 3: *Terms of governors in Leeuwarden, 1764–1795*

Name	Number of candidatures	Years as <i>manhig/parnas</i>
Elhanan Levi	5	14
Ephraim ben Joseph	8	10
Yuspa ben Heshel Levi	4	10
Itzik ben Menahem Mendel	4	8
Eisik ben Jacob Minden	4	6
Nathan ben Shmuel	2	6
Nahum ben Koppel	2	6
Leib Polak	10	5
Salman Drogist	4	5
Aharon ben Hayyim Rofe	17	3

The several attempts to improve the elections and leadership system apparently helped prevent any one individual achieving a dominant influence, since only three persons remained in office for ten years or longer: Elhanan Levi, Ephraim ben Joseph and Juspa ben Heshel Levi. There seem to be no family connections between the governors who served longest and the tables of all governors reveal no unusual domination by any prominent family. This may of course be a result of the absence of surnames and the brevity of the period recorded.

Oisterwijk

The period covered by the *pinkassim* of Oisterwijk is almost as short as that of Leeuwarden. Given the brief information recorded in the

¹⁰³ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 234.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, record no. 292.

manuscripts, no indication can be gleaned regarding the careers of governors. None of the other offices depended on election and the only year for which the names of electors are given is 1783/84.¹⁰⁵

The table¹⁰⁶ shows how small the rural community of Oisterwijk was. Only eighteen individuals were involved in the leadership. Thus the pool of candidates was considerably smaller than in other communities. Naturally even individuals related to each other might serve as governors in such a small community. David bar Akiva Oisterwijk and his son Akiva bar David were both *gabbaim* of the community and other governors may also have been related, although the names do not show this. Unlike those of other communities, the written records of Oisterwijk's community are incomplete, since the elections were not always recorded. Other records, such as accounts were also occasionally omitted in the three *pinkassim*, so that there are several years, in which we know nothing about the governors of this community. Apart from the early years prior to 1765, when no *pinkas* was kept, information is lacking between 1777 and 1779, between 1780 and 1783 and between 1790 and 1793. Including these years in the analysis, might offer a slightly different picture.¹⁰⁷

Table 4: *Terms of governors in Oisterwijk, 1765–1794*

Name	Years as <i>gabbai</i>
Mordekhai bar Simha	8
Jacob Meir bar Aharon	6
Nathan bar Abraham	5
David bar Akiva Oisterwijk	4
Gabriel ben Meir	4
Akiva bar David	3

As the various *pinkassim* show, there were governors in each community who served for several terms. Presumably most came from the upper echelons of their communities. Only the Hague community was dominated by one family for almost the entire eighteenth century. While the other communities included individuals who served for more than

¹⁰⁵ Ros 282b, p. 20.

¹⁰⁶ See the tables in the Appendix 1.

¹⁰⁷ See also Bader's analysis of Oisterwijk's governors in *op. cit.*, p. 8.

ten years as *parnas*, none followed the pattern of The Hague in this regard. It is surprising to find this phenomenon in the largest community examined here. While this situation developed because of the powerful position of the Boas family, it shows also that there is no connection between a community's size, the level of quasi-democratic behaviour and the direct influence of individuals or families on the leadership. The statistics relating to Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk reveal no great difference in the terms individuals served in office.

The Authority of the Leadership and Its Acknowledgement

Whether *pinkassim* are the best sources to investigate the kind of authority governors exercised in their communities in practice would at first sight seem questionable, since the records were authored by the governors themselves. They would hardly be expected to expound on their own limitations. Yet *pinkassim* provide valuable information on this question. The acknowledgement of authority can be charted by measuring the frequency of disciplinary measures and compliance. Cases, which were not recorded through to their conclusion may have been dropped because the *parnassim* came off badly. Revisions of statutes may also indicate which issues were being discussed and what policies needed changing. Another significant item is the influence of governors on prayer, liturgy and the synagogue, and whether these questions remain in the hands of the rabbis, or were influenced by the *parnassim*.

The Hague

The voluminous Hague *pinkas* includes many records relating to these questions. Those that are relevant to this part of the investigation are the records that reflect the legal or executive authority of the *parnassim*. The records themselves are not the only interesting aspect; the reactions to the decisions within the community are also significant, where these are recorded. The degree of adherence attested by the sources gives an indication of the willingness of members to obey their governors. To assess the number of authoritative decisions taken in The Hague, all the records have been counted and arranged into four categories: eight cases of individual disciplinary measures, nine of decisions concerning the synagogue, prayer and liturgy, three of revised or additional

regulations and another two records relating to the public behaviour of Jews in The Hague. The principal examples indicate the executive power of the governors.

The first relevant record deals with disciplinary measures taken against Mendele Cohen, who had apparently behaved impudently towards the community, the *parnassim* and perhaps also towards the local authority. A record dated 11 Elul 5484,¹⁰⁸ states that because of his impudence Mendele was required to ask for forgiveness in public before the start of the synagogue service, although his offence should have earned him a hefty fine. The governors waived the fine in order to preserve peace in the community.¹⁰⁹ The record does not state what it was that Mendele Cohen did. A similar lack of detail about offences is found in other manuscripts. A complete account was recorded by the *parnassim* in a separate document (as attested in the record) and was kept in a box, which was probably used to store recent administrative papers.¹¹⁰ This document has not survived, so we know only the basic outline of the case.

Since Mendele was also sentenced to pay the community's expenses owed to the local authority resulting from 'his lies', presumably he had discussed matters in public which had offended the governors, if not the entire Jewish community. Nothing is known about Mendele Cohen's status, but as has been noted elsewhere regarding other Jewish communities in this period, the 'leadership tended to choose its deviants from among the unfortunate members of the population and those living in misery.'¹¹¹ Presumably, therefore, Mendele did not belong to one of the wealthy Jewish families of the community.

The case apparently refers to an affair described by the early historian of The Hague's Ashkenazi community, D. S. van Zuiden, who clearly used different sources, since he was able to provide more detail (without mentioning the name of the perpetrator). A member of the community—apparently Mendele Cohen—had referred to one of the *parnassim* as an *am horetz*, an ignoramus. The *parnas* went to a non-Jewish notary

¹⁰⁸ I.e., 30 August 1724.

¹⁰⁹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 24.

¹¹⁰ A similar phenomenon is found among the Sephardi Jews of Amsterdam; Y. Kaplan, 'The Threat of Eros in Eighteenth-Century Sephardi Amsterdam', in: idem, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden 2000 [b]), p. 284.

¹¹¹ Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [a]), p. 152. This statement is certainly not only true of Amsterdam's Sephardi community.

to draw up a record of the incident. The notary charged over seven guilders, which was apparently the sum mentioned in the *pinkas*.¹¹²

Another record notes the public apology Mendele was to make in synagogue.¹¹³ Mendele was at first unwilling to accept the sentence and refused to apologise for several months. The governors then apparently threatened to increase the punishment, so he eventually agreed to say sorry during Pesach 1725. The same record reporting Mendele's apology also lists the total costs the governors had to pay for various notarial declarations. Whatever Mendele had done this shows that, despite the delay, the governors were able to pursue their case against an opponent and did so. Naturally they reported their triumph in the *pinkas*.

During the autumn of 1736, the governors discussed another offence. A woman, Merle, daughter of Yitzhak Jacob, had been struck on the backside by two brothers, Sussman ben Shalom Nerden and Yehuda ben Shalom, while leaving synagogue.¹¹⁴ The record does not say whether Merle complained about the incident herself. But since three members of the leadership were related to the victim, presumably the governors had a strong motive to demonstrate their authority in this particular case. The *parnas ha-hodesh*, the *gabbai tzedakah* and also the *ne'eman* (then Tobias Boas) were therefore not allowed to hear that case. Instead, two former *parnassim* were asked to join the panel.

Merle was called to the hearing to explain what had happened. She did so and the text in the *pinkas* states that a declaration had been presented to the governors, which was produced by a notary shortly before the hearing. Unfortunately we do not know whether this was about the assault, or whether there was another case between her and the brothers, which may have explained the assault. After hearing the victim, the brothers were summoned three times to apologise. This is remarkable, since the record suggests that they were not given a chance to defend themselves. One possible reason is that this was not about violence against a woman, but a halakhic matter about women's modesty. After all, no one but her husband was allowed to touch her. Indeed the record specifically mentions that the Merle was *niddah* at the time, making the offence even more heinous. Maybe it is no coincidence that Aberle Levi, one of the former *parnassim*, was asked to join the court,

¹¹² See Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), p. 24.

¹¹³ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 32.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 92. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 4.

since in all the *pinkas* records he is referred to as מַהֲר"ר, indicating that he was a rabbi. His involvement lent added authority to their decision. At that time the community did not have a serving rabbi, who would otherwise presumably been consulted in this case.¹¹⁵

Sussman and Yehuda did not obey the three calls to appear in court. This was punishable by a ban on their attending synagogue.¹¹⁶ Apparently, the two brothers seemed quite sure of themselves, since they let it be known that this was fine by them. In the end the governors decided to threaten them with a *hakhraza* (proclamation of a limited ban) in case they tried to attend synagogue anyway.

No further mention of the affair is found in the *pinkas*. Perhaps Sussman and Yehuda left the community and stopped attending synagogue.¹¹⁷ Maybe they switched to the Sephardi synagogue, although we have no evidence of this.¹¹⁸ Another possible way out may have involved an unofficial settlement between the brothers, Merle and the governors which was never recorded in the *pinkas*. Given the delicate nature of the event this would have been the most convenient solution for all parties, especially for the influential families who were probably not interested in having unpleasant gossip entered into the official records.

In the field of liturgy, prayer and synagogue there are some interesting examples of interventions by the governors in developments that conflicted with their desires. Apparently, in 1745 services were being held by members of the community at different locations, not just in synagogue. The record complains of the custom of carrying Torah scrolls to different places, in order to hold these services.¹¹⁹ These occasions included prayers at the homes of mourners and on Tisha b'Av. The governors prohibited the private removal of the scrolls from the synagogue for these services; only the *hevra kadisha* was authorised to do so. Interestingly, the governors were not concerned about separate services as such (which was a reason for many disputes, especially in the

¹¹⁵ See below, Chapter 3.

¹¹⁶ As in the case of Tzadok bar Tzvi in Leeuwarden, who left the community in 1758 for more trivial reasons; see below in this section.

¹¹⁷ This was not often the case, although it is indicated in Leeuwarden in 1756, see below in this section. In 1764, a certain Aharon Pach threatened to leave the community of The Hague, but decided eventually to stay; see GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 187.

¹¹⁸ There are indications that the opposite happened, that Sephardi Jews who were in conflict with their community came to the Ashkenazi synagogue, see *ibid.*, fol. 38, dating from 1726; see the record in Appendix 2, no. 1.

¹¹⁹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 122.

nineteenth century) but more the safety of the costly scrolls. Claiming the exclusive right to remove scrolls for the *hevra kadisha* represents an assertion of its status and position.

The next example also seems to deal with *halakhah*, in fact the issue is far more complex than appears from the *pinkas*.¹²⁰ The first record explains that Rabbi Saul Halevi, warned the community in his *Shabbat Hagadol* sermon in 1772, not to walk in the Bosch park on Shabbat and more crucially, the parade ground of the city garrison there. The Bosch was some distance from the Jewish quarter and outside the *eruv*, the boundary within which Jews might carry on Shabbat. The rabbi mentioned the danger that someone might go to the Bosch without noticing they were still wearing a pocket watch—which it would be forbidden to carry on Shabbat and festivals in public areas.

As always there were members of the community who were less observant, and had less respect for the rabbi's authority (and the governors) than they should have had. On the first day after Pesach the *parnassim* assembled in the rabbi's house to question a young man, Michel ben Benjamin Haas, who had been seen the previous Shabbat at the Bosch, wearing a watch. When they asked him why he had desecrated Shabbat and whether he had forgotten the rabbi's sermon, he said he had not done so on purpose. He did not know that carrying a watch was a desecration. Michel was excused for his ignorance of the rabbi's ruling, since he had not been in synagogue on *Shabbat Hagadol*. This sounds a little unconvincing since, while the Jewish community in The Hague was not small, someone had clearly seen (or claimed to see) Michel wearing his watch at the Bosch, and the topic of the rabbi's keynote sermon on *Shabbat Hagadol* would presumably have been a matter of discussion among the whole community.

Officially, the governors accepted his statement, observing that the desecration was a serious matter for which he might be excluded from services in synagogue. However, since he apologised and had not known about the rabbi's ruling, and since it was his first offence the governors let Michel off with a warning. The entire episode may have been played out simply to warn the young man's father, who had quarrelled with the governors some days previously. Benjamin Haas had been accused of abusing the cantor and *ne'eman* who had come to his house to escort

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 219. The first two records on the page focus on this issue. See also the records in Appendix 2, nos. 10–11.

him to the governors. The original quarrel is not mentioned in the record of his hearing.¹²¹

In order to prevent a repetition of the Michel ben Benjamin Haas case, the governors drew up an announcement to be read in public in synagogue. This prohibited walking to the Bosch on Shabbat and going to see the soldiers on the parade ground. The public announcement makes no mention of carrying outside the *eruv*, emphasising instead the attraction of the marching soldiers. This was presumably the problem at the core of the whole issue of Shabbat desecration. As many other cases show, the various activities and pastimes available in the late baroque period attracted Jews as well as non-Jews.¹²² Watching soldiers drill on the parade ground was obviously entertainment for some on Shabbat, especially those who were less than enthusiastic about worship and learning. Clearly Michel ben Benjamin Haas's absence from synagogue on *Shabbat Hagadol* is relevant in this context.

A week after these events Michal was seen returning from the Bosch by three heads of families who reported this to the governors.¹²³ They could not let their authority be flouted like this and ordered him to appear before them. This time his mother (!) appeared and declared that he had indeed been to the Bosch, but had not worn his watch. Moreover she demanded that he should not be judged in his absence. In this case too, no further or final record appears in the *pinkas* to tell us how the matter ended. Had the governors successfully imposed their will there would probably have been some record of their victory in the *pinkas* to mark the triumph of tradition over *Zeitgeist*. Presumably the parties agreed to compromise, or the governors tacitly accepted Michel ben Benjamin Haas's rebellious behaviour, and maybe that of several other young people.¹²⁴

The affair seems to reflect the urban context in which the Jews lived: here they were exposed to the typical lifestyle of the eighteenth century and tried to emulate it.¹²⁵ Rural communities did not have the same

¹²¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 219.

¹²² See A. Shochat, *Der Ursprung der jüdischen Aufklärung in Deutschland* (Frankfurt am Main 2000), pp. 68–79, who supplies many examples of rabbis in Germany who attacked Jews taking part in public amusements such as theatre and opera, card games and hunting (!).

¹²³ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 219.

¹²⁴ There was a similar case in the Sephardi community of Amsterdam, where the *Mahamad* tried to stop individuals walking on Shabbat to Dam Square, or going to the stock exchange; see Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [a]), p. 148.

¹²⁵ See chapter 3: Officials of a Jewish Community, describing visits of the Hague

intense contact or the temptations of urban life, and were more open to scrutiny. Urban centres are the source of cultural change in every human society and Jewish communities are no different in this regard.

The Michel ben Benjamin Haas affair, his Shabbat leisure activities and the emphasis on the halakhic aspect in the attempt to stop members of the community indulging in secular pursuits, covers a wider area than ritual law and liturgy. However, the halakhic implications place it officially in this group, and increased the seriousness of the offence. Other examples of measures of the governors in this category concern honours in synagogue,¹²⁶ the behaviour of women during services¹²⁷ and the rules concerning the reciting of *kaddish*.¹²⁸

The following example also reflects the attempt by the governors to maintain the moral probity of the community. The new additional *takkanot* enacted in 1777 deal with several aspects of community life in The Hague, but the most pressing issue was that of promiscuity among young women. This problem is first recorded in the *pinkas* in 1773, when two sisters, Sarah and Haye Goch were both found to have behaved improperly.¹²⁹ The governors were concerned for the reputation of the community, presumably not just in the wider Jewish world but also in The Hague in general, and were therefore determined to stop the spread of promiscuity in the community. The younger of the sisters, Haye, was pregnant, and when her condition became obvious the scandal broke. The governors discussed the matter without leaving a record of their findings in the *pinkas*, but the notice in the synagogue of their punishment was copied into the *pinkas* and this text is our source for the whole episode.

The punishment for the two sisters was severe, but not unusual: they were expelled from the community and deprived of any further support. In addition, all members were cautioned not to have any contact with them or to invite them to any festivities. This left the sisters with few options. They might convert to Christianity, but their reputation as loose women would have spread among the non-Jews too, so that

cantor and Torah reader to the opera, and the disapproval of these visits among the governors. See also S. Litt, 'Haag Jewish Community Minute Book (1723–1798), GA Den Haag, NIG, nos. 1–3', <http://www.earlymodern.org/workshops/summer2005/presenters/litt/01/intro.php>, accessed 20 February 2006. See this record edited in Appendix 2, no. 13.

¹²⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 60 v-61 (1729).

¹²⁷ Ibid., fol. 57 (1729).

¹²⁸ Ibid., fol. 66–69 (1734).

¹²⁹ Ibid., fol. 223 v. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 12.

their chance of a quiet life according to the mores of the time would have been small in The Hague. Whether Jewish communities employed the same social tools for dealing with this kind of circumstance as in non-Jewish society (e.g., marriage with an elder and respected man) is doubtful. However, little research has been done into this subject as yet. Alternatively, they may have joined the large group of beggars and goliards, who did not require a good reputation.¹³⁰

The long public notice was intended to make an example of the sisters to the whole community, to prevent any similar occurrences. This was an age of lax morals, so there were probably other cases which did not become public or escaped punishment for some reason. However, this affair shows that the governors were determined to demonstrate their authority in a matter which they saw as damaging the community's reputation and a breach of the moral conventions of the time. Since we know nothing else about the Goch family, they were probably not influential in the community. That the sisters lost their membership shows that they had been members and not just Jewish townspeople without a formal community affiliation. Presumably, if this had happened within a highly respected family, the affair would have ended rather differently. It would probably not have been mentioned at all in the official sources.¹³¹

Despite the best efforts of the community's governors similar cases continued to occur in the following years. In 1777, the governors and seven other prominent members decided to enact additional *takkanot*,¹³² consisting mainly of regulations concerning contact with women who, the governors maintained, behaved promiscuously and were regarded as prostitutes.¹³³ It is noticeable that none of the sources mention the

¹³⁰ This group is still largely unknown, having left few traces in the sources, out of all proportion to the numerous Jewish beggars and criminals. Concerning criminals and gangs in the Dutch Republic see the remarkable work of F. Egmont, *Underworlds: Organized Crime in the Netherlands 1650–1800* (Cambridge 1993), pp. 106–126, and J. C. E. Belinfante, 'The Ideal of Jewish Tradition Versus the Reality of the Jewish Poor: The Dilemma of the Ashkenazi Jewish Nation', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 30 (1996), pp. 216–217. On Germany see Y. Guggenheim, 'Von den Schalantjuden zu den Betteljuden', in: S. Jersch-Wenzel (ed.), *Juden und Armut in Mittel- und Osteuropa* (Cologne 2000), pp. 55–69.

¹³¹ See the measures taken by the Sephardi community in Amsterdam at this time described by Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [b]), p. 297–299.

¹³² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 240–240v.

¹³³ Sexually active unmarried women were regarded as prostitutes at the time, see R. Berger, *Sexualität, Ehe und Familienleben in der jüdischen Moralliteratur (900–1900)* (Wiesbaden 2003), p. 85.

men involved in these cases, and there is no indication whether Jews or non-Jews were involved, or both. Nevertheless, there is a clear contrast with the situation in the Sephardi community of Amsterdam in the seventeenth century where only the men were excommunicated and the women were never mentioned.¹³⁴ The records also give little information about the nature of the relationships. Were they love-affairs between young men and women, or was it genuine prostitution, as the sources imply? The governors were not attempting to relate the women's conduct in objective detail; it was enough that they had infringed Jewish law and the established moral conventions.

The Hague was not the only community to struggle with this issue. A similar moral decline occurred in the triple community of Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek in the eighteenth century, in Frankfurt in the late seventeenth century and in Fürth in the eighteenth century. The governors of these communities took the same steps to combat this phenomenon as the *parnassim* of The Hague.¹³⁵ Several large urban communities therefore faced similar problems regarding traditional moral values.

Apparently, many of these affairs resulted in unplanned pregnancies—assuming the secretary was not exaggerating—thus underscoring the need for the new regulations. It seems that the governors realised the impossibility of completely eradicating the lax morality of the mainly young offenders. So they tried to change some of the community rules to be able to threaten major difficulties in the future for those who refused to adhere to their norms. Unusually, the first paragraph states that whenever a son of a member or a Jewish resident or even a stranger became engaged to a woman who was already pregnant from him or from anyone else,¹³⁶ he would not receive the usual public honours accorded to a bridegroom. He would not be called up to the Torah on the Shabbat before his *huppa*; the couple were not allowed to have the *huppa* in the synagogue courtyard or to hold the celebration in the community's hall. However, the groom was allowed to be called up

¹³⁴ See Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [b]), pp. 286–287.

¹³⁵ Shochat, *op. cit.*, pp. 295–299. Shochat presents many examples of promiscuity and reactions of community governors, apparently chiefly from Germany.

¹³⁶ The restrictions also applied when the bride had already had children out of wedlock.

to the Torah on the Shabbat following the wedding, although without mentioning the marriage.

The second paragraph states that the rabbi was not allowed to marry the couple. Instead he had to authorise someone else to officiate. This would have reduced the prestige of the wedding considerably.

The third measure was to double all the costs for the necessary documents produced by the rabbi and the *ne'eman*. This was not the only financial burden imposed on couples in this draconian moral code.

According to the fourth paragraph of the new *takkanot*, illegitimate children were not automatically accepted as members of the community, even if the parents were full members. Parents had to ask for permission from the governors and had to pay at least 200 guilders for their child to acquire the rights of membership of the Jewish community. In addition to the financial burden, this measure was designed to humble young Jews by forcing them to ask the governors for the favour of acknowledging their child.

The governors also foresaw the possibility of a full member, whether a widower or single, might marry a woman who was pregnant by him or someone else. This would automatically cost him his membership according to the fifth paragraph. The only way to prevent this was to ask for permission from the governors and to pay a fine of 200 guilders.

The sixth paragraph excluded those who married a pregnant woman and their (illegitimate) offspring from public office in the community. This included the prestigious honours on Simchat Torah of *hatan Torah* and *hatan Bereshit*.

The seventh and eighth paragraphs concern the status and burial rights of Cohens and Levites who married a pregnant woman and were not members of the community.

These measures were formulated by the governors in order to counter the spread of promiscuity in the community. Five years later the new laws were consulted with regard to Nathan ben Yeheskel Cohen, apparently an illegitimate child of a community member. According to paragraph four, an illegitimate child of a member of the community would not automatically become a member, only upon payment of 200 guilders. The governors required Nathan to pay the sum when he applied for membership.¹³⁷ Apart from this case, the *pinkas* contains no further references to this issue.

¹³⁷ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 255.

One final example is a public notice from 1730 about appropriate behaviour on Shabbat and festivals in public.¹³⁸ Apparently there were several cases of Jews brawling on the street on Shabbat and festivals.¹³⁹ This was against Dutch law as well as *halakhah*. The governors were forced to act. From the notice it is also clear that the governors were equally opposed to altercations during the week. Clearly too they were concerned about the possibility that fighting might lead to gossip about Jews among the non-Jews. Moreover it seems that Jews were quite entitled to own and wear weapons in the Dutch Republic. The first *takkanot* of 1701 also referred to fighting in the synagogue,¹⁴⁰ which again suggests that Jews wore swords just as non-Jews¹⁴¹ and sometimes used them. That could have led to dangerous situations in case of their use.

A case not included in the *pinkas* shows that the revolutionary upheavals of 1795 also affected relations between the community and their governors. In that year, a group of 41 heads of households denounced the leadership to the local authority for the alleged misuse of community funds.¹⁴² This clearly shows that the authority of the governors did not remain unquestioned and demonstrates that there must have been considerable opposition against the leadership of the community. Absence of information on the *pinkas* after 1785 prevents us from reconstructing the leadership in his period.

These examples illustrate that the leadership in The Hague tried to maintain control over public affairs of the community by compelling Jews to adhere to *halakhah*. Or alternatively, these rules were used to justify disciplinary measures. Any behaviour the governors considered inappropriate was deemed contrary to *halakhah* (no matter, if it was or not), enabling them to present themselves as the defenders of Jewish law and tradition which in a number of cases indeed may have been their intention.

¹³⁸ Ibid., fol. 61v.

¹³⁹ The word פּעכטן corresponds with the Dutch word *vechten*, which means to fight, not necessarily with weapons. That was probably the case here. My thanks to Marion Aptroot for drawing attention to this point.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., fol. 1, paragraph 1.

¹⁴¹ Compare the situation in Germany in the Early Modern period as described in S. Litt 'Juden und Waffen im 16. und 17. Jahrhundert—Anmerkungen zu einem Alltagsphänomen', *Aschkenas* 13/1 (2003 [b]), pp. 83–92, *passim*.

¹⁴² I. B. van Creveld, *Kille-Žorg: Drie eeuwen sociale geschiedenis van joods Den Haag* (The Hague 1997 [b]), pp. 53–54.

Remarkably, the community's reputation among non-Jews was not the main concern of its governors. Offences against Dutch law by single Jews did not cause problems for the community as a whole. This is why the governors resorted to *halakhah*: they could not raise the spectre of a threat to the entire community if individuals misbehaved.

There is no indication in the *pinkas* that the rabbis of The Hague initiated the measures taken by the governors against those who disturbed the decorum of the community. In some cases, the rabbis were consulted, probably to provide an appropriate way to give their measures authority. However, most of the decisions regarding the synagogue, liturgy and prayer were made in periods when a rabbi was functioning in the community.¹⁴³

It is also striking that after 1750 no additional measures were taken concerning halakhic issues, whereas all additional regulations were enacted after 1750. Individual disciplinary measures, however, were taken equally during the entire period.

Middelburg

It was quite a different story in Middelburg. The poor presentation of events in this community's *pinkas* is evident here too. Just three cases are recorded of interventions by the governors throughout the entire period. If these were the only cases, it again confirms the weakness of Zealand's only community.

All the cases refer to the behaviour of individuals in synagogue, which provoked the anger of the governors. The first was that of Miriam, a widow who used bad language and cursed during the morning service on *Shabbat Hagadol* in 1725. The first record connected to the case states that she had infringed paragraphs 41 and 42 of the *takkanot* so the *parnas* of the month fined her one rijksdaalder.¹⁴⁴ These two paragraphs¹⁴⁵ gave the governors authority to punish those who disturbed the synagogue service or quarrelled in or near the synagogue. The fine was not sufficient to silence Miriam.

Some months later (19 Tammuz) she once again began to quarrel loudly during the afternoon service on *Shabbat*. The *parnas* of the

¹⁴³ See also Chapter 3.

¹⁴⁴ Zecuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 15. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 14.

¹⁴⁵ Zecuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 6.

month imposed a second fine of one rijksdaalder, but this time Miriam answered that even a twenty rijksdaalder fine would not silence her. This excited the assembled crowd, so in the end the *parnas* imposed a *hakhraza* (proclamation of a limited ban) on the widow.¹⁴⁶ This was an unusual step in any of our four communities, suggesting that the quarrel was linked in some way to the governors themselves. Unfortunately the records do not tell why Miriam did what she did, as so often in this kind of source.¹⁴⁷ Despite the lack of information concerning the dispute, the governors were obviously eager to maintain a tight control on the situation by repeatedly punishing the widow.

What happened in the following months is a mystery. Remarkably, Miriam remained banned for over eighteen months. Clearly there were several people who helped her in this period, since the rules even for the *hakhraza* were usually strict. It was almost impossible to live a normal Jewish life. However, the specific terms of the *hakhraza* in Middelburg remain unclear, since no explanation is given in the documents.¹⁴⁸ Middelburg's *takkanot* merely state that an individual who had been given a limited ban had to pay a fine of two stuivers a night.¹⁴⁹ The affair would have been a costly business for the widow if the governors had insisted on the fine. Her family obviously still supported her, which means that not all members of the community adhered to the prohibition on contact with Miriam. In the end, Shimshon, her son-in-law, paid the two rijksdaalders to lift the ban.¹⁵⁰

The *pinkas* does not explain the circumstances of Miriam's punishment, so we do not know whether the governors consulted the local authority, as the *takkanot* stipulate.¹⁵¹ Presumably, since the regulations had been enacted only some years before, they discussed the matter with the burgomasters.

A second case involved a public notice read in synagogue in 1730 or 1731.¹⁵² The governors felt action had to be taken to stop Jews talking during the synagogue services, a familiar problem in every community.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 15. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 15.

¹⁴⁷ See the examples from The Hague, above.

¹⁴⁸ The contemporaneous *takkanot* from Friedberg in Hesse (Germany) state that a banned person was not allowed to buy kosher meat, was forbidden to be invited to festivities or to receive honours in synagogue; see Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), p. 174.

¹⁴⁹ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 6, paragraph 43.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid., p. 15. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 16.

¹⁵¹ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 15, paragraph 44.

¹⁵² The date is not mentioned in the record; *ibid.*, p. 29.

The governors called it a *hillul hashem*, a desecration; again (as in The Hague), they dealt with it as a religious question, which was the extent of their power and enabled them to punish offenders. Punishments for further infringements were to be fixed by regulations issued (or maybe more correctly confirmed) by the local authority. Mention of the burgomasters gave added power to the announcement.

The last record of a fine was against Mordekhai ben Moshe Cohen Polak, who abused the *parnas* in synagogue in 1746. He was fined 39 shillings.¹⁵³ The record merely states the fine and the general background but offers no further details.¹⁵⁴

No other records exist demonstrating the governors' authority in Middelburg. There seems little doubt that this is connected to the general decline of the community's activities during the eighteenth century. Yet the fact that all these cases relate to synagogue services shows that the leadership's chief concern was to watch over religious practice.

Leeuwarden

Compared to Middelburg, the records of Leeuwarden's community reflect a far more active leadership. During the late 1740s and the early '50s, the community was torn by disputes. Here the issue was the new rabbi, who received *smikhah* in Germany not Holland.¹⁵⁵ Again, the local authority became involved in the conflict, nevertheless the Jews managed to maintain a certain autonomy. What emerged was a uniquely vibrant, well-organised community. Leeuwarden's accurate and detailed *sefer zikhronot* attests to the sophistication of the community's organisation. An unnumbered record on one of the first pages of the *pinkas* contains an appeal made in 1754 by a committee of ten Jews who had drawn up a compromise solution for the Leeuwarden community. It called for peace and concord, demonstrating the desire to restore order and organisation to the community.¹⁵⁶

As a result, the governors of Leeuwarden's community, who remained in office for another ten years after 1754,¹⁵⁷ developed a remarkable

¹⁵³ Why the fine was given in shillings rather than the usual Dutch currency is unclear.

¹⁵⁴ Zecuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 57.

¹⁵⁵ See Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 27–29.

¹⁵⁶ See the unnumbered text on a separate sheet, glued to page 2 of the *pinkas*.

¹⁵⁷ See above, section: *Election Procedures*.

penchant for defining the basic rules of correct religious behaviour. Most of these were made between 1754 and 1764. Apparently, at the start of this new era in Leeuwarden's Jewish history, new *takkanot* were drawn up¹⁵⁸ to which comprehensive regulations were later added, none of which have survived. The *sefer zikhronot* does not mention this. Given the distinct formal structure of the Leeuwarden regulations, no indications are found of amendments or changes to the *takkanot*, as for the regulations of the other communities examined here.

However, the governors of Leeuwarden's community were particularly concerned with issues relating to *kashrut*, the synagogue and the ritual customs. Proper adherence to *halakhah* was one of the main concerns of the Jewish leadership. This is reflected in the numerous decisions about *kashrut*, such as the instructions for cheese-makers in 1756 and 1774,¹⁵⁹ and measures to protect ritual slaughterers and kosher meat products from external competition in 1754. Infringement of the ruling was punishable by a ban.¹⁶⁰

An additional ruling, made in 1759, stated that those responsible for the ovens in which Jews heated their cooking pots on Fridays, were to pay special attention to the pots of visiting Jews from outside the community. The *parnassim* apparently feared they might be less stringent regarding *kashrut*.¹⁶¹

Five years later, the governors passed a regulation enjoining community members to buy and eat only kosher meat and poultry, on pain of losing their membership and all its privileges.¹⁶² There must have been a reason for this regulation. It would have been unnecessary if one or more members of the community were not actually lax in their observance of *kashrut*. Presumably, therefore, there were Jews in the early 1760s in Leeuwarden who took *kashrut* with a pinch of salt. In fact no mention is made in the *pinkas* of members being expelled, which suggests that the threat was sufficient. Of course it may also mean that no proceedings were instigated against offenders, and that infringements were ignored. This relaxed attitude was the practice among the Sephardim of Amsterdam.¹⁶³

¹⁵⁸ See Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 30–31.

¹⁵⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 26, 182.

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, record no. 8. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 59.

¹⁶¹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 51.

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, record no. 99.

¹⁶³ See Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [a]), p. 151.

The last ruling on the matter dates from 1794, when the governors stated that the only *hekhsher* (certificate of *kashrut*) acceptable for cheese or wine was that issued by the rabbi of the community.¹⁶⁴ Apart from the obvious need for a strict, credible *kashrut* regime for a community exporting food products to other communities, such as Amsterdam, this demonstrates firstly, that members of the community traded in foods that were not always under the supervision of their own rabbi, but under the *hekhsher* of a different rabbi, or perhaps even without any rabbinic control. Obtaining a *hekhsher* involved the payment of a fee to the rabbi. Trading without a local *hekhsher* detracted both from the rabbi's prestige and his income. Secondly, the lateness of this record shows that *kashrut* remained a concern of the governors throughout the eighteenth century, and demonstrates their constant efforts to maintain a high standard of observance of *kashrut* while the need for additional regulations also shows that many Jews tended not to observe these laws in full. This phenomenon reflects the complex social changes that occurred in Jewish communities in the eighteenth century, as reflected in many instances in the records of the country's urban communities.

Another issue was behaviour in synagogue during services. The Leeuwarden *pinkas* includes five rulings on the matter. The first, made in 1756, attempted to stop worshippers changing places during services.¹⁶⁵ The governors were concerned that the disturbance this produced affected the decorum. A year later the *manhigim* again reminded the community to adhere to the ruling. Despite the lack of further reminders in the *sefer zikhronot*, it is doubtful whether the ruling had any effect.

Another topic of concern was appropriate dress for services. The *manhigim* were especially concerned with women's clothing in the synagogue.¹⁶⁶ In the period prior to 1757 it had become customary to wear clothes made of heavy fabrics. Since this made the wearers hot they would eventually start removing items. That in turn led to chatter and to commotion in synagogue. Moreover, it seems that the decision also targeted a tendency among some to flaunt their wealth by wearing expensive clothes in public.

Soon after the ruling was extended to include men. The governors stipulated that the *ba'al segan* should wear clothes befitting the dignity of

¹⁶⁴ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 319.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, record no. 29.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*, record no. 39. The *takkanot* of Friedberg of 1664 to 1723 also refer to clothing. See Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), p. 161, paragraph 4.

the Torah, in particular this meant not wearing a coat¹⁶⁷ or a colourful scarf. Since this ruling was made during Sukkoth 1757, the *ba'al segan* may have been dressed inappropriately during the High Holidays.¹⁶⁸ The governors took repeated offence at colourful scarves, as a record dating from 1778 shows. This confirmed a former ruling on the subject.¹⁶⁹ It followed a conflict that had been resolved between the leadership and *Hazzan* Joseph Israel, which mainly concerned his lack of sartorial decorum.¹⁷⁰ To emphasise the seriousness the ruling was also signed by Rabbi Katriel Yehuda Leib.¹⁷¹

Two other instances concern behaviour in synagogue. The first involved Shlomo bar Baer, who was fined 55 stuivers by the governors for speaking out against *manhig* Hayyim Levi on *Shabbat Hagadol* in 1762 during the rabbi's sermon. He was also required to apologise to the rabbi. Shlomo had committed two offences: against the *manhig* and the rabbi. Clearly both had a motivate for punishing him, and for having the fact recorded in the *sefer zikhronot*.¹⁷² Shlomo bar Baer was not one of the poorest Jews of Leeuwarden, since he is not mentioned in any of the charity lists. The fine supports this assumption, it would not have been forced on a person who could not pay the sum.

In 1783, after a break of twenty years, the *parnassim* punished another offender for misbehaving in synagogue.¹⁷³ Meneke ben Levi Segal, a bachelor, had quarrelled on Shabbat Tazria, in synagogue and was subsequently summoned by the governors to a hearing. He immediately apologised and promised not to do the same again and eventually paid a fine. Whatever the reason for his quarrel, it seems that he calmed down and was willing to accept his punishment by the *manhigim*. While the governors used this situation to show their power, they also demonstrated their leniency towards the offender, as the record reveals.

An important step towards a sustained institutionalisation of the community was the construction of a public ritual bath or *mikveh* at

¹⁶⁷ In the record the Dutch word *jas* is used for coat.

¹⁶⁸ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 41.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, record no. 209.

¹⁷⁰ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 54–55. See the compromise between the parties in the *sefer zikhronot*, Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 204. The conflict was ended by the local authority in 1777.

¹⁷¹ The Leeuwarden *pinkas* is unique in this regard, since the local rabbis were authorised to sign records in the *pinkas*, unlike in most other communities; see also Chapter 3.

¹⁷² Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 84.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, record no. 240.

the home of Leib Polak in 1756. This was accompanied by the decision to close all private ritual baths and to prohibit their further use, apparently since some did not meet halakhic requirements.¹⁷⁴ It seems that the new community *mikveh* was in fact Leib Polak's private ritual bath, although it was perhaps more spacious and certainly met the requirements. A list of fees payable by women accompanies the record. The prohibition against the use of other baths ensured that these fees went to the community. The governors emphasised the importance of the decision by quoting the *takkanot*, in particular paragraph 29 that prohibited undermining the unity of the community, which separate *mikvaot* might have encouraged.¹⁷⁵ By including the reference to the *takkanot*, the governors presumably recognised that some members might not adhere to the ruling.

Naturally, a ruling like this must have had opponents, since families with their own *mikveh* would not wish to give this up in favour of a community bath, for the use of the entire community and the surroundings of Leeuwarden. Indeed, a certain Tzadok bar Tzvi, alias Tzadok Hartog, refused to give up his private *mikveh* and eventually left the community rather than accept the use of the community bath.¹⁷⁶ This was a drastic step, which—according to the little we know about the matter—was rarely taken at this time and suggests that there may have been other reasons. It is interesting that Tzadok was able to do this and not jeopardise his civil status as a citizen of Leeuwarden. The governors informed the local authority, but after reading Tzadok's justification the burgomasters decided not to intervene. So the *manhigim* declared Tzadok's house off limits to Jews in or out of the community, since the household's kitchen and tableware would now be deemed *treif*. Although it is not mentioned explicitly, he was presumably also excluded from participating in synagogue services. No one was allowed to buy *kosher* meat for Tzadok's family, or cook their Shabbat food in the community oven. It is hardly accidental that these restrictions are reminiscent of the penalties connected with excommunication. These measures were intended to reinforce the authority of the governors.

This case is a remarkable example of a person leaving the Jewish

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., record no. 26.

¹⁷⁵ See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 36–37.

¹⁷⁶ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 45. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 22.

community without incurring the difficulties generally associated with the status of renegade. It should be remembered that in most European societies of this period everyone had to belong to some identifiable group. To leave it would normally mean losing all former social ties. Tzadok's status was not the same as that of the Jewish inhabitants who were not taxpaying members of the community but nevertheless took part in community activities. The social and political circumstances of the Dutch Republic, which opened the doors to an individual way of life even for Jews, were doubtless unique for the European world of the eighteenth century.

Tzadok's story continues, and reveals that he had no conflict with the local authority after leaving the community and continued to have contact with individuals in the community. In the autumn of 1759, Leeuwarden's governors renewed the ruling concerning Tzadok bar Tzvi's family and home after he renounced his membership officially.¹⁷⁷ This shows that the atmosphere within the community was far less uniform than the regulations prescribed. In addition to individuals leaving the community, other members continued to associate with the family, which would have included visits to their home which had twice been declared off-bounds. Clearly therefore the authority of the *manhigim* and *parnassim* was not unquestioned among the members of the Leeuwarden community. No further information is available in the *sefer zikhronot*, which does not mean—as the examples show—that all Leeuwarden's Jews stopped visiting Tzadok and his family after the second announcement. Presumably this modern social individualism was increasingly acceptable in the Jewish world and governors had no other choice but to swallow it.

Only one case is recorded of governors intervening to prevent public misbehaviour. This occurred in the spring of 1757, when two women quarrelled in public on the last day of Pesach.¹⁷⁸ Mindele, wife of Tzadok bar Tzvi, insulted Miriam, the wife of Leib Levi. Here again, the background of the quarrel is not mentioned, but the fact that the wife of the renegade was involved, and shortly after the *mikveh* affair, suggests that it in some way concerned their private *mikveh*. According to the brief record, Mindele was fined one ducat. The second part of

¹⁷⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 52. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 23.

¹⁷⁸ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 38.

the text states that a fine of five guilders¹⁷⁹ was paid in the presence of the burgomaster. His presence shows that the quarrel must have happened in public. It also shows that the case was no longer a purely Jewish affair, since Mindele did not belong to the community any more, thereby involving the local authority. The *manhigim* must have been involved in direct discussions with the burgomaster regarding the payment of the fine. The whole affair is described in brief terms, which suggests that the governors wished to play down its importance due to the nature of the case.

In summary, the efforts of the *manhigim* and *parnassim* to maintain their power found expression in a unique way in Leeuwarden. None of the other three communities examined here recorded so many specific rulings relating to *kashrut*. Other issues, such as synagogue services, were also dealt with, but with reference to decorum and proper dress. Compared to the small number of cases involving public discipline of community members (only one incident), it is clear that the community's governors confined their interest increasingly to religious matters. The picture may be a distorted one, due to the lack of information about statutes and amendments, which have not survived and so form no part in this discussion. Moreover, the more frequent occurrence of interventions by the governors in the first years after the reorganisation of the community reveals that the *manhigim* were trying to create a stable structure for the community. They seem to have succeeded, if the decline in interventions in subsequent years reflects the actual situation. Alternatively, the governors may have realised that intervening in other public matters would have no effect, since the Jews had become citizens with a unique concept of personal freedom.

Beem's exploration of the history of Leeuwarden's Jewish community reveals that in addition to deviance and opposition within the community, the leadership also had to deal with the local authority. Beem provides a number of examples that are not recorded in the *sefer zikhronot*, but are preserved in the municipal archives.¹⁸⁰ This presumably reflects the reality of many Dutch communities. Due to the nature of the *pinkas*, these events are not recorded in these community manuscripts.

¹⁷⁹ It seems that the fine was actually raised, since one ducat was normally three guilders, but Mindele had to pay five guilders.

¹⁸⁰ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 20–25.

Oisterwijk

In the rural community of Oisterwijk, the distinctive character of the small community might be expected to have produced a different pattern in the various categories. It should be remembered that the leadership in Oisterwijk was less transparent than in the other communities, which would presumably increase their power. Furthermore it seems that the governors were less dependent on the local authority (the governing authority being the States General in The Hague) than in other communities in well-organised Dutch provinces.

For Oisterwijk, only two of the categories are represented: changes and amendments to the regulations and individual disciplinary measures. The comparatively numerous changes and additional paragraphs in the community's regulations indicate that the *takkanot* were not regarded as a fixed code of regulations.

The two main *pinkassim* present six new changed or additional *takkanot* over a period of thirty-two years between 1765 and 1797 (not including the *takkanot* for the regional organisation of the *meierij* of Den Bosch of 1764). The profusion of changes and additions to the regulations suggests ongoing discussions within the community, as well patterns of behaviour disapproved of by the governors. This unrest also indicates that the community was in a formative period. Several additional regulations were clearly enacted to better define or to strengthen the governors' power.

The first *takkanot*, mentioned in the sources in 1764, are not preserved.¹⁸¹ Some were presumably included in the *minhagim* that were written up by Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe in 1770.¹⁸² In 1773, the governors added two specific paragraphs concerning payments by the community members.¹⁸³ These regulated technical details of the community finances and are therefore of no interest here.

The amendment of 1775¹⁸⁴ includes five paragraphs. Two refer again to financial questions and empowered the *gabbaim* to exclude individuals from honours in synagogue services if they were in arrears. The main point of these additions was the enlargement of the leadership to include five men who were to be consulted on all matters.

¹⁸¹ Only a list of signatures of the Jews in Oisterwijk who approved the regulations appears; Ros 282 a, p. 10.

¹⁸² Ros 283, fols. 18–22.

¹⁸³ Ros 282 a, p. 26.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 43–44.

The committee was to revise the *takkanot* together with the *gabbaim* over the following three months.¹⁸⁵ As we have seen, they apparently failed to fulfil their task, since no revised *takkanot* or mention of these is recorded. Nevertheless, these paragraphs clearly show at least a marginal decline in the governors' power in Oisterwijk, not least because the decision was made at a meeting of all the community's members.¹⁸⁶ Apparently, they needed to add a further group of authorised persons to the existing committee, which effectively reduced the governors' power. Disputes must have existed within the community about the *gabbaim* and their power, but the official sources, recorded by the governors, naturally avoid mentioning this. Evidently, the new leadership did not last long and was not especially effective.¹⁸⁷

Perhaps it was a lack of interest among the *gabbaim* in fulfilling the wishes of the community that caused the delay in drawing up the new statutes. Finally, in 1782, seven years after the deadline, the two *gabbaim* and three additional men presented the new comprehensive *takkanot*.¹⁸⁸ These regulations are recorded in the start of the second *pinkas*, which was kept more chronologically than the first. The new leadership attempted to reform the community administration. It is surely no coincidence that these statutes dealt first with the issue of the *gabbaim* and their authority, clarifying this matter for the community's members. Presumably the nine paragraphs referring to the *gabbaim* (out of a total of 27 presented in the first section) resulted from previous disputes.

Apart from the paragraphs explaining the procedure of the elections, others refer to the status of the governors. Paragraph six demands that the *gabbaim* and additional members should be respected men, suitable for the position. The tenth paragraph concerned assaults by members of the community on the *gabbaim* and set a fine of five guilders on anyone who quarrelled with them. Apparently, the need to enact this measure stemmed from attacks against governors in the past.

However, the new statutes also restricted the governors' power: paragraph seven demands the consultation of three of the additional

¹⁸⁵ See above, section: *Parnassim and their Functions*.

¹⁸⁶ The five paragraphs were signed by fourteen persons, which probably represents the whole community at that time.

¹⁸⁷ See above, Chapter 1.

¹⁸⁸ Ros 282 b, pp. 1–15. Although these regulations are the most comprehensive to have survived, compared with other examples from different communities they are rather short.

members in all cases in which the governors were unable to come to a decision. While the position of additional member obviously still existed, their number and their rights were reduced compared to the regulations of 1775. Nothing is said about their authority to meet and discuss community matters without the *gabbaim*, as had been stipulated seven years previously, and their number was limited to three instead of five. All this indicates that the *takkanot* of 1782 represent a compromise by the community following severe disputes.

As the table of governors for this period shows, in the late 1770s and early '80s the records of elections are remarkably irregular in the *pinkassim*.¹⁸⁹ Yet it is impossible to determine whether this reflects the realities of the period, or a neglect of the records. A review of the names of governors chosen after the enactment of the new *takkanot* in 1775 reveals some new individuals. This suggests a shift away from the old community elite. Moreover, starting a new *pinkas* and simultaneously enacting new statutes while the old volume remained unfinished, demonstrates that the Jews of Oisterwijk were living in an atmosphere of change, if only for the simple reason that the old volume was temporarily unavailable.

In 1786, four years after enacting the comprehensive *takkanot*, the governors formulated five additional paragraphs, mainly referring to the rabbi, his duties and rights and his authority.¹⁹⁰ It is interesting that these points were omitted in the *takkanot* of 1782, requiring a later addition. The first paragraph reveals the desire of the governors to retain their powers and their control of the community finances, even in matters that would normally be the rabbi's province. No marriage could be held outside Oisterwijk without knowledge of the *gabbaim* and no *get*¹⁹¹ could be issued without their permission. The other paragraphs define several aspects of the office and work of the rabbi. He was no longer authorised to issue receipts for kosher meat or investigate the slaughterer without the knowledge of the *gabbaim*; he could only use the *ne'eman* or persons authorised by the governors, for writing *ketubbot* (marriage contracts) or *gittin* (divorce certificates). The rabbi had to ensure a respected substitute was available for weddings in his absence.

¹⁸⁹ See the Oisterwijk table in Appendix 1.

¹⁹⁰ Ros 282 b, p. 27. These regulations were not signed by the governors, nor were they mentioned in the whole text.

¹⁹¹ I.e., a certificate of divorce.

Whenever he was invited to officiate at weddings outside Oisterwijk he was required to charge a fee for the rabbi's fund.

Some of these regulations suggest that the rabbi of Oisterwijk was merely a public officer of the community subordinate to the *gabbaim*, who defined his duties and rights.¹⁹² This would seem to contradict Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe's reputation as one of the key figures in creating the community and its institutions.¹⁹³

The issue of varying taxes and contributions was always a problem in Ashkenazi communities since most Ashkenazi Jews were poor and unable to contribute sufficient funds to support their community adequately. Invariably there were also individuals who tried to keep their real assets a secret, to avoid paying the full tax and contribution. Small wonder that the additional *takkanot* focused on this issue. In 1789 some members of the community had again failed to pay their taxes.¹⁹⁴ So the governors formulated four additional paragraphs, three on financial matters, threatening defaulters with punishments and fines. The last paragraph placed the onus on the *gabbaim* themselves, stating that they would have to make up the shortfall from their own income if they failed to collect taxes from the other members on time. The third *takkanah* states that anyone who denigrated the *gabbaim* in public would be punished as the governors saw fit. This provided the governors with *carte blanche* to defend themselves against public criticism. There is no information in the *pinkassim* to suggest whether any direct cause for this particular paragraph existed; no specific quarrels are recorded in the *pinkas* around this time.

Divisions among the governors themselves were not unusual. Some questions, however, required a unanimous decision. According to the last recorded additional *takkanot*, dated 1797, one issue that demanded unanimity was the admission of new members.¹⁹⁵ Despite the decline into which the community had descended in the late eighteenth century, the governors (and members) still considered it important to maintain control over the membership of their small community. To avoid disputes about potential new members who might not fit the desired social

¹⁹² See Chapter 3.

¹⁹³ This impression is gained from the description in the *memorbukh* (Ros 283), in which Rabbi Yekutiel recorded the history of the funding and building of the synagogue. Since he wrote the text, it may be that he was emphasising his own importance in the community.

¹⁹⁴ Ros 282 b, p. 37. These paragraphs also remained unsigned.

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 49.

structure of the Oisterwijk community, decisions regarding applicants were required to be unanimous, which naturally strengthened the authority of the *gabbaim*.¹⁹⁶

Oisterwijk's *takkanot* and the numerous amendments are unique compared to those of the other community's examined here. The frequency of disciplinary measures also differs from the other three communities. Oisterwijk recorded three cases in which the *gabbaim* took action against individuals. In 1770, a certain Benjamin Wolf bar David was expelled by *kol ha-kahal* (i.e., all the community's officials)¹⁹⁷ and the rabbi.¹⁹⁸ The record is brief and simply states the fact, without (as usual) giving any of the background.

The subsequent record, written more than six months later, deals with the same issue.¹⁹⁹ It states that Benjamin Wolf bar David, referred to as being 'from Rotterdam', compromised with the governors in the matter of his offence against the *gabbai* Mordekhai bar Simha and his friend Meir Segal, and the entire leadership. Benjamin accepted the fine and was willing to do penance in Oisterwijk synagogue. The record states that Benjamin Wolf's offence was a dispute with the governors, but it gives no further details. The affair appears to have ended in complete triumph for the *gabbaim*, which is why it is reported in the *pinkas*.

The municipal records reveal more details about the affair. Benjamin David, who seems not to have belonged to any of the leading families, was invited to be *ba'al segan* one Shabbat. When he called up a servant to the Torah reading, referred to in the sources as Isaac Heiman Levi, the congregation erupted in turmoil. Benjamin was physically removed from the synagogue and beaten by the congregants when he tried to return.²⁰⁰ From the way the conflict ended it is clear that Benjamin stood no chance against the governors.

What remains unclear is why both records were written in the community *memorbukh* and not in the first *pinkas*, which was still the only

¹⁹⁶ See Fuks-Mansfeld, R. G., 'Enlightenment and Emancipation, from c. 1750 to 1814' in J. C. H. Blom, I. Schöffer and R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld (eds), *The History of the Jews in the Netherlands* (Oxford 2002), p. 177.

¹⁹⁷ While the community is the *kehilla*, the *kahal* refers to the governors.

¹⁹⁸ Ros 283, p. 55.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, Both of the records about the expulsion of Benjamin Wolf bar David are signed by Sussman ben Shmuel Abraham, the cantor and *ne'eman* of the community in Oisterwijk.

²⁰⁰ See Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 6, for a description based on archive sources from Oisterwijk. He suggests Isaac Heiman Levi was resented because of his low social status.

volume in use. We can only guess. Perhaps the governors wanted to have this severe case and the proof of their power imprinted in the community's memory²⁰¹ or maybe they simply chose the book nearest to hand.

The second disciplinary measure dates from 1797, when Sanwil bar Feibel Kleve was accepted as a new member on stringent terms.²⁰² He was not permitted to serve as *ba'al segan* for two years, or even to be called up to the Torah. He was also forbidden to stand for election and was warned not to do whatever terrible thing it was he had done again. He may have been the reason for the recording of the regulations concerning admission of new members only a few days before. Perhaps when Kleve applied to become a member the governors faced a problem: whether or not to admit a person with a blemish in his past. While every community preferred to attract respectable members, the need for revenue from taxes and contributions also weighed heavily. Moreover, this was a man who was well known to the community and had probably been living there for some time before he applied to become a full member.

The appearance of the text in the *pinkas* is interesting: the record was deleted with ink, which means that the governors wanted to hide the text from future readers. It hardly seems to have been intended as a historical record for the *memorbukh*. On the other hand, the record may have been deleted because Kleve had served his time (at the end of the two years), or perhaps out of discretion, even to offenders. Alternatively, the decision to admit him may have been reversed, thereby making the record invalid.²⁰³

Given the brief span of the Oisterwijk manuscripts, the number of disciplinary measures is rather high, especially considering the small size of the rural community. The Hague community, which was much larger and kept records for twice as long, had eight cases of individual disciplinary measures. Surely this reflects the situation in a small village community with a high level of social control, compared to a large city with a greater degree of individualism.

²⁰¹ On the strange composition of the manuscript Ros 283 see above, Introduction.

²⁰² Ros 282 b, p. 45.

²⁰³ Other *pinkassim* also contain similar blackened or deleted records, now mostly unreadable. Some contain private details, so that the deletion was a question of modesty; see e.g., the deleted record in the Leeuwarden *pinkas*, Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 110 and its description below, Chapter 2.

All the Oisterwijk cases show that unlike other communities, the governors of this rural community had to establish their authority more strictly. The addition of extra members in 1775 demonstrates that there must have been opposition within the community, forcing the *gabbaim* to coopt other governors for a period. However, the decrease in the number of the additional members from five to three seven years later, shows that the opposition lost its position.

The governors' attempts to demonstrate their authority occur chiefly in the new regulations. Many were linked to the vital issue of contributions. Since revenue was essential to keep the community alive, Oisterwijk's *gabbaim* were eager to ensure the regular payments of members' taxes. After all, a bankrupt community would have no need for governors. Hence, the connection between financial matters and reminders about the importance and dignity of the *gabbaim* were no mere accident.

Remarkably, apart from in the comprehensive *takkanot* of 1782, the *gabbaim* never attempted to influence the synagogue services, as in other communities. Here the issue was firmly under the rabbi's control, even though he was subordinate to the *gabbaim*.

In summary, *pinkassim* are perhaps not the ideal source for exploring the real power and influence of the governors in the respective communities. A *pinkas* was the creation of the governors, so that the records are necessarily biased in their favour. Nevertheless, by investigating these manuscripts using appropriate methods several aspects of the authority of governors become evident.

There is no general pattern to the attempts by governors to preserve their power. The sources provide differing pictures. There are a number of reasons for this. Firstly, the records are widely different in character and reveal local idiosyncrasies in style and content. It is almost impossible to start from the same initial position in assessing the four communities. Secondly, different communities had different policies for keeping *pinkassim*, resulting in varying detail in records of events. However, since all *parnassim*, *manhigim* or *gabbaim* were equally concerned to demonstrate their real or desired power, *pinkassim* may be assumed to show cases that reflected the success of their leadership. Other cases appear to languish unfinished, possibly reflecting the failure of governors' efforts. In general, the *pinkassim* show that the *parnassim* in the well-organised urban communities of The Hague and Leeuwarden, were able to maintain much of their power over their communities.

However, one basic premise applies to all the communities: the absence of the kind of strict regime imposed on Jews in places like Germany, allowed Dutch Jews comparative freedom to determine their own lives. It was not possible to threaten individuals who refused to adhere to the community's rules with a retraction of their right to live in the town. Neither were they forced as an alternative to join a Christian denomination.²⁰⁴

Yet even in these urban centres it seems clear that social changes were affecting the Jewish world in the eighteenth century, as A. Shochat describes with respect to Germany. Acculturation gained ground, especially in urban centres like The Hague and Leeuwarden. Here individual Jews often tried to find their own lifestyle, no longer abiding by strict Jewish guidelines, customs and traditions.²⁰⁵ Thanks to the liberal attitude of local authorities, Jews were increasingly able to live in towns without any community affiliation. As a result the authority of governors lost much of the force it enjoyed in other European regions like Germany, where more repressive circumstances ensured that Jewish community institutions retained greater powers.

It is doubtful whether the governors of Dutch Jewish communities were aware of this transformation. The evidence suggests this was not always the case, and that they tried to control their communities in old-fashioned ways that did not always suit the Dutch situation. Several cases highlighted here reveal, however, that they faced significant opposition. The *parnassim* in urban communities therefore attempted to use religious law to combat offences more effectively: they had few other tools at their disposal. Examples from The Hague demonstrate this especially, when the governors intervened in the case of the two men who had struck a woman and of the young women who were punished for their promiscuous behaviour. Michel ben Benjamin Haas, who ignored the *eruw*, reflects the same trend. These incidents were similar to occurrences in Amsterdam's Sephardi community a hundred years earlier, which shows that despite the differences between these communities and the two periods, the problems and issues were alike. Of course, sexual promiscuity and rebellious members had always been a problem for communities. Yet in the liberal atmosphere of the Dutch Republic

²⁰⁴ Michman, *op. cit.* (1995), p. 159.

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 161–162. Here he describes a similar phenomenon in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and elsewhere.

these occurrences required the special attention of the governors. It seems that the *manhigim* of Leeuwarden understood the situation better, since they limited their focus almost exclusively to religion and worship. Ultimately, to preserve the Jewish community as an institution within the unique Dutch framework, governors were forced to use all the means at their disposal, including demonstrations of power.

CHAPTER TWO

KEEPING A *PINKAS*

There are various reasons why the information contained in the *pinkassim* of the four communities examined here differs significantly both in quantity and intensity. It seems that the concept of a central document for the community's administration developed at varying speeds, with some *pinkassim* providing more information than others. Furthermore, a survey of the manuscripts reveals that a relation exists between the general appearance of a *pinkas*, its accuracy and neatness, and the complexity of its contents on the one hand, and the apparent seriousness of the administration and the general condition of the community on the other. Thus a general understanding of administration appears to have existed, of which the keeping of a *pinkas* formed a part. This is evident from the records of the communities with an effective administration in the period discussed here.

The communities of The Hague and Leeuwarden seem to have functioned efficiently, as their accurate and chronological *pinkassim* testify. Unlike Middelburg's community, which performed poorly in the eighteenth century. This is reflected in the *pinkas*, which began as a well-kept volume similar to that of The Hague, but ended up as a mere cashbook. Oisterwijk, however, tended to keep their records like a small, rural community (which it was). There were two, sometimes even three different *pinkassim* in use at the same time and only one is chronological, so that the administrative concepts which pertained in Oisterwijk are more reminiscent of earlier centuries.¹

In addition, different customs apparently existed in the four communities regarding which decisions, discussions and events to record. The contents of the *pinkassim* differ remarkably and leave the distinct impression that, for whatever reason, the most interesting information for today's reader was usually kept out of the official records.²

¹ The *pinkassim* of Friedberg and Frankfurt in Germany, dating from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, show a similarly confused chronological order.

² See e.g., the tumult in Oisterwijk synagogue in 1776, described by Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 6. The details are omitted in the *pinkassim*, except the punishment of the responsible individual; see above, Chapter 1.

An exploration of various aspects of these eighteenth-century Dutch *pinkassim* reveals certain common features which may be identified as the basic contents of all of these manuscripts. Alongside these are various unusual items, which may have been recorded for specific reasons, as well as items that were deliberately or incidentally excluded from the *pinkassim*, which may have been recorded elsewhere. Finally the records also show who the secretaries were who wrote up the *pinkassim* and the influence the status of the secretary had on the content and character of the records.

Standard Contents of the Pinkassim

A survey of the *pinkassim* of the four communities reveals fourteen basic topics found in all the manuscripts, or in at least three from different communities.

1. Appointments of governors and rabbis
2. Community regulations (*takkanot*)
3. Admission of new members
4. Annual accounts (*heshbonot tzedek*)
5. Employment of community officials (cantors, slaughterers, beadles, teachers)
6. Supply and sale of kosher food
7. Synagogue seating
8. Ritual objects
9. Ritual baths
10. Cemeteries and burial plots
11. Real estate owned by the community
12. Disciplinary measures against members in religious and public matters
13. Community organisations (*hevra kadisha, bikkur holim, talmud torah* etc)
14. Charity (*pletten*, free distribution of Pesach flour and peat etc)

These represent the basic elements of the everyday running of a Jewish community. It is not surprising, therefore, to find them in all or most of the *pinkassim*. Nine are represented in all manuscripts: elections, regulations, admission of new members, annual accounts, employment of community officials, disciplinary measures, ritual baths, religious objects

and charity. A comparison with the contents of *pinkassim* from Poland and Germany reveals a striking similarity.³ This implies that certain conventions existed among Ashkenazi communities in early modern Europe about keeping a *pinkas*.

The remaining topics do not appear in all the manuscripts. For example, synagogue seating was a major concern during the first 26 years of the Hague *pinkas* (1723–1738). During this period members who held seats in synagogue were recorded in large tables, distinguishing between the men's and women's sections.⁴ Before the start of the regular *pinkas*, seat holders were recorded in a separate book⁵ and after 1738 the *parnassim* apparently revived the separate record. Seating is discussed in the *pinkassim* of Middelburg and Leeuwarden, but here the secretaries did not keep complete lists of seat holders in the *pinkassim*. The Middelburg *pinkas* contains only one record concerning seating involving the inheritance of a seat.⁶ That a seat could change hands like this shows that in Middelburg seats were not hired, but sold (as in many communities in Europe) and thus belonged to individuals for long as they wished. As a result there was no need for detailed annual records about the matter in the *pinkas*. In Leeuwarden the hire of seats was the subject of various decisions.⁷ Like the Middelburg community, Leeuwarden kept no lists of names of seat holders in its *pinkas*, although both may have had separate records for this purpose.

While the priority given to a topic might depend on its importance within the community, in the case of synagogue seating, seat holders were presumably often recorded in a separate book known as a *pinkas beit ha-knesset*, as was the case in The Hague before 1723 and possibly also after 1740. Finally, in Oisterwijk, no records at all are found regarding seating in any of the *pinkassim*. The *minhagim* mention a tax on seats in the synagogue, which suggests that there may have been a record of seat holders and the fees charged.⁸ Since all other items in Oisterwijk's Jewish community archives are now apparently lost, no further examination can be made of this matter.

³ See Nadav, *op. cit.*, p. 12; Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), pp. 2–3.

⁴ See, e.g., GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 19, 20; fol. 58–59; and finally fol. 98 v–99 v.

⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625.

⁶ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 80.

⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 2, 8, 189.

⁸ Ros. 283, fol. 19 v, paragraph 5.

Another example involves community *hevras*.⁹ The Hague, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk communities all had *hevras* which were recorded in the *pinkassim*. Middelburg's *pinkas* mentions no *hevra*, although the community must at least have had a burial society.

The Hague *pinkas* mentions two *hevras* several times. One is the *hevra kadisha bikkur holim*, a society for the care of the sick.¹⁰ Eight records of the *pinkas* deal with this organisation. The first reports the appointment of a *gabbai* for the new *hevra* in the spring of 1724.¹¹ Clearly, the *hevra* had not existed until then, at least not in this form. Governors seem to have been involved directly in the *hevra*'s matters, whenever these affected the interests of the community as a whole, or whenever the *hevra* had problems. In such cases the *parnassim* recorded their decisions regarding the *hevra* in the *pinkas*.

The second *hevra* was *gemilut hassadim u-takhrikkim*, which seems to have been the women's counterpart of the first *hevra*. The *pinkas* mentions financial aspects relating to the *hevra* and includes the record mentioning the election of two women governors of the *hevra* in 1749.¹² It is remarkable that this was the only case of an election for the *hevra* recorded in the *pinkas*.¹³ Perhaps the *hevra* went on to keep its own records. If so, none have survived.

Leeuwarden had a *hevrat bikkur holim* too. The community's *sefer zikhronot* includes three successive records concerning the *hevra*: an announcement of the *hevra*'s foundation and its statutes of 1758, the first record of the elections of its governors and the employment of a person in charge of finance for the *hevra*.¹⁴ After this, no mention of the *hevra* occurs in the manuscript. Apparently, once established, the busy *hevra* may have kept its own *pinkas*. The three records merely illustrate the early history of *bikkur holim* in Leeuwarden. The *sefer zikhronot* was presumably considered the appropriate forum in which to record the founding of the *hevra* and its initial performance.

The second Oisterwijk *pinkas* also mentions the local *hevra kadisha*. These records start in 1790¹⁵ and focus almost exclusively on the

⁹ See below, Chapter 6.

¹⁰ See Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), pp. 219–223. Apparently, Van Creveld did not use the *pinkas* or the records of the *hevra kadisha*.

¹¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 23.

¹² *Ibid.*, fol. 135.

¹³ Van Creveld did not know about the existence of the women's *hevra* in the eighteenth century; see *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), pp. 223–224.

¹⁴ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 46, 47 and 48.

¹⁵ See the first record for that issue in Ros 282b, p. 39.

finances of the organisation. The *hevra* submitted a financial report each year to the *gabbai* and from 1797, the manuscript actually records the annual accounts. In 1792, a record reports that a certain Leib joined the *hevra*, and was immediately appointed *gabbai*.¹⁶ This shows that the *hevra* had no records of its own at the time and that probably the few activities of the *hevra kadisha* that required recording were written up in the *pinkas*. Since, as we have seen, Oisterwijk community apparently suffered a serious crisis towards the end of the eighteenth century and the number of members decreased, it is only natural that the active members of the shrinking community and its burial society would have overlapped, and so their records would naturally have merged. A clear indication for this is found in the joint annual accounts of the community and the *hevra kadisha*, recorded in 1803.¹⁷

It is apparent that the frequency of records concerning these societies depends on the nature of their activities and on their status at the time, as well as the size of the community. The more active and successful a *hevra*, the more likely it was to have kept its own records and fulfill its duties independently of the community leadership, which led to fewer records in the *pinkas*.

Local Idiosyncrasies

The first category of idiosyncrasies encompasses issues that might be expected in a *pinkas*, but for some reason do not appear in the *pinkassim* examined here. The second comprises topics which appear due to the particular circumstances of the community concerned.

The Hague

The Hague *pinkas* contains records relating to five topics which might be expected in a *pinkas* of an efficiently run Jewish community of the time and which are not found in the *pinkassim* of the other three communities. These items are loans raised by the community, estates of deceased members, collections for needy Jewish communities elsewhere, the Eretz Yisrael fund and donations to the community.

¹⁶ Ibid., p. 41.

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 60.

Raising loans was naturally one of the community's financial activities. Eight records relate to this subject in the Hague *pinkas*. A community of the size and importance of The Hague could certainly not function without undertaking major financial transactions, maintaining the community and expanding its activities.

In addition, the governors found another way to ensure the financial basis of the community in the mid-eighteenth century. This was a time of severe economic crisis in the Dutch Republic, which apparently affected much of The Hague's community. On several occasions, the *parnassim* took over all or a large proportion of a person's capital. Contracts were made with the individuals concerned for annuities to be paid. In the early records of this kind only Jews transferred the money to the community's cashier's office, but soon even non-Jews began to use this service. Ten records testify to this in the *pinkas*.¹⁸ Both sides of these agreements probably had powerful reasons for having their contract witnessed, so it is hardly surprising that the governors recorded the matter in the *pinkas*.¹⁹

From time to time every community had to deal with estates of members who had died intestate. During the period covered by the *pinkas*, two records relate to Jews who had left no heirs (1740 and 1775), leaving the governors to sort out their affairs.²⁰ In other communities, mainly in Germany, rabbis were responsible for dealing with such estates. Perhaps the governors in The Hague dealt with these cases because the community had no rabbi at the time, or as with other items, perhaps these are double records mirrored in the rabbi's own archive.²¹ Recording the conclusion of these estates has always been an important legal matter. A person might later claim to be a relative and demand their share. It would therefore be vital for the executors, here the *parnassim*, to cover themselves against possible accusations of malpractice and insert a record in the *pinkas*.

A completely different set of items in the Hague *pinkas* involves assistance to other communities. Europe's Jewish communities have often faced sudden emergencies, whether due to political exigencies,

¹⁸ There may have been earlier or additional cases of this kind which were not recorded in the *pinkas*.

¹⁹ See Chapter 5.

²⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fols. 106, 230.

²¹ Dutch rabbis may not have been required to deal with wills and estates. German rabbis were often obliged to do so by the local authority.

such as expulsions, or natural disasters, fires, epidemics and so forth. In extreme situations like these, Jewish communities would appeal to other Jews, near and far. Communities might also appeal for funds to erect a new synagogue, if they were unable to raise the money themselves. Interestingly, only the Hague *pinkas* records several collections for other communities, although the other communities examined here certainly collected money too. The *pinkas* contains five collections for other communities: Prague (1743 and 1772), Groningen (1756), Leszno (1768) and Brod (1771). This does not imply that Jews in The Hague only collected money in these cases. Oisterwijk's *memorbukh* includes a record listing donors who contributed to the building of the new synagogue there which includes The Hague,²² although the Hague *pinkas* mentions nothing about this. Perhaps only large collections of significant sums were recorded, while smaller donations, like that for Oisterwijk, might be omitted. These collections offer an interesting insight into communications between Jewish communities in Europe.²³

A related item is that of charity for the Jews in the Holy Land. These collections were made in many communities. Banker Tobias Boas²⁴ played an important role in collecting and forwarding contributions from Dutch communities to emissaries from the Holy Land. Naturally, records of the Eretz Yisrael fund are therefore found in the *pinkas*.²⁵

The last of this group of five items to appear in the Hague *pinkas* concerns donations for a *yahrzeit* commemoration (on the anniversary of a person's death) in synagogue. The manuscript reports three such donations. In 1722, Moshe bar Yehiel of Delfgauw, a small nearby village, donated 50 guilders for a *ner tammid* (eternal light) to be lit each year and for a *shi'ur* learning session to be held after his death.²⁶ Nine years later, a similar donation was made by a widow, again from Delfgauw. She gave 50 guilders for the same purpose and asked for the beadle to recite *kaddish* at her graveside.²⁷ In 1773, a record reports a donation by Moshe ben Jacob Deppinge again for the same purpose,

²² Ros 283, fol. 1 v.

²³ See Chapter 7.

²⁴ A leading member of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague, see above, section: *Families and Individuals in Community Leadership*.

²⁵ See above, chapter 2, section: *Local Idiosyncrasies*.

²⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 180.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 216 v.

this time of 200 guilders, while an additional 200 guilders was promised and reserved in his will for when his widow died.²⁸

Donations such as these were mostly connected to a record of the donor's name in the *memorbukh*. From the *takkanot* of The Hague we know of the existence of a community *memorbukh*, which was apparently lost. Paragraph 55 of the statutes states that a record in the *memorbukh* was guaranteed upon payment of one shilling,²⁹ which is considerably less than the amounts mentioned in the three donations. So it seems that only exceptional donations were recorded in the *pinkas*. The *pinkassim* of the other three communities do not mention such donations, although Leeuwarden did keep a *memorbukh*.

In addition to these items, various other records illustrate the particular circumstances of the Hague community which are not always found in other *pinkassim*. The first such record dates from 25 Tishri 5484 (24 October 1723), concerning discussions by the governors regarding the nature and value of the annual gift to the magistrate (*shofet*) in The Hague.³⁰ Apparently complaints had been made about the cost of the previous gift and so the governors had decided to spend less that year. Even so, the cost was remarkably high at 500 guilders. The governors bought a silver vessel. They also decided to present a gift to the deputy judge, another silver vessel, valued at 42 guilders. No information is available about why the governors considered the gifts useful. Obviously the *parnassim* expected some reciprocal benefit either then or in the future. This may have been why the gift was recorded in the *pinkas*. After all, a sum like this was a major item in the annual accounts and, as the record shows, the subject of complaints. It was a vital issue for the community and was recorded for that reason. The record itself only mentions the standard phrase לטובת הקהילתינו, i.e., for the benefit of the community. No similar gifts are mentioned in the *pinkas* and it is unclear whether or not gifts continued to be presented in subsequent years. Since the record mentions the small *pinkas*,³¹ which was in use in 1722, gifts may have been recorded there regularly and only mentioned in 1723 in the main *pinkas*, following the dispute.

²⁸ Ibid., fol. 224 v. Nothing is said about the donor's origin.

²⁹ See the *takkanot* in GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, extra pages bound into the volume.

³⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 18.

³¹ On the small *pinkas* of The Hague, see above, Introduction: Sources.

Because of the existence of two communities, Sephardi and Ashkenazi, Jews found themselves in a different situation in The Hague compared to the rest of the Dutch Republic. The Sephardi community of Middelburg ceased to function in 1725, giving new impetus to the Ashkenazi community. In Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk no Sephardi community ever existed. The Hague was therefore similar to Amsterdam, the centre of Jewish life in the eighteenth century. As in Amsterdam, and other towns with more than one community, relations between the two divergent communities in The Hague were not always smooth.

Contacts between the Sephardi and Ashkenazi communities were frequent and dated from the start of the Ashkenazi community in the early eighteenth century, when two Sephardi Jews wrote up the first statutes of the new community.³² The *pinkas* includes thirteen records concerning the Sephardim. A major topic was kosher meat, which the two communities organised jointly. Besides the records in the *pinkas*, there are several documents relating to the matter in the archive of the former community in the municipal archives of The Hague.³³

Another issue is the use individual Sephardim and Ashkenazim made of each other's facilities. Sephardi Jews attended Ashkenazi services after they had quarrelled with their own community.³⁴ Some Sephardi women used the Ashkenazi *mikveh*,³⁵ since it was presumably cheaper or more convenient. At the same time, some Ashkenazi Jews, for motives that remain unexplained, attended Sephardi services.³⁶ In fact they probably did so for the same reason Sephardi Jews came to the Ashkenazi synagogue: presumably they had quarrelled with the *parnassim*. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that the *pinkas* fails to mention why these phenomena occurred.

Finally, the *pinkas* also presents a number of cases that reveal private relationships between Jews of the two communities. Ashkenazi maids served in Sephardi households³⁷ and marriages between Sephardim and Ashkenazim are also recorded.³⁸

³² See S. Litt 'The Earliest Regulations of the Ashkenazi Community of The Hague from 1723', *Zutot* 3 (2003), pp. 160–161.

³³ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 807, 809, 816, 817.

³⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 38. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 1.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 165.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, fols. 184 v, 188.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 162 v. This is the only case of this kind mentioned, although other Ashkenazim were surely employed in Sephardi households or businesses.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 227.

All this might easily upset the balance between the communities. It could also affect the financial interests of the communities, especially taxes and fees. Since this was one of the main concerns of the governors, this must be why these records were kept in the *pinkas*. It might one day prove necessary to have the facts at hand.

Surprisingly, the manuscript also includes a number of issues that were clearly the province of the rabbi. The *pinkas* records four occasions when a widow performed *halitzah* with her brother-in-law, thus enabling her to remarry. This would have been supervised by the rabbi. The records show that the rabbi and *beth din* oversaw the ceremony,³⁹ except in the first two cases when there was no serving rabbi in The Hague and the *beth din* consisted of laymen. Perhaps the absence of an official rabbi in 1735 led to major halakhic matters being recorded in the *pinkas*, after which the custom continued in later years, even when a rabbi was appointed and presumably kept his own records of *halitzah* ceremonies. Moreover, governors also had a powerful motive for supervising these ceremonies, since an accurate record would prevent any future claims as well as gossip.

A sensitive issue arose in 1733, when Rachel, widow of Süsskind, came with her daughter Serle before the rabbi and governors. She reported that her daughter had fallen and injured herself in such a way that she no longer appeared to be a virgin. Two experienced women were asked to examine the injured girl and they confirmed the mother's assumption.⁴⁰ The case was recorded to guarantee Serle's integrity for when she would marry.⁴¹ It seems that the statement found its way into the *pinkas* because of the involvement of the governors. Clearly, it would have been inappropriate to raise a delicate issue like this in public, which explains why no other similar records are found in the main *pinkas*. Instead they are recorded in a less central document, the book of copies of *takkanot*.⁴² The last two pages contain seven similar cases dating between 1747 and 1799. Most are the same as this earlier example. A woman or a man appears before the governors or rabbi and declares together with two witnesses that a daughter (none was older than nine) had fallen on a bench or a chair, which caused the injury.

³⁹ Ibid., fols. 209 v, 239 v.

⁴⁰ Ibid., fol. 76.

⁴¹ A statement that a girl had suffered an accident by which she appeared not to be virgin, *shetar mukkat ets*, literally a declaration of being 'struck by wood'.

⁴² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625.

Some records state that the father of the girl demanded that the case be written up in the *pinkas*.⁴³

One story was different. In 1769 a father reported that his daughter had been abused by a young man, the teacher's son. The girl, who was seven, had suffered from pain for weeks, until one day her younger brother told the father the reason for her pain. He had seen a young boy force the girl to lie down and rape her. The father of the girl demanded the expulsion of the boy from the community and a record in the *pinkas* to remember his evil deed.⁴⁴

These records were kept in a confidential source because of their sensitive content and to preserve the honour of the girls involved, as well as to ensure that their marriage prospects were not harmed. Clearly, however, it must have been decided by the governors some time after 1733 not to record these matters in the official *pinkas*. No such decision is mentioned in the manuscript. Obviously, therefore, certain issues were discussed among the *parnassim* without being written into the official records. This again raises the question of the general reliability of *pinkassim* as sources.⁴⁵

Another interesting occurrence is reported in a record dating from 1767.⁴⁶ Sere, wife of David bar Nahman, was called before the governors to read a letter sent to her by her husband from Puerto Rico several months earlier. David, the husband, wrote to inquire after her health and that of their children, and to say that after having received a letter from her he would send her money via the banker Tobias Boas.

Although there is no additional information about the matter, it seems that this is one of many cases in which families broke up—however temporarily—when husbands went off to try their luck across the Atlantic. Many disappeared in the New World and effectively deserted their family. This was a widespread phenomenon, especially in the eighteenth century, described by Yosef Kaplan in relation to the Sephardi community of Amsterdam⁴⁷ and by Van Deursen in connection with

⁴³ A similar phenomenon occurred in Rome in the sixteenth century, see D. Malkiel, *The Woodstruck Deed*, published at <http://www.earlymodern.org/workshops/2006/malkiel/index.php?pid=36> (27.3.2007). The Amsterdam *pinkassim* contain similar records; Sluys, *op. cit.*, p. 120.

⁴⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, fol. 47.

⁴⁵ See below, Conclusions. On this subject in general see Michman, *op. cit.* (1995), pp. 180–181; Beem, *op. cit.* (1995), *passim*.

⁴⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 202. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 9.

⁴⁷ Kaplan, *op. cit.* (2000 [b]), pp. 287–288.

Dutch Republic's non-Jewish population in the seventeenth century.⁴⁸ The phenomenon mainly involved poor people who were unable to make a living in the Republic and hoped to find their fortune in the New World. In most cases the wives and children were left helpless and without any resources. The dangers of the voyage added to the risk and sometimes turned abandoned wives into widows. Without reliable witnesses for the death of a husband, a wife would remain an *agumah*, still officially married, unable to remarry and remedy her economic plight, and ensure the future of her children.

It was apparently rare for a husband to write a letter like the one written by David bar Nahman, promising money in the near future. Poor families without a breadwinner were a heavy burden on the community and its governors. So the letter from Puerto Rico with the suggestion of a possible release from economic hardship for one family must have made a positive impression on those involved, not least the *parnassim*, who decided to record the letter in the *pinkas*. Because David bar Nahman proposed to send money via Tobias Boas, the matter presumably became a private transaction which may explain why no further records refer to the issue in the official documents.

In 1747, the turmoil of the Orange Revolution spread throughout the Dutch Republic, as the French occupied the south of the country. Amid the general economic malaise and inflation, support for the house of Orange grew. Many provinces—under popular pressure—demanded the restoration of the Orange stadholder. Disturbances were accompanied by attacks on Catholics and Protestant sects,⁴⁹ and in Amsterdam against the Jews.⁵⁰ The Hague *pinkas* also mentions disturbances. In the autumn of 1747, the annual election of governors was postponed because of the prevailing unrest in the capital. The record mentions cases of plundering, although it is unclear whether Jews suffered directly,⁵¹ as in Amsterdam. Since the unrest was partly directed against craftsmen who worked outside the traditional guilds, which included Jews, presumably violent incidents also occurred in The Hague. Either way,

⁴⁸ A. T. van Deursen, *Plain Lives in a Golden Age: Popular Culture, Religion and Society in Seventeenth-Century Holland* (Cambridge 1991), p. 89.

⁴⁹ See J. A. F. de Jongste, 'The Restoration of the Orangist Regime in 1747: The Modernity of a Glorious Revolution', in: M. C. Jacob and W. W. Mijnhardt (eds), *The Dutch Republic in the Eighteenth Century: Decline, Enlightenment and Revolution*, Ithaca 1992, pp. 32–59.

⁵⁰ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 58.

⁵¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 126 v.

the *parnassim* apparently considered the situation too dangerous for elections to be held and therefore postponed the ballot for a month. Remarkably, the record contains no other detailed reference to the events, which the governors must surely have discussed. Clearly they preferred not to record their views in the *pinkas*.

A later record reveals that leading Jews in The Hague were quick to seek direct contact with William IV, sending two representatives to the new stadholder in 1748. It is hardly surprising to find that one of the representatives was Tobias Boas. The other was Leib Tieh.⁵² These two prominent community figures⁵³ went again in 1766 to represent the community of The Hague, even though they were not *parnassim* in that year. In addition, the *pinkas* mentions the need for the legation, which included representatives of the two other large Dutch communities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam. In 1766 William V, stadholder since 1751, attained the age of majority, providing an opportunity for representatives to renew the good relations between the country's Jews and the royal court, as the record notes. The text also states that Tobias Boas had already managed to make an appointment for some days later that week. The other two communities involved in delegation had suggested sending *parnassim* from each community, but in The Hague the incumbent *parnassim* gave way to the former governors, Tobias Boas and Leib Tieh. A sensible move, since Boas had excellent connections at Court. Of all the Jewish representatives to attend he was no doubt the most important.⁵⁴

This record is one of the few to provide information about the duties of the governors outside the everyday business of community administration. It reveals Tobias Boas fulfilling the traditional role of *shtadlan*, mediator between the Jews and the non-Jewish world.

Another important event that occurred in 1744 and 1745, is not mentioned at all in the *pinkas*, although Tobias Boas, who was then a *parnas*, played a key role. In 1744, Maria Theresa, the pious Habsburg queen of Hungary and Bohemia, decreed that all Jews be expelled from Bohemia and Moravia, in particular from Prague. This was the subject

⁵² *Ibid.*, fol. 195 v. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 8.

⁵³ Leib Tieh was a prominent governor of those who were not part of the Boas clan; see table 1, which shows the years in office of the *parnassim*.

⁵⁴ That the audience took place, can be seen from a note in the 's *Gravenhaagse Woensdagse Courant* of 19 March 1766; see Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), p. 31. See also the chapter by S. Seeligmann in the same volume, 'Het geestelijk leven in de Hoogduitsche Joodsche Gemeente te 's Gravenhage', pp. 44–45.

of heated discussion across Europe and the Jews, mainly the leading court Jews, generated intense diplomatic pressure to cancel the decree, which would have brought the flourishing Jewish life of the region to an end. As has already been described elsewhere, Tobias Boas played a leading role in Dutch Jewish efforts to convince the government to intervene directly or indirectly in Vienna.⁵⁵ The Dutch Republic's intervention was the first of many similar efforts by other European governments. Which makes it all the more surprising that this matter did not find its way into the official records of the Hague community.

The Jews of The Hague had already concerned themselves with the Jews of Prague a year previously, when the Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities collected 336 guilders for the community. This sum was also submitted to Tobias Boas, who sent it to Amsterdam, where all the money collected by other Dutch communities was brought together and sent to Prague.⁵⁶ The record does not explain what the Jews of Prague needed the money for, perhaps it related to the retreat of the Prussians from the city and the demolition of the old Jewish quarter in the early 1740s. It may have been part of an attempt to preempt measures against the Jews, who were suspected of sympathising with the occupiers and opposing the Habsburgs. It was these suspicions that motivated the expulsion decree of 1744.

The long list of both regular and unusual items shows that the Hague *pinkas* is a far richer source than the other *pinkassim* investigated here. This underscores the importance of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague in relation to the many other communities outside Amsterdam. Because The Hague was the seat of government, its Jewish community was far more than just another provincial *medine* community. The Hague community was powerful enough to act and lobby in ways that smaller communities were not; indeed, many of the items found in the Hague *pinkas* are not found at all in the *pinkassim* of the other Dutch communities.

A review of its contents shows that only one or two items are not found in the Hague manuscript. For instance, there is almost no material about taxes or contributions by members, which might provide a

⁵⁵ B. Mevorah, 'Die Interventionsbestrebungen in Europa zur Verhinderung der Vertreibung der Juden aus Böhmen und Mähren 1744–1745', *Jahrbuch des Instituts für Deutsche Geschichte in Tel Aviv* 9 (1980), pp. 15–81; here pp. 36–39.

⁵⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 118.

better understanding of the social structure of the community. The only source for this subject is the listing of synagogue seats, with the sum paid for each. These lists show who belonged to the wealthiest families. Yet the price for an average seat rarely varied, so that no further distinction can be made regarding the spending power of the various members.

In general, it seems that the principle maintained in the *pinkas* was not so much to avoid certain topics, but to avoid recording too many details. Records about disciplinary measures rarely mention the real reason for the steps taken against an individual. Matters of diplomatic importance, like the campaign to prevent the expulsion of the Jews of Prague, were not recorded in the *pinkas*, perhaps because they were of no immediate concern to the community. Yet these issues were obviously discussed by the *parnassim* and influential members of the community. In most cases, the record states the final resolution of the issue. Only rarely is it possible to trace the development of a discussion about a topic. Several events described in the *pinkas* reveal that additional documents were kept containing temporary measures and matters that were pending. This material was apparently destroyed whenever the issue was resolved. Thus, by its very nature, the *pinkas* is not a comprehensive and detailed source for the items it records, which is true of all *pinkassim*.

Almost all of the records in the Hague *pinkas* were written by *ne'emanim*, the annually elected secretaries. They were in charge of keeping the *pinkas* and wrote up the records as instructed by the *parnassim*. As a result the character of the records remains more or less constant throughout the period. Interestingly there is not a single record written or signed by a rabbi, who apparently had no direct part in the keeping of the community's key administrative document. This consistent omission suggests that (unwritten) conventions must have applied to the rabbi's involvement in the community records.

Middelburg

Only three unusual items appear in the Middelburg *pinkas*. Foremost among the former are the *pletten* lists of households required to feed the poor on a certain number of Shabbatot and festivals. Doubtless the other communities maintained the same general Ashkenazi custom, offering a systematic way of providing charity and dealing with the

problem of the itinerant poor. Unlike Middelburg, none of the other communities investigated here kept similar lists in their *pinkas*.⁵⁷

The Middelburg manuscript records only one instance of the community taking over a person's capital in return for an annuity, as recorded in the Hague *pinkas*. The record mentions a case in 1773 in which two members of the community deposited a sum in return for an annuity for their mother.⁵⁸ If the *pinkas* record is the only event of its kind (which may be assumed, given the copious financial records), the Middelburg community was not a major supplier of financial services. The community was not large enough to provide sufficient wealthy customers, and the general state of the community probably did not encourage potential clients to deposit their capital. Moreover, Middelburg's governors may not even have considered this opportunity for increasing the community's financial basis.

A variation on this theme occurred in 1787, when Joseph ben Israel entrusted the enormous sum of 1,500 guilders with the *parnassim*. He deposited this for the five children of his late brother on condition that an annual interest of four percent be paid, and that each of the children should receive at least 300 guilders when they married or when they attained the age of majority.⁵⁹ Obviously it was the unexpected receipt of such a large amount that prompted the matter to be recorded in the *pinkas*, which by then was no more than a cashbook and therefore dealt mainly with financial items anyway.

These three items are the only three unusual types of record in the Middelburg *pinkas*. This brief addition to the basic *pinkas* contents reveals again the modest area of activity and the apparent lack of dynamic in this community in the eighteenth century. The records were written up almost exclusively by the cantors of the community, who also served as *ne'eman* or secretary.

Leeuwarden

The Leeuwarden manuscript is of greater interest in this regard. This *pinkas*, which remained in use until the mid-nineteenth century contains some unusual items which are also found in part in other manuscripts.

⁵⁷ See below, Chapter 6.

⁵⁸ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg no. 1, p. 118.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

However, it also contains items that are unique to this community. Remarkably, the Leeuwarden *pinkas* is the only *pinkas* in which records are numbered, thereby turning the *pinkas* into a systematic administrative tool. Several references in various records show that the numbers were used to refer to earlier records in the manuscript. The numbering seems to be unique for *pinkassim*. So far no comparable system has been found in any other *pinkas* of the period.⁶⁰

Moreover, the Leeuwarden manuscript also contains several relatively early records in Dutch. The first Dutch record was written in 1758, about the renegade Tzadok bar Tzvi, who, despite the community's prohibition, kept a private ritual bath in his house.⁶¹ Since this had also been reported to the local authority, the notification was copied into the *pinkas* in the original Dutch, together with a comment about the official report.

Whenever non-Jews were involved in a case, the text was apparently copied in Dutch, often from the original Dutch document. Altogether fifteen Dutch records are found in the *pinkas* prior to 1795, all of which are connected to non-Jews in some way. Normally no Yiddish translation was added to the Dutch text, which indicates that Dutch was acknowledged as a semi-official language by the governors, and must have been generally understood in its written form.

Another group of unusual records involves the annual lists of contributors to the community fund (*Lyste der Quotisatie des Weeks van de Joodsche Leeden*). The Leeuwarden *pinkas* contains eight lists⁶² comprising the names of heads of households, for some reason only starting in 1788. These lists are valuable sources about social aspects of the community, and are therefore examined further below.⁶³

Connected to this are the records of loans made to the community by individuals and institutions, both Jewish and non-Jewish. Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot* reports five loans made to the community during the four decades before 1795.⁶⁴ This item was of course an important matter in *pinkassim*, and it is surprising that only the manuscripts of The Hague and Leeuwarden contain such financial transactions.

⁶⁰ Surprisingly, Italian *pinkassim* were also kept like this in the sixteenth century. See Boksenboim, *op. cit.* and Carpi, *op. cit.*

⁶¹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 45; see also Chapter 1.

⁶² *Ibid.*, record nos. 276, 284, 289, 295, 299, 307, 316 and 333.

⁶³ See below, Chapter 5.

⁶⁴ *Tresoar*, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 74, 139, 161, 258 and 326.

Poor Jews, wandering from one town to another, begging for money, were a major problem for every organised Jewish community. This was no less acute in Leeuwarden, despite being in the far north of the country. Indeed, Leeuwarden was part of a chain of Jewish communities across northwest Europe, so that large numbers of Jewish beggars arrived here. Hamburg, Emden, Delfzijl, Groningen, Leeuwarden and some of the smaller towns with Jewish communities must have seemed attractive to poor Jews on the road, and the route was certainly well known. Every Jewish community was obliged to help poor Jews in every way possible; however, the burgomasters were concerned about the Jewish lower class, since they were doubly suspicious: they were poor and Jewish.

The Friesland assembly enacted decrees against Jewish beggars at least twice, in 1757 and 1766, forcing the community to adapt its policy towards poor Jews, who presumably hoped to find a place to settle and work somewhere along the way. Both decrees and the community's decision following the first measure are recorded in the *sefer zikhronot*.⁶⁵ The issue arose several times between Friesland's local authorities and the Jewish community long before the first record in the *pinkas* was written. It was a familiar problem, and continued to concern Jewish and non-Jewish leaders.⁶⁶ The decrees were regarded as important legal documents. Whether the *parnassim* liked it or not, the texts had to be considered part of the community's everyday business and were available to be presented to anyone who objected to the restriction against housing poor Jews.

A further similarity between the two *pinkassim* from Leeuwarden and The Hague involves records of members who died intestate. Compared to The Hague, Leeuwarden's governors faced some unusual cases. The first case was that of the widow Hanna, whose estate was sold for fifteen guilders in 1794.⁶⁷

A month later, the aged Juda Leib ben Abraham agreed a contract with the *parnassim*, to arrange that he would receive one rijksdaalder a week from the community for the rest of his life, since he was old,

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, records 39 and 126 b.

⁶⁶ See Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 10–11, 16, 19–20, where he describes the decrees by the local authority concerning poor Jews coming to Leeuwarden in the first half of the eighteenth century.

⁶⁷ *Trezoar*, Jewish institutions and communities, no. 1, record no. 312. See Chapter 3.

weak and could no longer earn a living. In return, after his death his estate would revert to the community. When the contract was drawn up his property was listed in the *sefer zikhronot*. It comprised thirty-four books of religious content, mostly *loshen Ashkenaz* (Yiddish) and various items for everyday use.⁶⁸ Juda's comparatively large book collection shows that he came from a well-educated family; his late father's name is preceded by the acronym **מהר"ר**, meaning *morenu ha-rav* (our teacher the rabbi).

In the spring of 1796 the governors listed the estate of the late Leib Polak, one of Leeuwarden's wealthier Jews. In the 1760s and '70s he served as *parnas*, so that it is hardly surprising to find that his estate was far larger. Here again, books are listed as the principal item, illustrating the value of books in Jewish society. His library contained 44 books, mostly on halakhic subjects, like those of Juda Leib ben Abraham. But Leib Polak's books also included the regulations of the Ashkenazi community of Amsterdam, the *takkanot* of Leeuwarden, the regulations for the synagogue (of Leeuwarden?), and even secular (and non-Jewish) folk literature in a Yiddish book about those wise fools, the Schildburgers.⁶⁹ The various books of regulations indicate that Leib Polak treated his work as *parnas* seriously, but the folk stories show that he or someone in his family also enjoyed secular literature.⁷⁰

From the growing frequency of estates dealt with by the *parnassim* in the mid-1790s the question arises whether the three cases occurred coincidentally, or whether the relevant rules had changed. Unlike The Hague, Leeuwarden employed rabbis throughout the period. In many communities it was the rabbi who handled estates. In 1793, Shabbatai ben Eliezer Susman Cohen of Sokolov was chosen to serve as the new rabbi of the community.⁷¹ All three cases occurred under his tenure. In fact, the second case suggests why these were written up in the *sefer zikhronot*: Juda Leib had made a contract with the community, so a record had to be kept in the *sefer zikhronot*.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, record no. 317.

⁶⁹ See M. Gutschow, *Inventary of Yiddish Publications from the Netherlands c. 1650–c. 1950* (Leiden 2006) for a list of similar Yiddish books.

⁷⁰ On both libraries listed in the pinkas see H. Beem, 'Welke boeken bezaten Joden in een Nederlandse provincie stad in de 18e eeuw?', *Studia Rosenthaliana* 6 (1972), pp. 71–75, in which he lists the titles of the books and the price they were sold for.

⁷¹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 309, see also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 51.

The last unusual item in the *sefer zikhronot* involves the community's Eretz Israel fund, which again parallels the fund mentioned in the Hague *pinkas*. Many records relating to the fund are found in the manuscript. It seems that the fund was especially prominent during the first three decades of the *pinkas*; two emissaries from the Holy Land visited the community in the period before 1795. They travelled around Europe in order to collect money for the four communities of Jerusalem, Hebron, Safed and Tiberias.⁷² By the 1750s the fund had its own *gabbai*.⁷³ Since he was a community official, all matters relating to the fund were recorded in the *sefer zikhronot*, especially occasions when the governors were forced to borrow sums from the fund to cover community expenses.⁷⁴ The prominence of the issue in the *pinkas* demonstrates the importance attached to the fund.

Finally, there is the record of a young girl who had injured herself in 1765 in such a way that she no longer appeared to be a virgin, similar to the cases described in the Hague *pinkas*. The record was written up in the *sefer zikhronot*, but subsequently covered over with a sheet of paper and sealed, so that no one would be able read the text without removing the page.⁷⁵ This intention would have been obvious, yet eventually someone uncovered the record since the paper is now folded back. The reason why this record was covered is the same as in The Hague, where the governors decided to record most of these cases in a confidential document: the *parnassim* wished to preserve the subject's modesty.

Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot* is a relatively detailed *pinkas*, especially compared to the community's size. Hardly any subject is ignored in the manuscript. It seems that the governors wished to keep a meticulous record of the community's administration. Yet one item is missing: collections for other communities (apart from the prominent Eretz Israel fund). Presumably this is not because no such collections were made; after all, the interest in the Holy Land suggests the opposite. Perhaps this item was recorded in other community documents which are now lost, and not in the *sefer zikhronot*.

⁷² Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 30, 94.

⁷³ H. Beem, 'Leeuwarden's Connections with Erets Israel' in Michman, J. (ed), *Studies on the History of Dutch Jewry* 2 (Jerusalem 1979), p. 159.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁷⁵ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 110.

Oisterwijk

Compared to the ample contents of the *pinkassim* of The Hague and Leeuwarden, the three Oisterwijk manuscripts are far less varied. Besides the basic contents—and even these are not fully represented in the manuscripts—there is only one unusual item. It concerns the regional organisation of the Jews in and around Oisterwijk, which is similar to the organisations of Jews in Germany known as *Landesjudenschaften*.⁷⁶ The first *pinkas* includes both the statutes of the regional organisation (מדינת מארייאן מן הערצוגאין בוש) dated 1764, which opens the first *pinkas*,⁷⁷ and a record of a meeting of representatives of the communities of the regional organisation, dated 1783.⁷⁸ We do not know whether this organisation had its own *pinkas*, or whether Oisterwijk's first *pinkas* was used for recording its decisions. Either way, the *gabbaim* of the regional organisation would presumably have copied important texts into their own *pinkas*.

The vast majority of the records in the Oisterwijk *pinkassim* were written up by the cantor and *ne'eman*, although the rabbi also served as a secretary.⁷⁹ In fact the rabbi wrote up most of the third *pinkas* which, apart from a few records that properly belonged in a regular *pinkas*, is more like a *memorbukh*.⁸⁰ Most of the texts therefore reflect the intentions of the governors, who certainly advised the *ne'eman* how to formulate the records, and which details to include.

A *pinkas kahal* bears witness to the many events that occur in the course of a community's history, and is full of numerous decisions by the community's governors. Yet none of the *pinkassim* examined here provides a complete chronicle of all the issues and topics discussed by a community's governors. There are clear indications of meetings and decisions by *parnassim* that are not mentioned, and of which no record was kept. So a *pinkas* represents only part of the history of a community's administration. Subjects such as political involvement, moral and

⁷⁶ The most comprehensive research on these organisations is that of D. J. Cohen, 'The Organizations of the "Landjudenschaften" (Jewish Corporations) in Germany During the XVII and XVIII Centuries', PhD thesis (Jerusalem 1967).

⁷⁷ Ros 282 a, pp. 1–8.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 39. Regional organisations are discussed below, Chapter 7.

⁷⁹ For example he copied the statutes of the regional organisation into the first *pinkas*, mentioning that he was asked to do so by the representatives of Oisterwijk, Waalwijk, Dinther and Eindhoven.

⁸⁰ See Ros 283.

marital issues and matters involving unpleasant consequences for the community's governors were often kept out of the *pinkas*. Governors must have been aware that their records might be read by later generations or even by the non-Jewish authorities. The latter possibility was of particular concern, since such encounters had rarely ended favourably for Jews on previous occasions.

Local idiosyncrasies were recorded in the manuscripts due to their importance in the everyday life of the community, their unusual character, or because they described some special aspect of the community. This is why records discuss extraordinary financial matters, which were invariably the most important issues and which dictated a community's fate. Records of young girls who had injured themselves in such a way that they no longer appeared to be a virgin were crucial, since the served as a guarantee of their integrity, and ensured their future as members of the community. Finally, the presence of records relating to the regional organisation of the Jews in the *meierij* of Den Bosch in the Oisterwijk *pinkas* illustrates the importance of these organisations for small communities like that of Brabant.

Unfortunately the material provides insufficient evidence to determine whether the status of the secretary influenced the content of the manuscripts. Almost all of the records in the *pinkassim* were written by *ne'emanim* or by other community officials, who did not always sign the records. As a result, there is no way of telling whether the eloquence of a *pinkas* is related to the number and differing status of its secretaries.

CHAPTER THREE

OFFICIALS OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY

Like almost every Jewish community, the four Dutch communities of The Hague, Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk employed various officials who were in charge of the—mostly religious—activities and requirements of the community. The number of these officials differed from place to place, since there was a direct link between the differentiation of tasks and the community's size. All the communities investigated here employed cantors, teachers, slaughterers and beadles. Sometimes the regulations even obliged communities to employ these officials.¹ The *pinkassim* of the four communities refer to all these officials, providing evidence of their status within the community, their origins, and their attitudes. Of all the officials attached to a community, the rabbi was of course the most important.

Rabbis and Poskim

The *pinkassim* examined here contain considerable information about rabbis, their status and their relationship to the governors. Sometimes, information has to be found between the lines. This reflects the findings of the previous chapters: *pinkassim* were the administrative instruments of the *parnassim*, rabbis rarely had a voice in these documents. Yet the *parnassim* would never have criticised the rabbis openly in the official records. So we have to look for small signs to piece together the historical reality and to learn more about the status and acknowledgement of rabbinic authority.

Many rabbis have been researched by scholars because of their outstanding role within the Jewish community. Yet while Jewish historiography is full of information about the religious leaders of Jewish

¹ See, e.g., paragraph 20 of the *takkanot* of Middelburg; Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 3.

communities, the older publications in particular present a distorted view that does not always reflect the real situation.

The Hague

The history of the rabbis of The Hague has always been an important topic for scholars interested in this community. In his work on the Ashkenazi Jews of the Dutch capital, Van Zuiden mentions all the eighteenth-century rabbis and their successors,² including a separate chapter on local rabbis by Sigmund Seeligmann.³ A more recent study on the rabbis of The Hague has appeared by I. B. van Creveld; while an examination from a religious perspective of the leading rabbi of the eighteenth century, Saul Halevi, has also appeared.⁴ Yet none of these have investigated the sources sufficiently, and so their discussions remain somewhat superficial, particularly with regard to the status of these rabbis and their relations with the community and its governors.

Salman Loonstein seems to have been the first appointed rabbi of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague.⁵ In the autumn of 1724, the governors and seven additional respected members of the community decided unanimously to appoint Loonstein, who had until then been living in Nijmegen.⁶ The *pinkas* offers few details about the appointment. It merely states that it was not to be a burden for any of the members of the community. The official contract⁷ provides more details about the conditions offered to Loonstein. His appointment was limited to three years. He was given a weekly salary of six guilders, and a free apartment close to the synagogue. In addition, he and his wife received free peat and wood for heating, and also free flour at Pesach. They also had free seats in the synagogue. Apart from these conditions relating to the economic aspect of Loonstein's terms of employment in The Hague nothing is stated regarding his relationship to the governors,

² Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), pp. 28–30.

³ Seeligmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–80.

⁴ P. A. Meyers, *Sefer Binyan Sha'ul* (Jerusalem 2004).

⁵ See the regulations of 1723, in which paragraph 25 states: **זוא לנג מיר קיין אב"ד כאן הבן**.

⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 30.

⁷ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 522. The certificate is, of course, in Hebrew, whereas the record in the *pinkas* is in Yiddish. An illustration of the certificate appears with a translation in Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), p. 40 (a) and in I. B. van Creveld, *Haagse Rabbijnen: Drie eeuwen geestelijke leiding* (Zutphen 1995), p. 24.

or his authority in the community. This aspect was apparently settled informally.

Not much is known about Loonstein and his work during his three years in The Hague, the last three years of his life. He died in 1728, and his widow Rekhle, who was more or less obliged by the *parnassim* to leave the community,⁸ died in 1733 in Middelburg. It seems that neither were very young when they came to The Hague. Probably that was one of the reasons why the governors accepted Loonstein, since he would be unlikely to play an important role for a long period, yet he would also have been experienced enough to fulfil his task properly.

The *pinkas* reveals no tension between the first rabbi and the governors of the Hague community in their decisions concerning the local Jewish life. Apart from his appointment and the matter of his widow three years later, Loonstein is not mentioned in the records at all. This fact and the strange circumstances of Rekhle's departure suggest that Loonstein was not particularly respected in the community.

In the summer of 1728 the *parnassim* decided to employ a teacher for the best six pupils at the local Talmud Torah school. His title would be 'rabbi of the Talmud Torah'. The only candidate was Jacob Shalom, who apparently came from outside The Hague. The first text to mention his name provides no further details about his origins.⁹ It seems that besides teaching these six children (and four additional private pupils), Shalom was also expected to function as a rabbinic authority on halakhic issues. He was indeed a rabbi and is consistently referred to in the records as *morenu ha-rav*. He was paid 4 guilders and 20 stuivers a week, almost a third less than Loonstein. However, Shalom was probably still unmarried when he came to The Hague, since there is no mention of a wife in any of the records.¹⁰ Like his predecessor, Shalom was also granted free peat, wood, and an apartment.¹¹ His rooms were

⁸ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 50. The *pinkas* does not explain why the *parnassim* forced her to sell her pension rights and never return to The Hague.

⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰ He was granted a seat in the synagogue, but there is no corresponding place for his wife in the lists; see *ibid.*, fol. 52, where his seat is no. 3. The next page does not mention the rabbi's wife on any of the first seats, or elsewhere. In later years, he no longer had his own place, presumably because as rabbi of the community he had a special seat in front of the community. That seat was removed from the synagogue after his contract ended.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 50.

rented by the community in the house of Feibel Shnuki, where Shalom had a small bedroom and a classroom.¹²

Some weeks later Jacob Shalom was appointed rabbi of the community.¹³ The record states that the decision to appoint him *av beth din* (head of the rabbinical court) in addition to his task as *more tzedek* was made unanimously. The records in the *pinkas* do not explain this apparently sudden move. Presumably the governors came to the conclusion that the community's standing would be enhanced by the appointment of an official rabbi. It is also possible that Shalom may have tried to improve his position himself, thereby raising his status, if not his salary. Eventually, Shalom served both as rabbi and teacher of the Talmud Torah on a six-year contract.¹⁴

Like Loonstein, Shalom is not recorded as having been actively involved in any of the issues dealt with by the governors. Besides the records dealing with his appointment, he is rarely mentioned in the *pinkas* during his six years at The Hague. Even the revised *takkanot* concerning honours in synagogue, enacted in the autumn of 1729, were only signed by the *parnassim*,¹⁵ with no mention of the rabbi although he could hardly have been left out of the decision-making process.

In the spring of 1731, the governors of the community signed a contract with David Bomsler, also an ordained rabbi. He was to be the new rabbi of the Talmud Torah school, where he would teach six boys, for an initial period of six months.¹⁶ This would seem to have encroached on Shalom's duties, who was still ostensibly responsible for teaching the Talmud Torah pupils. Since he presumably continued to teach, there must have been a need for additional teachers in the growing community. A *pinkas* record reveals that Shalom enjoyed a reputation as a teacher. The governors stated that both Shalom and Bomsler should inform the *parnassim* before accepting new pupils to prevent parents trying obtain the community rabbi for their child rather than the junior Talmud Torah rabbi.¹⁷

¹² Ibid., fol. 51.

¹³ Ibid., fol. 55 v. Neither Seeligmann, *op. cit.*, nor Van Zuiden, *op. cit.* (1913), knew about this. They do not seem to have studied the *pinkas* carefully in their research. Likewise I. B. van Creveld.

¹⁴ There are two records about the decision to accept Jacob Shalom as rabbi, but only the second mentions the duration of the contract; *ibid.*, fol. 56 v.

¹⁵ Ibid., fol. 60 v-61.

¹⁶ Ibid., fol. 70 v.

¹⁷ Ibid.

The *pinkas* mentions Shalom as an active participant only towards the end of his contract in 1734. The disastrous financial circumstances of the community forced the governors to decline to renew the rabbi's contract, and to resolve not to employ another rabbi for a further ten years.¹⁸ The financial situation of the Ashkenazim in The Hague had probably never been healthy, but the decision demonstrates that the *parnassim* were convinced that the community did not need to employ an official rabbi. It is impossible to judge from the few relevant records in the *pinkas* whether any other aspect of Shalom's role in the community may have influenced the *parnassim* to decide against extending his tenure. There is only one cryptic passage which states that besides the financial reasons there was also something else, which remained hidden: אונ' אום אנדרה רעדן הכמוסים עמנו שאינו מן הראוי [...] להעלות על הנייר.¹⁹

Meanwhile, some of the community objected to the decision to leave the position of rabbi unfilled for such a long period. They were led by Itzik Leeuwarden. The opponents appealed to the burgomasters to quash the decision of the *parnassim*. Shalom seems to have played an active part in this campaign and agreed to lay the case before the local authority. Yet the burgomasters rejected the arguments of the opposition and confirmed the ruling of the governors, which they declared to be the only valid decision-making body. This simultaneously strengthened the position of the leadership, and confirmed the internal autonomy of the Jews in religious affairs.

Shalom then appeared before the *parnassim* and declared that all he wanted was for his contract to be extended, that he had been misled into following Leeuwarden and supporting the court case. The case being lost, he asked the governors to provide him with a means of support. They responded by asking why he had not come to them earlier, and that they were willing to reconsider his case.²⁰

All this shows that Shalom was well regarded by a section of the community, who were loath to lose him as their rabbi. So while the governors upheld their decision, they permitted the rabbi to remain with the community. Moreover, the *parnassim* allowed him to stay for

¹⁸ Ibid., fol. 81. This decision was taken together with some other measures to raise revenue.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid., fol. 82; see also Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1995), p. 25. See the record in Appendix 2, no. 3.

another six months in his former apartment, offered him 20 stuivers a week for the next two years and a seat (no. 4) in the synagogue. Abiding by Shalom's own request, his former seat of honour in the synagogue was removed.²¹ Two years later he asked for a continuation of his weekly stipend, but the governors refused, and offered him only free peat in winter.²² He lived in The Hague for another 35 years, and died in 1769.²³

The record stating the decision to leave the position of rabbi vacant for ten years does not explain how the governors proposed to deal with halakhic questions in this period. It seems that the respected Aberle Levi, a rabbi and a member of the community, served in an unofficial capacity in this period. Later he took part in the *beth din* in his role as rabbi;²⁴ a record dating from 1738 specifically mentions his participation as rabbi.²⁵ Interestingly he was one of the two *parnassim* in 1734, when the governors decided to leave the post of rabbi vacant, after which he immediately started to handle halakhic questions. Levi was doubtless one of the more powerful individuals in the community. Perhaps those who opposed the decision to leave the post of rabbi vacant feared the concentration of power in the hands of one person, but the sources naturally provide no indication for that assumption.

In 1738, a change in the community's *modus operandi* occurred when Matatyahu ben Yona of Meseritz was appointed Talmud Torah rabbi, with responsibility for deciding on halakhic questions whenever Levi was absent. Matatyahu was also an ordained rabbi, as his title **מהר"ר** shows.²⁶ The governors apparently tried to combine different religious functions in one person, making Matatyahu also responsible for the *bedika* of ritually slaughtered animals. Matatyahu's contract was for six months, but it soon became clear that he felt unable to fulfill all his tasks, so that within weeks he was asking for his appointment to be

²¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 82–82 v.

²² *Ibid.*, fol. 92 v.

²³ See Seeligmann, *op. cit.*, p. 41, who quotes the inscription on Jacob Shalom's tombstone.

²⁴ See the *halitzah* ceremonies in the spring of 1735, when Aberle Levi was head of the *beth din*, GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 84.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 96 v. The record states that the new Talmud Torah rabbi, Matatyahu ben Yona had to decide on halakhic questions instead of Aberle Levi, whenever he was absent. He only stayed in The Hague for three months, and his successor, Yehoshua, was employed on the same terms; *ibid.*, fol. 98.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 96 v.

limited to that of Talmud Torah teacher and *posek* (making halakhic rulings).²⁷

Even during Matatyahu's tenure the governors were looking for a new teacher who would fulfill the various additional tasks. A new candidate emerged in the shape of Shmuel Ofen, also an ordained rabbi who was apparently unable to find an appropriate position, a situation that led him to accept the more modest position of beadle, Talmud Torah rabbi, and *posek* in The Hague. The governors offered him a contract for two years,²⁸ which was eventually extended for a further two years in 1740. Interestingly the first contract states that each halakhic decision Ofen made had to be approved by Aberle Levi, the community's respected elder. This condition shows that Levi was still concerned about his status in the community, and that he was probably regarded as the leading authority on *halakhah*. Ofen is not mentioned again in the *pinkas* in connection with the several tasks he fulfilled between 1738 and 1742. Neither is there any decision that bears his stamp as *ba'al posek*, since no records of such matters were kept in the *pinkas* unless they concerned community issues. In 1764, the *parnassim* declared their intention to appoint a Talmud Torah rabbi instead of distributing the children among different teachers.²⁹ This implies that there was no Talmud Torah rabbi at the time, or in other words, that by 1764 Ofen no longer fulfilled this role. Yet in 1783 and 1785 Ofen was still in The Hague, and was a respected member of the community, serving as *gabbai* of the community.³⁰

Until the mid-eighteenth century the religious leadership of the Ashkenazi community in The Hague was weak and lacked a clear and independent authority, recognised beyond the confines of the city. This changed in 1748, when Saul Halevi of Emden, a son-in-law of the famous Rabbi Arye Leib Loewenstamm of Amsterdam, was appointed rabbi in The Hague. Halevi was not only respected as a Talmud scholar,³¹ he also seems to have enjoyed a personal reputation in the community itself, and crucially, among the elite in The Hague. This enabled him to

²⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 97. The short span of Matatyahu's stay as a community official is the apparent reason for the lack of information about him in the literature about the Ashkenazi Jews in The Hague; no scholar has ever mentioned him before.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 97 v. and 98.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, fol. 193 v.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, fol. 254.

³¹ Seeligmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 48–49.

remain in office for a remarkable 37 years. Evidence for this is found in the many records in the *pinkas* that refer to him, his authority and his decisions concerning ritual and religious matters. Yet it remains unclear why this change occurred. The records provide no explanation for the desire of the governors to employ a prestigious rabbi.

From the first records mentioning the new rabbi it is clear that Halevi, who was born in Galicia between 1712 and 1714³² and served as a community rabbi in Emden from 1742 to 1748,³³ did not regard himself as just another unemployed Jewish scholar looking for an income. He had been a community rabbi, and was related to one of the most esteemed rabbinic authorities in Western Europe of the day: Arye Leib Loewenstamm of Amsterdam. Indeed, Loewenstamm's relatives included other scholars and rabbis. This impressive background enabled Halevi to negotiate the terms of his contract without pressure.

When he was unanimously approved by the *parnassim* and seven additional respected community members (among them Aberle Levi, who had filled the post of *posek* for several years previously) in 3 Adar Sheni 5508 (3 March 1748), he was offered a weekly salary of eleven guilders. Five guilders of this to be paid by Tobias Boas.³⁴ This offer, however, was rejected by Halevi, and the community had to raise the amount by almost half to sixteen guilders. Twelve additional men contributed with smaller annual donations to the rabbi's salary.³⁵ This indicates that the community's elite were clearly interested in appointing a prestigious rabbi for their community. While the *pinkas* makes no direct mention of negotiations between the candidate and the governors, the records reveal that the *parnassim* had to improve their offer to Halevi, who also received free housing, wood and candles.

Presumably Halevi was assisted in these negotiations by his experienced father-in-law, since the records refer several times to Halevi staying in Amsterdam in the spring of 1748. The final draft of the *ketav rabbanut*, the official appointment for a period of six years accepted by Halevi, dates from 14 Iyar 5508 (12 May 1748). About six weeks later

³² Meyers, *op. cit.*, p. 48.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 82. Meyers, whose work is not an academic attempt to investigate the life and work of the rabbi but a traditional Jewish compilation, mentions conflicts between Emden's *parnassim* and Saul Halevi, which eventually brought him to The Hague; *ibid.*, p. 85.

³⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 129.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 130.

the *pinkas* shows him in office for the first time as The Hague's rabbi, with the title *av beth din*.³⁶

Throughout the following four decades Halevi appears in many of the *pinkas* records. The texts show that the rabbi was not longer the object of dispute among the community and its governors, but took an active part in the affairs of the Ashkenazi Jews of The Hague. The *parnassim* apparently welcomed his active participation, opening the *pinkas* to his rulings, although not to his pen—his handwriting never appears anywhere in the manuscript. From the beginning of Halevi's tenure he tried to reshape the local *minhagim* according to those in Amsterdam,³⁷ which reflects his close ties to his father-in-law, and to his own interpretations of *halakhah*. Under his guidance the *beth din* also became far more active, as numerous *halitzah* ceremonies and other decisions concerning members of the local community demonstrate. Halevi was even involved in disciplinary measures by the governors against members of the community, wherever a halakhic question was involved. One example is the affair concerning Michel ben Benjamin Haas, who had been seen several times at the Bosch on Shabbat, watching the troops parading.³⁸ His authority was even recognised outside The Hague, when he was consulted by the governors of Leeuwarden community concerning the reputation of Katriel ben Yehuda Leib, a candidate for the position of rabbi there in 1769. Halevi responded in favour of Katriel, and the text of his letter is found in Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot*.³⁹

After the first six years, Halevi asked the community's governors to extend his contract for an additional six years in 1754, but now for a weekly salary of eighteen guilders. After Tobias Boas had assured a further contribution towards the rabbi's income, Halevi was appointed for a second term and a new *ketav rabbanut* was drawn up.⁴⁰ This document was written in Hebrew, as was usual for this kind of contract.⁴¹ That

³⁶ Ibid., fol. 131 v.

³⁷ Ibid., fol. 132.

³⁸ See above, Chapter 1; and *ibid.*, fol. 219 v; the record appears in Appendix 2, nos 10–11.

³⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 144; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 26.

⁴⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 150. The phraseology of the document was copied into the *pinkas*, as had been done in 1748.

⁴¹ The earliest surviving example of a *ketav rabbanut*, issued for Man Todros by the governors of Friedberg community (Hesse) in 1575, was also written in Hebrew; see Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), fol. 60 b.

led to a dispute among the members of the community, and particularly among those who contributed to the rabbi's salary. Some were astonished that the contract had been extended for a further six years and claimed that some had been unable to understand the wording because it was in Hebrew, and considered it impossible to continue to contribute.⁴² From the record it is difficult to discern the real background of their sudden opposition. But perhaps the text provides the true facts. The dissatisfied governors demanded a resolution ending the private contributions to the rabbi's salary. They wanted this to be issued by a *beth din* or by two lawyers, indeed the protesters decided to ask two non-Jewish lawyers to draw up a declaration to this effect. In the end, the remaining contributors agreed to support the rabbi's salary for the next six years.⁴³ This dispute is the only conflict relating to Halevi in person in the entire manuscript.

When the second contract ended in 1760, Halevi asked for a renewal of his appointment, which was made without any further dispute or negotiation.⁴⁴ The record in the *pinkas* says explicitly that the contract was again for a six-year term. Finally, the governors and Halevi agreed in 1766 or before to enable him to remain in office without any further limit, since no other mention of his contract is made.

In the spring of 1780, Halevi asked the *parnassim* to enact a *takkanah* that his successors should not be allowed to charge fees for halakhic rulings, divorces, *halitzah*, *smikhah* and *hatarot shehitah*. He pointed out that he had never taken any payment for these services, and that he expected his successors to behave in a similar fashion. The governors replied positively and enacted the *takkanah*.⁴⁵ It reveals a remarkable understanding of the duties of a rabbi, and shows that even then it was not regarded as a matter of course that such services should be provided free of charge.

Halevi died on 25 Iyar 5545 (5 May 1785) and was buried in the community cemetery,⁴⁶ where his grave can still be seen today. The vacant

⁴² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 155; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 5.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, fol. 155 v.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 171 v.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, fols. 247–247 v.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 263. The record was written in Hebrew, since it related to a religious subject. Similarly, the documents of his appointment were also formulated in Hebrew.

post of rabbi soon became a matter of dispute among the governors. Halevi's death cannot have been unexpected, and discussions about a possible successor may have preceded his passing. Under Halevi's tenure the governors had changed their views about the need for an official rabbi. This is indicated by the decision, immediately following the record of the former rabbi's death, to employ Abraham Yehuda Leib Meseritz as the new *ba'al posek*, which was a lesser rank than head of the rabbinical court.⁴⁷ Meseritz came from The Hague. He was the son of Matatyahu of Meseritz, who had served briefly as Talmud Torah rabbi and *ba'al posek* in 1738. Abraham Meseritz had been ordained by Saul Halevi, so that the governors certainly did not anticipate any change in religious direction.

The record stating the offer of the post to Meseritz, with its reduced powers, was followed by the terms of his contract.⁴⁸ Some conditions appear surprisingly modern: the contract was not limited to a number of years, but each side had the right to cancel it subject to three months notice. The document, which is more like a contract of employment than a traditional *ketav rabbanut*, consists of 21 paragraphs detailing the duties of a *ba'al posek*. Besides writing certificates of marriage, *halitzah* and divorce, Meseritz was also in charge of *kashrut*, including the supervision of butchers, bakers, cheese-makers (most of whom were not Jewish), as well as wine and milk. Interestingly, he was also placed in charge of supervising chastity and purity in the community. For all these duties he was paid six guilders a week, in addition to a one-off payment of 300 guilders and the usual free fuel and accommodation.

The final pages of the *pinkas* provide no further information about Meseritz, but we know that he remained in office for more than 20 years,⁴⁹ and presumably over the years the terms of his employment and his status gradually improved.

Surveying the religious leaders of the Hague community, there was clearly a gradual change in the course of the eighteenth century. The

⁴⁷ The governors granted Halevi's widow, Dina, the right to stay in the rabbi's house as long as no new head of the rabbinical court was appointed; *ibid.*, fol. 264. This proves that Abraham Meseritz had not been employed as a full rabbinical authority in 1785. The title *ba'al posek* was quite unusual in other communities. My thanks to Edward Fram of Beer Sheva for pointing this out.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 263–263 v.

⁴⁹ Seeligmann, *op. cit.*, p. 69. Whether conditions improved later, can only be answered by analysing the second large *pinkas* of The Hague, covering the French period between 1795 and 1806, which is kept at Gemeentearchief Den Haag.

pinkas records show that in the 1720s and '30s the *parnassim* and probably many in the community had a limited understanding of the role of a rabbi, an *av beth din* or a *ba'al posek*. This came to a head in the 1730s and '40s, when the community dispensed entirely with official rabbis. The long tenure of Saul Halevi changed this situation fundamentally. He created a powerful foundation for his office in the community. After his death in 1785, the position appears to have remained well respected in the community. Halevi therefore played an important role in fostering community awareness among the Ashkenazim in The Hague by building up the explicitly acknowledged institution of the rabbinate. His authority and his excellent connections with the rabbis of Amsterdam certainly assisted him in this work, as well as the consistent willingness of the community's governors to support him. The desire of the *parnassim* to find a successor after Halevi's death and the choice of his former student testifies to their profound wish to maintain the institution and its local traditions.

Middelburg

Little information about the rabbis of Middelburg is found in the community's *pinkas*. Few facts are available about the period before 1725, the year in which the central record book was started. During the first decades of the eighteenth century Isaac ben Moses appears to have taken care of the community's ritual matters as rabbi and cantor.⁵⁰

The first reference to the rabbi's role in the community is in the regulations of 1725, in which paragraph 18 states that the rabbi may not provide direct services to any member, woman or young man without the knowledge of the *parnassim*.⁵¹ This defines the rabbi as a subordinate of the community's governors, and the few records referring to Middelburg's rabbis confirm this impression.

The *pinkas* refers only once to a community rabbi, when the governors decided to employ a rabbi as *av beth din* for one year in 1730. A certain Meir Peretz was appointed with an annual salary of 40 rijksdaalders:⁵² This sum was considerably lower than the salary of the rabbis of The Hague. The reason may be the small size of the community, which

⁵⁰ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 478.

⁵¹ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 3.

⁵² *Ibid.*, p. 29; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 17.

lacked a wealthy patron like Tobias Boas, whose financial support was crucial for The Hague. Due to the lack of information in the *pinkas* about the community's history, no further data exists about Peretz or his work in the community. Nothing else is known about him, his origin, and his role in the community, and nothing about his subsequent fate. Apparently, the community survived without a rabbi or halakhic authority for many years in the eighteenth century, since no suggestion of a rabbi is found. In fact other sources reveal that this was not the case: the community did have a rabbi for many years, one Joshua Aharon Lipshitz who the *parnassim* tried to dismiss in 1772.⁵³ A serious measure such as this must have had a background, although there is no sign of the official records of the *pinkas*. It seems that the administrative awareness of the *parnassim* was so poor they failed even to mention the appointment of a rabbi, who served from 1750 to 1790. Lipshitz appears only once in the entire manuscript, in 1783, when he signed a financial record in the *pinkas*, but without mentioning his formal position.⁵⁴ The lack of involvement of a halakhic authority in community matters was presumably another reason for the modest performance of the Ashkenazi community in Middelburg, compared to The Hague.

Leeuwarden

The situation in Leeuwarden contrasts starkly with that in Middelburg. Relations between secular leaders and rabbis in Leeuwarden were apparently close. However, the early years were not without difficulties. Leeuwarden's first rabbi took office in 1720, but because it had no *pinkas* as yet, no administrative information about the appointment exists. Between 1720 and 1735 Jacob Emmerich served as community rabbi in Leeuwarden. Despite his surname he originated from Amsterdam, and being the rabbi of Leeuwarden, Emmerich corresponded frequently with the famous scholar Jacob Emden about halakhic questions concerning Friesland's Jewish community.⁵⁵

⁵³ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 478.

⁵⁴ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 118.

⁵⁵ S. Dasberg, 'De eerste rabbijn en de oudste synagoge te Leuwarden', *De Vrydagavond* 7/1 (1930), pp. 9–10.

He was followed by Hertz Levi, who converted in 1741 to Christianity.⁵⁶ This was fiercely debated among the Jews of Leeuwarden, and it is a pity that there are no detailed internal records about the issue. It would be fascinating to discover how the community handled this extraordinary situation. Apparently no rabbi was appointed in Leeuwarden between 1741 and 1747,⁵⁷ when Nahman ben Jacob Levy of Emden was chosen to fill the post. However, there was considerable opposition in the community to his appointment. This focused on the new rabbi's ordination in Emden, rather than Amsterdam. The alternative candidate, Levy Isaacs, the son of a wealthy and influential local merchant had received *smikhah* in Amsterdam. Indeed, it seems that the conflict was more about the family's power than about Nahman's qualifications. Nevertheless, importance was clearly attached to the origin of the *smikhah*, and the matter was used by his opponents. Although we do not know when Nahman received *smikhah* and who the rabbis were in Emden and Amsterdam at the time, it seems unlikely that the reputation of Amsterdam's rabbis clearly would have been superior to those of Emden. The conflict dragged on until 1754 and only came to an end after the local authority intervened in favour of the chosen rabbi.⁵⁸

Rabbi Nahman remained in Leeuwarden for the rest of his life, although he is hardly mentioned in the *pinkas*. While his name is not explicitly included in any record, he is occasionally referred to indirectly as *av beth din*.⁵⁹ Unlike the early rabbis at The Hague, Nahman played an active role in Leeuwarden's community administration. When the election procedure was reorganised in 1765, he was the first to sign the regulation.⁶⁰ Apparently the governors recognised his position and respected his office. He died in 1769.

Nahman's successor established a far more powerful position in the community. In fact he was one of the few rabbis to have had consistent access to the *pinkas* and its contents. Rabbi Katriel ben Yehuda Leib was chosen during Sukkoth 1769. The record of the procedure also states the terms of employment for the new rabbi. In fact, these conditions

⁵⁶ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 5–9. Hertz Levi later adopted the name Werner Neumann, and moved to Utrecht, where he became a lecturer in oriental languages.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 50.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 27–29. One result of the conflict was the decision to keep a *pinkas*, which actually starts in 1754, see above, Chapter 2.

⁵⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 28, 44 and 84.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, record no. 106; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 24.

were recorded before the actual election record,⁶¹ so they must have been known to all the electors, and presumably also to the candidates. This procedure reduced the possibility of subsequent renegotiation to a minimum. The tenure was for three years, and the weekly salary was a mere six guilders, including free peat and housing. The terms also included a weekly pension of two guilders for Nahman's widow. Interestingly, the governors insisted that the future rabbi should be acknowledged by the Amsterdam halakhic authorities, which reflects the turmoil associated with Nahman's *smikhah* from Emden:⁶²

[...] ווייטר איזט גירעזולופֿהרט דש קיינר קאן נבחר ווירדן להיות אב"ד בקהילתינו, אם לא ער מוס אבסולוטא איין התרה האבין מהגאון הגדול המפורסם אב"ד דק"ק אמסטרדאם יע"א [...]

Of the three candidates who stood for the post, Katriel received fourteen votes, a clear mandate. The others were Shmuel Speyer and Seelig Metz, of whom the latter received the remained three votes.

Immediately after Katriel's appointment doubts were raised about his past and about his abilities as a religious leader. Leeuwarden's *parnassim* took this seriously and searched for witnesses to substantiate or crush these rumours, none of which are stated explicitly in the records.⁶³ They asked Rabbi Saul Halevi of The Hague, who apparently knew Katriel, for his opinion of the candidate's personality. Halevi responded in a short letter written in Hebrew, explaining that he had not wished to be the sole witness, so he had asked someone else, a certain Beer, about Katriel. Halevi could find nothing incriminating in Beer's testimony, and wrote as much in his letter.⁶⁴ In the end Halevi's exoneration convinced Leeuwarden's governors to accept Katriel as their rabbi.⁶⁵

The *parnassim* soon developed a good relationship with Katriel. As rabbi, he presumably played an active role in the community's life (although little of this is reflected in the records of the *sefer zikhronot*), in addition to which he was also consulted in matters not necessarily belonged to the competence of a rabbi. He often took part in the annual elections and was the first to sign the records, obviously as a form of

⁶¹ Ibid., record no. 142.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid., record no. 144; the full record appears in Appendix 2, no. 26.

⁶⁴ The letter was copied by the *parnassim* into the *sefer zikhronot* to ensure that written proof would be available if further questions arose in future. The text is part of record no. 144.

⁶⁵ On this issue see also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 50–51.

confirmation; it is a right that rabbis were rarely granted in other large Jewish communities.⁶⁶ The limited tenure of his appointment was never mentioned again in the records of the *pinkas*, which suggests that the community was happy with Katriel.

From 1780, Katriel signed his name as *honeh*, [i.e., verbatim, ‘resident’, but means ‘rabbi’] of the holy community of Leeuwarden and the *medine*.⁶⁷ This means that either his authority extended to other communities in the vicinity, or that a regional organisation had been established around 1780. The *sefer zikhronot*, however, mentions neither a change in the rabbi’s authority nor the founding of such an organisation. Katriel seems to have been in charge of the community of Harlingen,⁶⁸ but probably also of all the other Frisian communities in the latter part of the eighteenth century.

Remarkably, despite the harmony between the secular and religious branch, the *pinkas* does not mention the rabbi’s death. Katriel signed the electoral record of 1792, but we only learn of his passing with the selection of a new *av beth din* in the summer of 1793, when Katriel’s widow is also mentioned. Since the death of two rabbis was omitted in the *sefer zikhronot*, presumably this was not regarded as essential in Leeuwarden. Actually, Leeuwarden’s *pinkas* seems to paint a rather unusual picture of Katriel. The manuscript reveals the remarkably close cooperation between the *parnassim* and the rabbi in administration of the community, yet surprisingly little about Katriel’s activities in 23 years as the community’s religious leader.

As in 1770, there were three candidates for rabbi in 1793. Eliya, son of the late Rabbi Katriel, who lived in Amsterdam, Shabbatai ben Sussman Cohen (Katz), apparently the rabbi of Sokolov, but living in Hamburg, and Moshe, rabbi of an otherwise unknown community named Delmot. The terms of employment were again listed in advance and describe the anticipated duties in detail. The weekly salary was fixed at five guilders, which would rise to six after the death of Katriel’s widow.

Strikingly, the governors no longer insisted on an approbation from Amsterdam. Instead the terms state that the candidate should present a *hatarah* from a famous rabbi. According to another condition the new

⁶⁶ See, e.g., record nos. 147, 151, 192, 234 and 238 in the *sefer zikhronot*.

⁶⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 228.

⁶⁸ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 51. See also Chapter 7.

rabbi would have to bring his family to Leeuwarden within six months, presumably to prevent a situation developing in which the rabbi stayed away from the community for extended periods. The decision was conclusive: 22 votes for Shabtai Katz, and five for Eliya ben Katriel, with Moshe receiving none.⁶⁹ The choice of Katz, who had been a rabbi in the Polish town of Sokolov shows that the former reservations regarding foreign ordinations no longer applied in 1793.

Katz rarely appears in the records of the *sefer zikhronot*. In 1794 a decision by the *parnassim* emphasised that only the *hekhsher* of the community's own rabbi should be valid for cheese and wine. In the end it seems that Katz was probably not the right person for the job in Leeuwarden, since he decided to leave for Hamburg in 1799.⁷⁰ An indication of the lack of respect in which he was held is the absence of his signature in the election records; a significant change of a long-standing custom. Yet this can also be explained in two ways; the governors may not have wanted him to interfere in their business, or Katz may have preferred to keep his distance from the community's administration.

A gradual development can be seen in the religious leadership of Leeuwarden's Jewish community (as reflected in the *sefer zikhronot*), which is similar in a way to that of The Hague. Several brief appointments preceded a long, fruitful tenure characterised by mutual cooperation and respect between the secular and religious leadership of the community. Presumably these periods were successful years for both communities. In addition, though the observation is almost trivial, the personal relationships of the participants also dictated the quality of the administration of the communities.

Oisterwijk

The three Oisterwijk manuscripts provide data about the community's rabbis for the second half of the eighteenth century. These rabbis also served on a regional basis for Jews living elsewhere in the *meierij* of Den Bosch. The manuscripts start relatively late, covering a brief span of forty years (up to 1795). As a village, Oisterwijk's Jewish community always remained small. Which makes it all the more remarkable that

⁶⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 309.

⁷⁰ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 100.

the community had a rabbi of its own. He was clearly one of the dominant personalities in the community and played a prominent role in maintaining its administration.

Oisterwijk, in the mainly Catholic Generality territory of Brabant, was a young Jewish community when Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe arrived. Until then, Jewish life had been fostered by *Hevrat Se'adat Zekekinim*, the so-called *Reis hevra*. This organisation was based in Amsterdam and operated two travelling synagogues for the Jews who came to the fairs in Brabant. Yekutiel may in fact have been sent by the organisation to Oisterwijk to establish the permanent community.⁷¹

Rabbi Yekutiel described the early years in the *memorbukh*,⁷² which is written mainly in his hand. He portrays the meagre state of the community in 1757, a loose group of Jews with no synagogue and no *mikveh*. Yekutiel, who came from Poland before settling in Oisterwijk,⁷³ travelled to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague to collect money from the large communities for a synagogue and *mikveh* soon after his appointment. He managed to collect enough and states: **ובניתי בית הכנסת לפני הקהל בכאן כתבתי זאת** [..] **וזכרון בספר לדור אחרון שאני הייתי כנייל מתחיל ומגמיר במצוה** [..].⁷⁴ Yekutiel was obviously proud of the achievement, and presumably he earned the respect of the community. As a result of his central role in establishing the community, he remained immersed in its affairs, as several records in the *pinkassim* show.

As rabbi of Oisterwijk and the surrounding region Yekutiel was deeply involved in the formation of the local structures and therefore the natural person to record the first regulations of the regional organisation of the *meierij* of Den Bosch in 1764:⁷⁵

כל י"ד תקנות דיא אובן גימעלט זיין איזט גשריבן ווארדן ממני בביתי על שולחני פר כל הקהל מן אנזי מדינתינו אונט מפהם מיר פאר גיזאגט דיא תקנות דש כל בני מדינתינו צו פרידן וואהרן [..]

Yekutiel also signed the *takkanot*, apparently in confirmation. The extent of his involvement in formulating the regulations is unclear. However, since six of the fourteen paragraphs deal with the rabbi's

⁷¹ Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Unfortunately he does not mention his source for this detailed information.

⁷² Ros. 283, fol. 1 v.

⁷³ The *memorbukh* includes a record for his father, mentioning that he lived in Pinczow; Ros. 283, fol. 46. See also Bader, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–5.

⁷⁴ Ros. 283, fol. 1 v.

⁷⁵ Ros 282a, p. 8.

salary and his tasks, it seems probable that he was at least consulted and that he approved the result. Otherwise he could have refused to write the regulations into the *pinkas*. According to the regional *takkanot* the rabbi held a powerful position with authority to penalise individual members. Collecting revenue for the rabbi's salary is a major concern of the *takkanot* and was presumably also reflected in the regulations of the regional organisation. It would be fascinating to compare this with Yekutiel's position in the local community's *takkanot* of the same year, but unfortunately these have not survived.

Occasionally Yekutiel also approved the community's annual accounts,⁷⁶ the only rabbi in the four communities examined here to do so. In addition, he was involved in disciplinary measures against members of the community, as in 1770, when Benjamin Wolf bar David was expelled,⁷⁷ although Yekutiel was neither the secretary of the record nor the signatory.

The additional regulations of 1772 were enacted by the governors and the rabbi,⁷⁸ revealing that his influence in the community continued in the decades after its formation. None of the other *pinkassim* examined here mention the active participation of the rabbi in enacting the statutes or amendments. The apparent division between secular and religious leadership was not as clear and strict in Oisterwijk as in Jewish communities of the time. Yekutiel is last mentioned in the *pinkassim* in 1777, when he signed a record noting the gift of a Torah scroll to the synagogue by a member.⁷⁹

In later years Yekutiel may have moved to Den Bosch,⁸⁰ which might explain the absence of any further references to him, although there is no direct information to substantiate this. The absence of his name under Oisterwijk's new community regulations of 1782 is surprising, especially since his son Itzik is one of the signatories.⁸¹ Either way, he apparently died around 1782 or 1783,⁸² the exact date has not been established.

⁷⁶ For example: *ibid.*, p. 14.

⁷⁷ 8. Ros. 283, fol. 55 v; see above, Chapter 1.

⁷⁸ Ros. 282 a, p. 26.

⁷⁹ Ros. 282 b, p. 24.

⁸⁰ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 496. The short article on Oisterwijk does not mention the source of his assumption.

⁸¹ He gives his father's name without adding **ל"י**, indicating that the rabbi was still living. See Ros. 282 b, p. 1. Itzik was the secretary and *ne'eman*.

⁸² Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 7 claims that he died in 1780 in Oisterwijk, but again Bader does not provide a source for the assumption.

In 1783 representatives of the regional organisation chose a new rabbi, Eliya bar Nathan. He signed a decision by Oisterwijk community's governors using the title *av beth din* of the community.⁸³ He served as both regional and local rabbi, like his predecessor.

We know little about his relationship with the *gabbaim* of Oisterwijk, since he is rarely mentioned in the manuscripts. Some additional *takkanot*, enacted by the governors in 1786,⁸⁴ refer mainly to his tasks and authority, but the text is unsigned, so that we have no idea whether Eliya took part in formulating these regulations. He is last mentioned in the manuscripts in 1789, when the retiring *gabbaim* submitted their annual financial report at the home of the *av beth din*. Eliya did not sign this report, which suggests that while he was presumably well respected by the governors, the division of authority was probably more clearly defined in his case. He seems to have moved to Den Bosch in around 1790.⁸⁵

Eliya appears to have taken his duties as regional rabbi seriously, working to foster a sense of community and plans to build a synagogue in Den Bosch, which eventually failed following protests by the local non-Jewish population.⁸⁶ Eliya may have been trying to emulate his predecessor in laying the groundwork for a genuine Jewish community. The sources do not indicate when or where Eliya died.

In conclusion, there may have been a link between the small size of Oisterwijk's community and the prominent role of its rabbis, who seem to have enjoyed more status in their community than many rabbis elsewhere. Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe's prominent position clearly emerges from his active role in establishing the basic institutions of the Jewish community of Oisterwijk. On the other hand, rabbis who functioned in both a local and regional capacity may have enjoyed more status than those responsible for only one community,⁸⁷ although the two cases of Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk do not provide enough data to verify this assumption.

⁸³ Ros. 282 b, p. 21.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 27.

⁸⁵ Bader, *op. cit.*, p. 10.

⁸⁶ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 426.

⁸⁷ The regional organisation of AshPaH (acronym of the community names), comprising the communities of Ottensoos, Schnaittach, Forth and Huettenbach in Franconia is similar. Its rabbis were highly esteemed and kept the *pinkas* of Schnaittach for many years, or more precisely, wrote numerous records in it; see Hildesheimer, *op. cit.*, especially the edition of the original text.

Cantors, Ritual Slaughterers, Teachers, and Beadles

It is clear from the evidence that communities were not always able and did not always feel the need to employ a rabbi, although most communities did in fact do so. Unlike the rabbi, who enhanced the community's reputation, the positions a cantor and ritual slaughterer were relatively essential. Most communities tried at least to employ a *hazzan* or cantor who was familiar with the complexities of Jewish liturgy. The circumstances of appointments and contracts between communities and cantors differed from place to place. In smaller communities unable to pay more than a few salaries, the post of cantor might be combined with that of teacher, and sometimes also slaughterer. These posts are mentioned frequently in the *pinkassim*, whereas the less prominent *shamashim* or beadles appear only rarely.

The Hague

A cantor had been employed at The Hague since the community's earliest years. The regulations of 1723 list him as a community official without special mention, which shows the natural position he occupied in the community. In 1717, the governors appointed Menahem ben Peretz as cantor, a position he fulfilled for a further 47 years.⁸⁸ Because of the early date, the *pinkas* contains no details about him or the terms of his appointment.

It seems that the community's cantors served exclusively in The Hague. They had only one additional (voluntary) duty: the cantor and his wife ran the ritual bath, or *mikveh*.⁸⁹ The revenue from this key facility gave the cantor and his family an additional income, since everyone who used the bath paid a small fee to its attendants. This must have made a welcome addition, given the cantor's modest salary.⁹⁰ Menahem seems to have been assisted by his sons, since the names Jacob bar Menahem, Gershom ben Menahem and Benjamin ben Menahem are often mentioned as cantors in several records.⁹¹ In 1764, when his father

⁸⁸ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 187 v. In 1764 Menahem asked the *parnassim* to be able retire, on that occasion he stated that he had filled the position for 47 years.

⁸⁹ See, for example, *ibid.*, fols. 92 v, 239.

⁹⁰ Menahem's successor, Matatyahu, received 30 stuivers a week in the first years of his employment; GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 525; in later years his salary rose to thirteen guilders a week.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 165 v.

retired, Benjamin was appointed *ba'al kore* (Torah reader in synagogue) and later also cantor in 1784, when Menahem died.⁹² In the intervening years Matatyahu of Mosbach, formerly a cantor in Bayreuth, served as the main cantor in The Hague.⁹³

Matatyahu and Benjamin did not hold totally separate positions, as the instructions of the governors in 1767 show.⁹⁴ This record lists the different services that each led during the week. Both therefore served as cantor, although Matatyahu took the lion's share of the work. When Benjamin was appointed assistant cantor in 1785, their respective duties were redefined.⁹⁵ They led services on alternative Shabbatot. Matatyahu and Benjamin also shared another interest. In 1779, they were both warned by the *parnassim* not to visit the theatre or the opera on pain of temporary suspension, and if they persisted, permanent dismissal.⁹⁶ The secular entertainment of the Rococo era seems to have posed quite a problem in urban Jewish communities.⁹⁷ In fact there was even a Jewish theatre and opera company which put on operas in Yiddish. However, they performed primarily in Amsterdam,⁹⁸ so we cannot assume that Matatyahu and Benjamin were visiting exclusively Jewish performances. In addition to Matatyahu and Benjamin, the *pinkas* also records *meshorerim*, singers who accompanied the cantor in the synagogue services.

Besides cantors, the *pinkas* also refers to *shohtim* or slaughterers, who worked closely with the slaughterers of the Sephardi community. It seems that the Ashkenazim always employed more than one slaughterer, one being the senior, who rented the market where kosher meat was sold.⁹⁹ In 1739 Meir bar Benjamin became the community's main

⁹² Ibid., fol. 258 v. Menahem apparently insisted on keeping the title for life. After retiring he lived for almost 20 years without serving as cantor, yet his son was only officially appointed after Menahem's death.

⁹³ See his appointment in 1764, *ibid.*, fols. 187 v, 188. His *shtar hazzanut*, a beautiful certificate of appointment, is preserved in the Gemeentearchief; GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 525.

⁹⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 199 v.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 263.

⁹⁶ Ibid., fol. 244; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 13. On this issue see also Litt, 'Haag Jewish Community Minute Book (1723–1798), Gemeentearchief Den Haag, NIG Den Haag, no. 1', accessed on 29 January 2006: <http://www.earlymodern.org/workshops/summer2005/presenters/litt/01/intro.php>.

⁹⁷ See Shochat, *op. cit.*, pp. 68–79.

⁹⁸ Fuks-Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, pp. 188–189.

⁹⁹ This was the case in 1730; *ibid.*, fol. 62; and in 1749; *ibid.*, fol. 133 v.

slaughterer,¹⁰⁰ a position he retained for at least 36 years. He was followed by his two sons Yidle and Hirtz, who served as community slaughterers from 1774 on, although their father continued to receive the salary and was regarded as the official slaughterer until his death.¹⁰¹

This is a similar arrangement to the appointment of *Hazzan* Menahem and his son Benjamin. These two examples show how this custom was used in The Hague to ensure the respect and income of elderly community officials who were no longer able to continue their profession due to their age. It demonstrates a certain sense of social responsibility of the governors for the community's employees.

Parents were apparently responsible for finding their own teachers for their sons in the Ashkenazi community. There is little information in the manuscript about teachers, most of whom were poor and looked for work from one community to the next. For example, the teachers in The Hague included a certain David Bomsler in 1731;¹⁰² seven years later he was appointed *ne'eman* and cantor in Middelburg in 1738,¹⁰³ and doubtless also looked for work in other communities too. In 1724 the governors warned heads of families not to withhold teachers' salaries for longer than 30 days.¹⁰⁴ This public admonition suggests that families were not always punctual in paying teachers, whether through negligence or inability, further proof of the hard life that Jewish teachers often led.

In 1726 the *parnassim* decided to fund the studies of ten boys whose parents were unable to pay for their education. They distributed the boys among three teachers and outlined a syllabus, consisting mainly of Chumash and Mishnah. Moshe Cohen, who taught seven of the children, was promised a salary of two guilders a week; the other two, who taught two boys, received six stuivers a week.¹⁰⁵ In addition, in 1728 a Talmud Torah rabbi was engaged, responsible for advanced studies in Talmud. The first rabbi of the school was Jacob Shalom, who was also employed to decide halakhic questions.¹⁰⁶ The Talmud Torah rarely appears in the *pinkas*. Either its affairs were recorded in a different manuscript, or they may have been discussed without decisions

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., fol. 100 v. In that year he married and therefore asked for a raise.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., fol. 229.

¹⁰² Ibid., fol. 70.

¹⁰³ Zecuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 46.

¹⁰⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 22.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., fol. 38.

¹⁰⁶ See above, chapter 3, section: *Rabbis and poskim*.

being recorded at all. From the few records mentioning teachers and the Talmud Torah school it seems that this issue was not of central concern for the governors. Typically, this changed with the advent of emancipation and the new importance attached to education.

In addition to these positions, the community also had a beadle, who is mentioned in some of the *pinkas* records. However, the issues involved are insignificant and hardly worth discussing.

In general, the continuity of the community's affairs in The Hague is reflected in the stability of its officials, some of whom were employed for several decades. Rabbi Saul Halevi, cantors Menahem and Matatyahu, and the slaughterer Meir ben Benjamin remained in The Hague almost all their lives. As permanent fixtures, they contributed significantly to the stability of this Ashkenazi community.

Middelburg

The situation was rather different in Middelburg. Firstly, there was no separation of functions: the cantor served as *ne'eman* (secretary and notary), as well as *more tzedek* (teacher) of sons of needy families, at least until the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰⁷ Secondly, unlike The Hague, a contract for a cantor lasted only six months, until annual contracts were introduced in 1763. Yet for the following decades there is almost no information about cantors or their appointment, since the manuscript does not contain these records for this period.

Subsequent records of appointments of cantors fill much of the *pinkas*, since these were written up every six months in the first decades of the manuscript. Almost all were recorded by the cantors themselves since, as *ne'eman*, they also kept the *pinkas*. While the issue of cantors therefore seems to have been central in Middelburg, on closer inspection this impression is simply due to the numerous appointments and renewals of contracts. Another consequence of these brief contracts was a sense of unrest in the community, since every six months or year the synagogue might have a new cantor. This would hardly have helped maintain a sense of community, although some cantors remained without

¹⁰⁷ This was not always the meaning of the title *more tzedek*. In the eighteenth century in Schnaittach, a large community in Franconia, the *more tzedek* was a deputy of the regional rabbi; see Hildesheimer, *op. cit.*, p. 41. Since two of the individuals appointed as *more tzedek* were also rabbis, they may also have served as substitute rabbis. As we have seen, there is little information about rabbis in Middelburg.

interruption for several years, regularly updating their contracts. In the end, the custom of short-term contracts may be seen as an additional factor in the apparent demise of the Middelburg community in the course of the eighteenth century.

The 1725 *takkanot* obliged the community to employ certain officials. Paragraph 20 states that besides a rabbi, the community should employ a cantor, a slaughterer and a beadle. Clearly the compilers of these regulations felt the need to emphasise this, while in The Hague it was a matter of course and is not discussed in the *takkanot* or its amendments.

Altogether, the *pinkas* mentions eleven cantors (ש״ץ ונאמן), and two additional teachers. Both teachers stayed in Middelburg for a short period in the mid-eighteenth century.¹⁰⁸ Presumably this was either because the cantor was a poor teacher, or because the *parnassim* wished to change the community's custom. The cantors tended to serve between two to five years, with their contracts being regularly renewed. The records offer no clues why the different cantors decided to leave: whether they moved to a new community,¹⁰⁹ or whether there was an unwritten law in Middelburg that no cantor would serve for more than a few years. There probably is no clear answer.

Only in one instance is it possible that the community may have demanded a new cantor. Mordekhai ben Israel of Glogau had been cantor, teacher and secretary for four years, one of the longest tenures in Middelburg, when he was replaced by Tzvi Hirsch from the Corvey region in Germany in 1755. It seems that Mordekhai neither expected this nor did he wish to leave Middelburg, so he complained about his successor to the *parnassim*. He apparently claimed that Hirsch was not qualified to serve as a cantor. The governors responded by asking for witnesses regarding Hirsch's past and certificates of his qualifications, which were supplied by Rabbi Jonathan Eybeschutz of Altona, Hamburg and Wandsbek, and Rabbi Isaac Ashkenazi of Hanau. Besides these famous scholars, Rabbi Abraham ben Yehuda Lipschutz of Rotterdam affirmed the candidate's professional qualities

¹⁰⁸ Zecuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 57, 59–62, 105. Both Itzik Gershom of Leszno (Lissa) and Avigdor ben Shlomo of Wodzislaw (?) came from Poland, and both are addressed as מְהַרְיָר, i.e., they were rabbis.

¹⁰⁹ E.g., David Bomsler, who spent a year in Middelburg, after The Hague, where he taught at the local Talmud Torah; *ibid.*, pp. 46, 48. See above chapter 3, section: *Cantors, Ritual Slaughterers, Teachers, and Beadles.*

and the authenticity of his certificates. These rabbis were influential figures and Hirsch certainly knew them personally. Isaak Ashkenazi even affirmed that Hirsch had qualified as a ritual slaughterer under his tutelage. Mordekhai's attempt to slander Hirsch failed, and he was condemned as a liar.¹¹⁰ The case illustrates the potential conflicts among the numerous competing cantors who were constantly looking for new contracts, however short-term.

It is noticeable that almost all of the cantors included their native town as part of their signature. Most, it appears, came from Poland. Communities are mentioned such as Krotoszyn,¹¹¹ Wisnicza,¹¹² Tykocin¹¹³ and Glogowa (Glogau),¹¹⁴ while only one cantor came from Germany, from Corvey.¹¹⁵ This is indicative of the general situation of Dutch Jewry.¹¹⁶

Leeuwarden

The customs that pertained in Leeuwarden are a mixture of those of The Hague and Middelburg. As in The Hague, different officials were employed for different tasks. In practice, however, the divisions were less clear. We know about the cantors prior to 1754, when the first records were inscribed in the *sefer zikhronot*, from Beem's research into the community. Salomon Cohen was the cantor of the community in 1715; he is recorded in later sources as Tzadok Katz.¹¹⁷ Apparently, he continued to serve as cantor in Leeuwarden for many years. He is mentioned in *pinkas* records between 1759¹¹⁸ and 1766.¹¹⁹ He probably died shortly before 1771 when the *ba'al kore*, Yuspa Yehiel, was appointed cantor.¹²⁰ In other words, Tzadok Katz seems to have spent almost fifty uninterrupted years in Leeuwarden as the community's cantor.

¹¹⁰ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 81–82; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 18.

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 37.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 77.

¹¹⁶ See further below in this chapter.

¹¹⁷ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 53.

¹¹⁸ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 54.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, record no. 120.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*, record no. 158.

Yehiel, who was the *ba'al kore* and *sofer* (scribe) of the community starting no later than 1755,¹²¹ had to be content with short-term contracts in his first years at Leeuwarden. This is reminiscent of the situation in Middelburg, although in Leeuwarden Yehiel had a realistic opportunity of a modest career. Being the *sofer*, he was apparently the person responsible for keeping the *sefer zikhronot*, although few of the records bear his signature. If he was not authorised to sign the records this may reflect his different title: being a *sofer*, rather than a *ne'eman*, he did not have the authority of a notary. A *sofer* is a writer of religious texts.

From 1771 on, Yehiel was responsible for the synagogue services, although he was still employed on a temporary basis.¹²² While the record of his appointment states that he had to give up the office and income of cantor if the governors employed a new specialised cantor, he was apparently never replaced. In 1780, he was still serving as cantor when Feis, the beadle, was appointed deputy cantor.¹²³ Three years earlier a major crisis had occurred in Yehiel's relations with the *parnasim*, which eventually led to a case before the burgomasters, were the parties reached an agreement on the terms of Yehiel's employment.¹²⁴ He apparently died in the early 1790s. In 1794, Abraham ben Jacob was appointed cantor, the first in Leeuwarden to combine this office with that of ritual slaughterer. His appointment for a mere half year also recalls the practice in Middelburg.¹²⁵

Until then, unlike Middelburg, the two positions had been separate appointments. This suggests that, like The Hague, the community in Leeuwarden was large enough to employ different individuals for these positions. In 1757, Jacob ben Joel Levi served as the community's slaughterer;¹²⁶ by 1774 three slaughterers were providing the Jews of Leeuwarden with kosher meat.¹²⁷

Besides the beadle,¹²⁸ another official is mentioned in Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot*, that of gravedigger and synagogue childminder, whose

¹²¹ Ibid., record no. 20. He was paid in 1761, for serving as cantor; *ibid.*, record no. 78.

¹²² Ibid., record no. 158.

¹²³ Ibid., record no. 229.

¹²⁴ Ibid., record no. 204; see also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 54.

¹²⁵ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 318. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 55.

¹²⁶ Ibid., record no. 35.

¹²⁷ Ibid., record no. 180.

¹²⁸ See records 34, 40, 48, 49, 93, 184, 290.

tasks were presumably performed by other officials in other communities. This post is mentioned comparatively late in the manuscript. Hirsch ben Joseph was appointed childminder and gravedigger in 1778, and his contract was renewed ten years later.¹²⁹

A record of a decision by the governors in 1760 concerning the wages of the community's officials reveals a remarkable gradation, which did not necessarily correspond to the position's status. The text lists the annual income for the Jewish year of 5521, in which the cantor was paid 30 guilders, the beadle 50 guilders, the *ba'al kore* (and *sofer*) 80 guilders and the slaughterer 65 guilders.¹³⁰ The salary probably reflects the intensity of the work rather than its religious importance.

In summary, the governors of Leeuwarden's community clearly attempted to maintain a sense of continuity in the various community positions. However, some records suggest that they remained cautious in appointing new officials. The only way to obtain an open-ended contract seems to have been to start by accepting short-term contracts. In the end, this practice enhanced the stability of Leeuwarden's community.

Oisterwijk

The only community official in Oisterwijk about whom any information exists (apart from the rabbi) is the cantor, who also served as *melamed* (teacher) and *ne'eman*. His appointment is rarely an issue in the *pinkas* records. All three manuscripts mention a total of four cantors in Oisterwijk in the second half of the eighteenth century. Of these only Sussman ben Shmuel Abraham served for any length of time. Due to the lack of information about the appointment, the signatures of the *ne'emanim* provide the only evidence of the cantor's tenure. Sussmann's signature first appears in 1779,¹³¹ and continues until 1802.¹³² In this period, only one record was ever signed by a different individual with the title of a cantor and *ne'eman*: Gabriel ben Meir in 1786.¹³³ The only record of Sussmann's appointment does not actually refer to his position as cantor, but to his continuation as a teacher of the

¹²⁹ Ibid., record no. 215 and 274. The second record mentions Gottlieb ben Joseph, which may have been another name for the same person. Yet it is also possible that Gottlieb was not Hirsch.

¹³⁰ Ibid., record no. 59.

¹³¹ Ros 282 a, p. 50.

¹³² Ibid., p. 60.

¹³³ Ros. 282 b, p. 24.

community's children for another year.¹³⁴ It is therefore impossible to discover the terms of his appointment, in contrast to the cantors of the other three communities. Yet Sussman's long tenure shows that there must have been a similar desire to instil a sense of continuity in the office in Oisterwijk.

The *pinkassim* reveal numerous details about the appointment and employment of community officials. While each community employed various officials, the definition of their tasks differed considerably. Similarly, the number of officials in each community also varied, depending on its size. Large communities like The Hague and Leeuwarden employed more officials than small communities like Oisterwijk, where only the combined office of cantor and *ne'eman* appears in the official records. Middelburg's community was probably large enough to employ several officials, but due to the unique development of this community there were rarely—according to the *pinkas*—more than two officials at any one time.

The *pinkassim* examined here reveal other patterns too. Most communities tended to employ officials for longer periods. Officials with temporary contracts at the start of their career could expect to renew their agreement. In The Hague and Leeuwarden some officials stayed in office for life. In several cases the governors even appointed sons to succeed their fathers maybe for providing a deeper sense of continuity. This is particularly true of the position of cantor and slaughterer in The Hague. Whether this continuity made a community more successful is impossible to tell here, since the statistical basis is too small. It is striking, however, that the two established communities in The Hague and Leeuwarden tended to employ officials on a more permanent basis. This may indicate a direct link and should be kept in mind in future investigations into community administration.¹³⁵

Another interesting fact is the concern for the probity of community officials. The smallest doubt concerning the morals of a candidate or an official, past or present, was enough for the governors to start an investigation. An accurate record of the investigation (although not

¹³⁴ Ibid., pp. 20–21.

¹³⁵ See L. Fuks, 'East European Jews in the Netherlands' in R. G. Fuks-Mansfeld (ed.), *Aspects of Jewish Life in the Netherlands: A Selection from the Writings of Leo Fuks* (Assen 1995), p. 196, in which he mentions a similar case regarding Amsterdam and the Ashkenazi rabbi Saul Loewenstamm.

the accusations) was crucial for the governors. In the case of *Hazzan* Tzvi Hirsch at Middelburg and Rabbi Katriel in Leeuwarden, fascinating documents reveal the governors' efforts to obtain dependable information about their past, and professional and religious reliability. This reflects the importance of employing officials who would meet the ethical and religious standards set by the governors enshrined in the community statutes.

The *pinkasim* also reveal that many officials originated from Eastern Europe. Their superior scholarship was widely acknowledged, a phenomenon that appears in other regions and communities too, described, for example, by Leo Fuks with regard to Amsterdam.¹³⁶

¹³⁶ Ibid., pp. 196–197.

CHAPTER FOUR

MEMBERS, ORIGINS, AND PATTERNS OF MIGRATION

Not every adult Jewish man living in a city or village was automatically a member of the local Jewish community. Jews generally had to fulfil a number of conditions in order to become a full member holding *hazakah*, membership, giving the right to vote in elections, to be elected as a *parnas* or *gabbai*, and the obligation to contribute taxes based on income. This system resembles the organisation of burghers in early modern towns,¹ suggesting that both systems have common origins. An interesting aspect of the role of membership within the concept of community is the position of women members. A few records in the manuscripts indicate that women were able to become independent members, not just as wives of *ba'alei battim*.² Applicants for membership from outside the community present another intriguing group: where did they come from, what general patterns of migration do the sources indicate? These questions are of importance for the history of Dutch Jewry in the context of the wider European Jewish world.

Naturally membership is important enough to be defined in the community regulations. As a rule, a Jew who wished to join a community had to pay a one-off sum, generally known as *hakdamah*. The amount differed from one community to the next, from five guilders in The Hague,³ seven and a half guilders in Oisterwijk,⁴ to three rijksdaalders in Middelburg.⁵ In Oisterwijk, however, theory and practice differed. Most records of admissions of new members mention sums of five guilders and less. Some also paid more than the regular seven and a half guilders. In The Hague, bridegrooms from outside the community had

¹ R. van Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag in der Frühen Neuzeit*, vol. 2: *Dorf und Stadt*, 16.–18. Jahrhundert (Munich 1999), pp. 81–82.

² The Hebrew term for a full member of a community: a householder or head of a family.

³ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 2. The later *takkanot* mention ten guilders; GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, fol. 43, paragraph 14; *ibid.*, no. 1, regulations paragraph 44.

⁴ Ros 282b, p. 11, paragraph 21.

⁵ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, fol. 1, paragraph 1.

to pay an additional quarter percent of their dowry.⁶ These sums were payable by Jews who were not children of existing members. For sons of members who were about to marry and start their own household, the *hakdamah* was usually lower, varying from one guilder in Oisterwijk to five guilders in The Hague, according to the regulations of 1716 and 1723. This was the same amount paid by a Jew from outside the community who married into a member's family.

Since no *takkanot* survive from Leeuwarden, we have to rely on the few records in the *sefer zikhronot* relating to membership. It seems there was no fixed sum payable by new members. The amounts paid vary from three⁷ to 26 guilders.⁸ This range suggests that the size of the family may have been a factor: single individuals paid less than large families. And there was also the question of a person's financial position. In 1785, a man named Abraham ben Mordekhai of Sneek (Friesland) paid two ducats to join,⁹ which was high for a single man. Presumably, therefore, he was wealthy.

Imposing different sums on locals and Jews from outside the community was common and occurred in many Ashkenazi communities, although the actual amounts varied. While no regulation ever mentions a minimum capital requirement for an applicant from outside the community, clearly in practice it was necessary to have a certain amount of capital. On the other hand, possessing capital was no guarantee that a person would be accepted (had this been the case there would have been no reason for some Jews not to have been full members): there was clearly an unspoken rule that only those who had enough capital to qualify to pay taxes and to contribute to the community would be eligible. At the same time, the governors often miscalculated the wealth of a potential member, or were intentionally misled.¹⁰ All the manuscripts contain threats and punishments against individuals who failed to pay their taxes regularly. In 1753, the governors in The Hague decided to raise the fee for new members to 100 guilders, because, as the record states, too many outsiders had come to the city, imposing

⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 3.

⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 111.

⁸ *Ibid.*, record no. 235.

⁹ *Ibid.*, record no. 247.

¹⁰ This problem occurred in many communities. One way of avoiding this difficulty was to administer oaths in which people testified regarding their true wealth. The texts of these oaths can be found in German *pinkassim*, e.g., in that of Friedberg, see Litt, *op. cit.* (2003 [a]), p. 197. The Friedberg oath dates from 1664.

a financial burden on the members. This demonstrates the attraction of The Hague's community at the time, and as well the desire of the *pinkassim* to limit the influx of needy Jews who were a drain on the community's resources.

Besides having sufficient income, new members were also required to acknowledge the community's regulations. This is the reason for the lists of signatures of new members in the *pinkassim* of The Hague and Middelburg.¹¹ By signing, new members declared that they knew and would adhere to the community's *takkanot*.

There was also a time limit for signing the *takkanot* as a new member in The Hague and Middelburg. In The Hague this had to be done within thirty days of becoming a member, otherwise the *hakdamah* was increased.¹² In Middelburg, severe penalties could be imposed after three months:¹³ exclusion from community services, including the purchase of kosher meat. Moreover, new members were not eligible for election until after three years of membership.

All these rules were enacted to maintain control over the community's size, enabling the governors to manage its revenue from taxes and contributions. It was also important to keep a clear separation between members and non-members when negotiating with local authorities who were constantly concerned about the rising number of poor Jews. The *pinkassim* show this to have been the main objection of the burgomasters, although in most towns there was no reluctance in principle to admit Jews.¹⁴

Standard membership was only available to Jewish men, who could join as a married couple, or, as in Leeuwarden, as a single person. The situation was more complicated for women. In early modern times, it was commonly accepted that women followed their menfolk, from whom they took their civil status, or their membership of a Jewish community. In the non-Jewish world women could become citizens independently,¹⁵

¹¹ See above, chapter 1, section: *The Authority of the Leadership and its Acknowledgement*.

¹² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, fol. 43, paragraphs 13 and 14.

¹³ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 2.

¹⁴ Beem discusses the attempts of Leeuwarden's burgomasters to limit the number of Jews; Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 21–22. However, he does not explain their motives. The most famous exception is probably the city of Utrecht, where no Jews were admitted after a decision of the provincial assembly in 1712, see Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 563.

¹⁵ M. E. Wiesner, 'Gender and the Worlds of Work', in: B. Scribner (ed.), *Germany: A New Social and Economic History*, vol. 1: 1450–1630 (London 1996), p. 216.

but women only became independent members of a Jewish community when they were widowed.

The *pinkassim* examined here reveal various cases of widows joining a community. In 1739, Beile, daughter of Abraham Katz of Prague, called 'di mome', became a member of the Hague community, paying ten guilders.¹⁶ In Oisterwijk, another widow, Serkhe and her son were admitted to the community. Serkhe paid two rijksdaalders.¹⁷ A widow's status was therefore almost comparable to an adult Jewish man, although without the right to vote or be elected. A widow's household had the official administrative status of a regular community household. This appears from the *pletten* lists in Middelburg, which after 1749 often included households of widows who were members.¹⁸

A girl born into a member's family automatically became a member of the community. If she married a man from outside the community he would have to acquire membership. It was also possible for young women to lose their membership. For example, in 1773, two unmarried sisters, Sara and Haye Goch were expelled from the community due to their promiscuous behaviour.¹⁹ It is clear from this case that both were members and belonged to an established family. The *pletten* lists in the Middelburg *pinkas* also mention the household of a woman named Hanna bat Menahem, who was not a widow but was nevertheless included,²⁰ although she is never mentioned in any other *pinkas* records. She may have remained unmarried for many years, but since she was obliged to host needy Jews on Shabbat at her home, she apparently had the administrative status of member.

Membership was not only about the procedure of joining a community. When individuals or families moved away or left the community without moving to another town, they had to settle their affairs with the community. Governors were always concerned about their community's financial situation. In The Hague, a *ba'al bait* had to pay off all past and present fees and taxes before moving. This was enshrined in earliest regulations of 1701,²¹ and none of the community's later

¹⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 100v.

¹⁷ Ros 282a, p. 56.

¹⁸ For example: Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg no. 1, pp. 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77.

¹⁹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 223v. See also Chapter 1; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 12.

²⁰ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg no. 1, pp. 65, 67, 69, 71, 73, 75, 77.

²¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 3, paragraph 13.

takkanot mention the issue. In Middelburg, like most other Ashkenazi communities, those who wished to leave the community had to pay a lump sum, or continue to contribute as before.²²

באם איין בעל בית מקהילתינו יצ"ו יהיה מי שיהי' דער אין קהל איז, אונ' מעכט ניט וועלין נושא בעול זיין אונ' איז זיך פורש מן הציבור, אזו לנג אז ער זיך ניט אויז גקויפט האט אונ' צאלט יו"ד ר"ט אן קהל, מוז ער אין אלה זאכין נושא בעולם זיין גלייך דיא אנדרה ב"ב דקהילתינו יצ'

This is not only about a *ba'al bait* moving away.²³ Members might forfeit their status yet continue to live in the same town. This does not necessarily reflect a process of secularisation, which would hardly have been accepted in this way in the regulations. It seems to refer to those whose income fell and were unable to contribute taxes, forcing them to give up the status of full member. No statutes ever refer to the possibility, but cases certainly occurred. Another Middelburg regulation hints at this, stating that a person would lose their membership if they failed to pay their contribution for three years.²⁴ The Oisterwijk and Leeuwarden manuscripts remain silent on this issue; they contain no ordinances or records of members who voluntarily left the community.

Jews who were not members of a community were known as *toshavim* (residents). In most cases they were presumably poor individuals and families, who made use of the community's facilities. They participated in the services in synagogue and bought kosher food, and some drew support from the community's poor fund. None of the *pinkassim* provide any lists of the names of *toshavim* or their number. Yet here and there references to the group occur, revealing the constant concern of the governors for these Jews, who were precisely the people the local authorities tolerated least. [In addition there may have been individuals who preferred not to pay as much as their income might warrant and forfeited their status.] The moral duty to support the poor forced governors to deal with this issue on a daily basis. Some of the *toshavim* were better off than others: in The Hague those who could were required to contribute a minimum sum to the poor fund. The regulations of 1717

²² Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 5, paragraph 33.

²³ Similar cases occurred in Germany. Heads of families sometimes kept up their membership of their previous community in an apparent attempt to ensure a safe haven in case they failed to settle successfully in their new home; see Graupe, *op. cit.* (vol. 1), p. 137.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4, paragraph 30.

set the contribution at one stuiver a week. Each contributor was entitled to participate in the *mitzvot* in synagogue, except on High Holidays and for Torah readings, which were reserved for regular members.²⁵ The later regulations of 1723 merely mention the restrictions of the *mitzvot*.²⁶ The sources show that in Amsterdam *toshavim* usually contributed to the poor fund, but did not pay a membership fee, and so were lower in rank to full members.²⁷

Middelburg also had its *toshavim* of relatively better economic standing. In 1752, 1774 and 1778 some were included in the *pletten* lists, obliging them to host poor families for Shabbat. According to the list, some of the *toshavim* actually hosted more guests than regular members.²⁸ In 1752 the distribution was almost even: the list included 17 members and 12 *toshavim*. Presumably the *toshavim* who were included had sufficient income to host Shabbat guests. In fact, there may have been more *toshavim* in the community than full members.

Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot* provides annual lists of people who received flour for Pesach and peat in winter. However, the lists never state whether these are members of the community or *toshavim*. Not enough information is offered in the *pinkassim* to be able to examine the issue properly. Indeed, in general the poor left little evidence of their existence in the sources. Oisterwijk's *takkanot* also mention *toshavim*. Paragraph 23 of the regulations states the fees for the use of the ritual bath, listing three categories: women members, women married to *toshavim*, and guests.²⁹ *Toshavim* play no further role in any of the records of the three manuscripts, suggesting that their number was small in Oisterwijk. Yet the *toshavim* may have included relatively well-off families who preferred not to be members. In the late eighteenth century especially there must have been cases of individuals who left the community voluntarily due to basic differences with the leadership.³⁰ It is doubtful whether they would then have been able to benefit from the services provided by the community.

By signing their name in the *pinkas*, new members of The Hague and Middelburg declared that they knew and would adhere to the regulations.

²⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 625, fol. 42v.

²⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 39.

²⁷ Belinfante, *op. cit.*, pp. 214–215.

²⁸ ZA, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 71, 116.

²⁹ Ros 282b, p. 14.

³⁰ For examples see Chapter 1 section: *The Authority of the Leadership*.

The Hague *pinkas* contains 20 pages filled with 570 signatures of heads of families between the years 1723 and 1798.³¹ The Middelburg *pinkas* has only five pages with a total of 88 signatures covering the years 1724 to 1797.³² Despite this difference in the number of new members, the identical nature of the sources, covering a similar period, enables the statistical information they conceal to be distilled in a comparison of the number of new members joining each year and the estimated size of the two communities. In addition, some new members from outside or already settled in The Hague or Middelburg also mention their place of origin. This provides new insights into the migration of Ashkenazi Jews in the eighteenth century, both into and within the Dutch Republic.³³

Occasionally the lists also contain remarks alongside the signature, apparently by the *ne'eman*. These generally concern how the new member is related to an established family. In most cases the new member is a son or son-in-law of an existing member.

A comparison of the annual lists of signatures in the course of 75 years is provided in the first graph (fig. 1). Jewish years are used here since these are the dates found in the *pinkassim*.³⁴ The graph shows how different in size the two communities were. There were almost always more new members per year in The Hague than in Middelburg, with the exception of 5489 (1728/29) and 5543 (1782/83). In some years no new families joined the Middelburg community at all. This never happened in The Hague, which reflects the community's prestige, its internal dynamic, and the attraction of the town. The statistical basis for Middelburg is too small to supply reliable data for further consideration. It is striking that for two-thirds of the period there were hardly any significant changes or developments in the pattern of new members. This ended in 5539 (1778/79), when a new period started that

³¹ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fols. 16, 16v., 17v.–18v., 19v., 24v., 25v., 26v., 27v., 28v., 29v., 30v., 31v., 32v., 33v., 34v., 35v. 36v., 37v. The regular distribution of the lists in the first part of the *pinkas* suggests that the *ne'emanim* had left spaces in advance.

³² Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 9–12, 14.

³³ Little research has been done into Jewish migration to the Dutch Republic. On Amsterdam see Y. Kaplan, 'Amsterdam and Ashkenazi Migration in the Seventeenth Century', in: idem, *An Alternative Path to Modernity: The Sephardi Diaspora in Western Europe* (Leiden 2000), *passim*.

³⁴ The Jewish year is luni-solar. The new year can fall in either September or October. The year 5000 corresponds with the Christian year 1239/40. A simple way to calculate the Christian year from the Jewish year is therefore to subtract 5000 and add 1239/40.

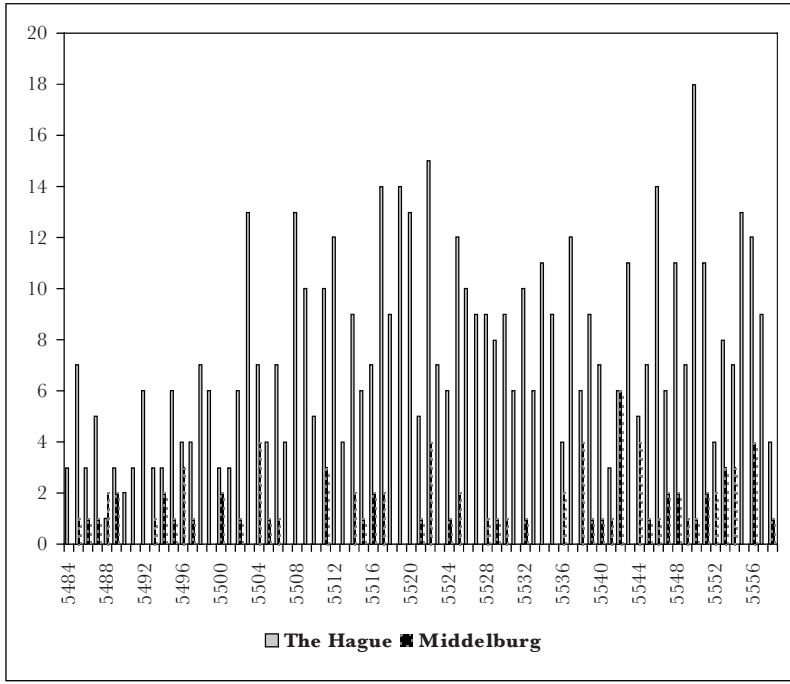


Fig. 1: *New members of the communities in The Hague and Middelburg 5484–5558 (1723–1798)*

continued for some two decades. It should be borne in mind that the population of The Hague remained relatively stable in the eighteenth century while Middelburg experienced a severe decline.³⁵ This may have affected Jewish population patterns.

A similar trend is shown in the last period in The Hague, although the numbers are considerably higher. By contrast, in the first 20 years, the number of new members remained relatively low; immigration does not seem to have played a major role in The Hague at that time. In the first few years it is unclear whether the signatures are by new members or by people who had already been members for some time and had delayed affirming the regulations. The first mention of a person specifically from outside The Hague dates from 5493 (1732/33),

³⁵ See the population statistics and development described in the Introduction, section: *Historical Background of the Netherlands*.

when a man from Amsterdam signed the *pinkas*.³⁶ A few years later, two people joined the community from Hamburg and Prague,³⁷ after which rarely a year passed without new members arriving in The Hague. Throughout the period, 69 signatures occur of persons who apparently migrated to The Hague.

Naturally there are several methodological problems with this kind of material. There is no indication whether migrants came directly from the places they mention, or whether they spent time in other communities, or even in The Hague without being a member. Indeed, some new members may not have felt a need to mention their origins at all. The graph therefore only includes signatures stating a place of origin, i.e., geographical names with the Hebrew prefix *mi*. In other cases geographical names may simply be surnames, such as Witzhausen, which appears several times without a prefix. This name is found elsewhere in the *pinkas* in other records, indicating that it was a surname.

Of the group of individuals who apparently migrated to The Hague, around 30 percent, i.e., 21 individuals, came from inside the Dutch Republic, six from Amsterdam, and three each from Leiden and Delfgauw, a small village near The Hague. As the second graph shows, Jews came to The Hague from nine different places. Apart from those from Nijmegen and Eindhoven, all were from the province of Holland. Most of the towns are known to have had Jewish communities. Only the small villages around The Hague may not have had a separate community, since some are mentioned in *pinkas* records and were apparently connected to the central community, as often happened in the early modern Ashkenazi world.³⁸

The number of German Jews arriving in The Hague is even more significant than the advent of Dutch Jews. An analysis of the 23 signatures of individuals from Germany reveals a wide distribution of 15 places of origin. Four Jews from Fürth comprise the largest sub-group, with two each from Hamburg, Worms, Mannheim and Dresden. The remaining eleven places are mentioned only once (fig. 3). These were the major urban communities in eighteenth-century Germany, with the exception of Barby, Usingen, Kirburg, Nordstetten and Geldern. Most

³⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 16v.

³⁷ Ibid.

³⁸ These would have formed a *medina*. However, this term never appears in the context of The Hague and its surrounding Jewish settlements. See Chapter 7, on regional organisations. On similar structures in Poland, see Rosman, *op. cit.*, p. 138.

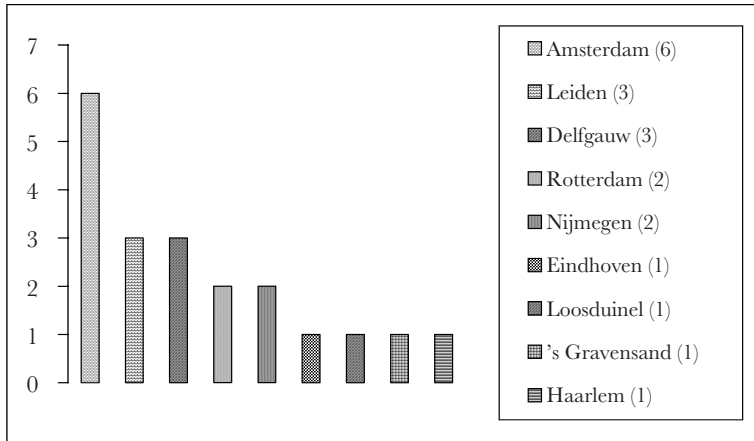


Fig. 2: Dutch Jewish migrants to The Hague 1723–1789

German Jews who arrived in The Hague came from western Germany, only those from Berlin, Strelitz, Barby, Dresden and Breslau came from central or eastern Germany.

Four other countries are mentioned: Poland, Bohemia and Moravia, France and the Holy Land. Six Jews came to The Hague from Poland and Ukraine: two from Poznan, two from Hruzka, one from Lesznó (Lissa) and one from Cieszyn (Teschen).³⁹ Three came from Prague and another two from Lipnik nad Bečvou, referred to in the *pinkas* as Leipnik. All the Czech Jews came after 1744, the year of the expulsion of the Jews from Bohemia, so that we may assume that a connection existed between their presence and the expulsion. Two other signatures are by Jews from Türkheim in Alsace, while one signatory added *ish Yerushalaim*.⁴⁰ Eleven other places remain unidentified due either to the illegible handwriting or the obscurity of the geographical name.

Despite the considerably smaller number of signatures in the Middelburg *pinkas*, the geographical names mentioned here also deserve inclusion. Seven places are listed, each mentioned once. One of these remains unidentified, so that only six places can be positively located: Dessau, Workum, Hamburg, Leeuwarden, Prague and Breslau. Once

³⁹ In contrast to Shulvas's comment that a new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe arrived in the major Dutch communities in the second half of the eighteenth century, including The Hague, the numbers remain surprisingly small; M. A. Shulvas, *From East to West: The Westward Migration of Jews from Eastern Europe During the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Detroit 1971), p. 91.

⁴⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 18.

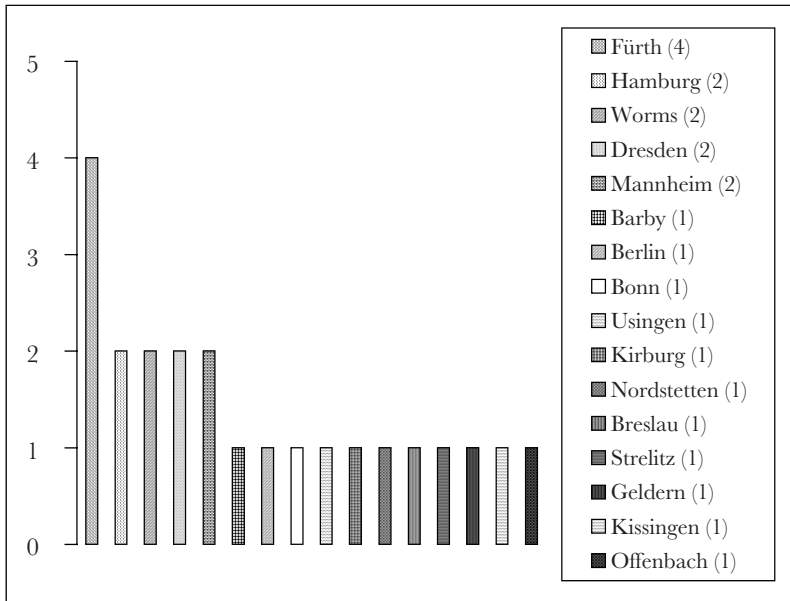


Fig. 3: *German Jewish migrants to The Hague 1723–1789*

again the places from Germany form the largest group with three places, followed by two from the Low Countries and the one from Bohemia.

In general, the statistics confirm the accepted theories about the regions and countries of origin of the growing Ashkenazi population of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth century: Germany, Bohemia and Poland.⁴¹ Even more striking, however, is the major role of internal migration in the eighteenth century.

An analysis of the statistical data in these lists relies heavily on the information provided by The Hague, since the quantity is far larger. Examining the data to identify periods in the eighteenth century that may have been of greater importance with regard to migration, a comparison of the total number of new community members and the number of immigrants shows that during the early years almost no new members arrived at The Hague. Jews began coming to The Hague in considerable numbers in 5498 (1737/38). There is also no clear connection between peaks in total numbers, and peaks in migration. Once

⁴¹ Compare Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 49.

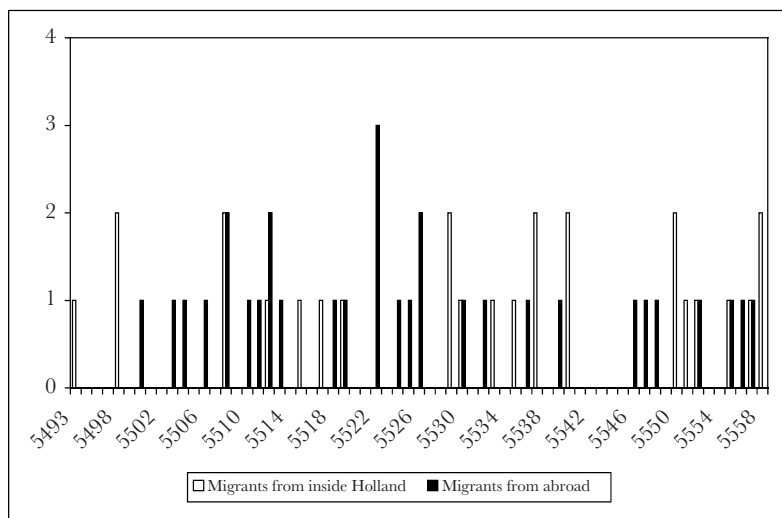


Fig. 4: *Jewish migrants to The Hague from inside the Dutch Republic and abroad 5493–5558 (1732–1798)*

it began, migration to The Hague remained at a low average without significant change throughout the period.

However, a comparison of migration from abroad and from inside the Dutch Republic reveals a remarkable development that surely deserves a more detailed investigation (fig. 4).

There is clear evidence that migration from abroad played a significant role in the mid-eighteenth century, while migration within the Dutch Republic was less important then. During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the situation reversed: internal migration became more important for The Hague. Of course, it is not possible to conclude from this that patterns of Jewish migration within the Dutch Republic changed radically during the eighteenth century, but it may be anticipated that further research into the subject will confirm the trend shown by The Hague. The Dutch Ashkenazi population had apparently become large enough to develop its own internal migration dynamic. Thus the Dutch Republic was still an attractive place to live, compared to other European countries in the second half of the eighteenth century.

Perhaps the improvement in circumstances of Jews in Central and Eastern Europe reduced the number of those arriving in the Dutch Republic in the late eighteenth century. The issue deserves to be

examined in a far wider perspective. Moreover, *pinkassim* are apparently not the best source for this: the *pinkassim* of The Hague and Middelburg, with their lists of names, are clearly not representative in this regard.

Considerably less information is available in the Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk records regarding migration and related trends. A single mention of a family joining the Leeuwarden community suggests that this record must have been an exception in the *sefer zikhronot*. A community of this size would surely have had many more new members. This kind of record was probably kept elsewhere, not in the *pinkas*. Yet the information that in the summer of 1766 Yehiel Michel ben Leib Amelander and his wife, originally from Groningen, joined the community is interesting.⁴² Clearly new members in Leeuwarden must have come from a variety of places. Unfortunately, our sources provide no insight into the situation here.

Oisterwijk's governors began recording new members in 1780, according to a decision of the previous year.⁴³ A number of records in the three manuscripts therefore provide some information about the trends in Oisterwijk. Six of the seventeen records state the origins of the new member. All were from within the Dutch Republic. The earliest record mentions a village situated in States Brabant: 's Gravenmoer. Other towns mentioned are: Den Bosch,⁴⁴ Oirschot⁴⁵ (both in Brabant), Blokzijl,⁴⁶ Hasselt⁴⁷ (both in Overijssel) and Rotterdam.⁴⁸ Placenames outside the Republic only begin to appear in records after 1795 (Poznań in Poland appears twice). These few records tend to support the findings from The Hague and Middelburg: in the late eighteenth century migration to Jewish communities in the Dutch Republic was mainly internal.

Other manuscripts from elsewhere outside the Dutch Republic may provide similar information. Clearly, significant insights may be gained from an examination of these *pinkassim* to provide a better understanding of Ashkenazi migration patterns in the early modern period.

⁴² Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 123.

⁴³ Ros 282a, p. 50.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 51.

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

⁴⁸ Ros 283, fol. 55v.

CHAPTER FIVE

REVENUE AND FINANCE

Taxation and finance were vital issues for Jewish communities everywhere, since independent economic subsistence was generally a precondition for the establishment of a community. The basic sources of revenue comprised the contributions of the *ba'ale battim*, the sale of kosher meat,¹ fees for seats in synagogue and fines imposed as penalties.² Due to their importance, financial affairs might be expected to appear prominently in the community records. This is true to some extent, but there were differences between the various communities. By examining the sources of income in the records—taxes, fees, loans and other transactions—an insight may be gained into the way the governors tried to maintain the level of revenue, and to improve their financial situation.

All the *takkanot* examined here contain references to revenue. However, surprisingly there seems to have been no common custom for levying a basic tax on all members. Most of the regulations mention no such tax, referring instead to various other financial obligations for *ba'ale battim*. Only the Middelburg statutes mention a monthly contribution to be paid by each member to the *tzedakah* fund.³ The other communities remain silent on the subject. Of course a basic contribution like this may have been taken for granted so that communities felt no need mention it. Beem refers to a regular weekly tax for each member but fails to provide a source for this custom in Leeuwarden before the 1780s.⁴

The term *tzedakah* suggests a charity fund, but many communities do not seem to have separated the different funds in the community's finances, so that the general use of the term refers to the community's fund as a whole. The office of treasurer was often called *gabbai tzedakah*. In Amsterdam, only heads of households who paid a weekly share to

¹ See Belinfante, *op. cit.*, p. 220.

² Fuks-Mansfeld, *op. cit.*, p. 177.

³ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 5, paragraph 34.

⁴ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 41. There is evidence of a regular basic tax paid by members of Amsterdam's Ashkenazi community in the seventeenth century.

the poor fund were regarded as full members of the community,⁵ which seems to have been the practice in other communities too. Contributing to the community's finances therefore implied contributing to the poor fund, a synonym for the general community fund.

The *pinkassim* of The Hague, Middelburg and Oisterwijk include the reports of the annual accounts. These were almost always called *heshbon tzedek* (from the root *tzadak*: *tzedakah*—*gabbai tzedakah*—*heshbon tzedek*). The records of these annual accounts differ considerably in detail. The Hague *pinkas* offers regular sober reports of the community's total fund, and a calculation for the revenues from kosher meat, one of the main sources of income for the community. This revenue was repeatedly used to pay off loans.⁶ No mention is made of poll tax revenue, which would have represented a major proportion of the community's income. Clearly the detailed accounts were not kept in The Hague's *pinkas*: it only lists the main items in the *heshbon tzedek*, and even these are incomplete. For example no income is mentioned from synagogue seating (which was recorded for some years in separate tables), or from the ritual bath (which is occasionally mentioned with regard to its lease by the cantor's family). The *gabbai tzedakah* held separate records for the details of everyday financial matters, which are regularly mentioned in records concerning the *heshbon tzedek*. To understand the intricacies of these financial affairs the bills and receipts must be examined, and indeed these records of the eighteenth-century community in The Hague are still available.⁷

Records of annual accounts in Middelburg are considerably less detailed. This is surprising, especially for the second half of the eighteenth century when the manuscript turned into a cashbook, and would be expected to focus on such details. Most of these records merely state the total revenue and expenses, without explaining sources or purposes.⁸

Oisterwijk's *heshbonot tzedek* are similar. Unlike the other *pinkassim*, in the early years the relevant records in the manuscripts include lists of

⁵ Belinfante, *op. cit.*, p. 214.

⁶ See, for example, the calculation for 1784; GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 260–260v. The manuscript contains lists for revenue from the sale of kosher meat each year.

⁷ GA Den Haag, NIG, nos. 649, 650. These documents have not been explored here.

⁸ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, pp. 22 (from 1727), 115 (from 1769). The latter account is less detailed than the first, which also records revenue from the hire of seats in synagogue.

tax payers in arrears.⁹ During the 1790s the *pinkassim* state only revenue and expenses, leaving out the long lists of defaulters. Perhaps the election of an official to ensure the equal distribution of contributions to the rabbi's salary and *pletten* in 1793 improved matters.¹⁰

Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot* is completely different. No annual accounts are found anywhere in the manuscript. Presumably, therefore, general and detailed financial matters were recorded elsewhere.¹¹ Weekly taxes of the members were limited to contributions to the poor fund and fees for seats in synagogue.¹² Not all the members were equally diligent in paying their contributions to the poor fund (apparently the bulk of the community's revenue). The situation became so acute that the *parnasim* eventually asked the burgomasters to force defaulters to pay their debts.¹³ The governors could count on the burgomasters' cooperation since the latter were always concerned that the community should look after its own indigent and itinerant Jews. As a result, from 1786 the *sefer zikhronot* includes annual lists of weekly contributions of each head of a household.¹⁴ Remarkably, they are recorded in Dutch, not Yiddish. This shows that the governors needed these lists for future dealings with the burgomasters.

The various manuscripts reveal that the practice in these four Dutch communities was quite different from the traditional way of defining individual contributions known as *erekh* found in similar records of German communities. The reason lies in the different circumstances of the Jewish communities in the Dutch Republic, which may have been less autonomous but flourished under more liberal conditions. Thus the Dutch communities were not required to pay arbitrary lump sums like those demanded by local or regional rulers elsewhere, which had

⁹ See, for example, the accounts from 1767 and 1768, Ros 282a, pp. 14–15.

¹⁰ Ros 282b, p. 44.

¹¹ Perhaps, even after the upheavals in the community around 1754, there were still some accounting irregularities. However, they apparently used cashbooks; see Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 41.

¹² *Ibid.*, The *sefer zikhronot* refers occasionally to an *erekh ma'ot* tax; Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record 106. The name implies that it was levied on a family's personal wealth. This may have been the contribution to the poor fund; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 24.

¹³ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 43.

¹⁴ Until 1795, there are nine lists; Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 254, 272, 276, 284, 289, 295, 299, 307, 333. The growing frequency of the lists among the other records shows that other matters were relatively less important. See also Chapter 6.

to be divided among the members. Jews paid a property tax according to their houses and wealth, as the records of The Hague show.¹⁵ Without the integration forced by a shared collective tax, Dutch communities seem to have developed a different structure and character, reflected not least in the power and character of the community's elite. The long discussions about how to the lump sum payments should be shared were certainly a factor in integrating communities elsewhere in Ashkenaz. It seems that religion was the main tie and the focus that united Jewish families and individuals. This may indeed have been one of the reasons for the sustained success of observant Jewish tradition in Dutch Ashkenazi communities in nineteenth century.

Modest financial resources often forced Ashkenazi communities to look for alternative ways of raising income to ensure the community's survival. A common method was credit. Since loans were raised by the community as an institution, each transaction was naturally recorded in the *pinkas*. Surprisingly only the Hague and Leeuwarden manuscripts mention loans raised by these communities. This does not necessarily mean that the communities in Middelburg and Oisterwijk did not borrow money. Their loans were presumably recorded elsewhere.

The Hague *pinkas* records around thirteen loans raised between 1723 and 1784. These varied between 600 guilders and 11,000 guilders. This large sum was raised only once in 1751, when a property on Waagenstraat was bought with three loans totalling 18,800 guilders.¹⁶ A new synagogue was erected here in the nineteenth century. The total sum borrowed over 61 years was 34,500 guilders. Besides demonstrating the enormous financial needs of the Ashkenazi community, this shows its dynamic, its ability to handle financial transactions, and its perceived credit-worthiness over a long period. Almost all the loans were acquired from non-Jews; only once did the governors borrow from the Jewish orphans fund.¹⁷ Yet all the records were still recorded in Yiddish. They were not copies of the bonds, but reminders of the basic details for administrative use. Most of the records contain the name of the lender, the sum, the interest rate, as well the purpose of the loan. The obvious question, however, is why no loans are recorded from the community's natural bank: the Boas family bank. There seems to be no explanation

¹⁵ Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), pp. 42–45.

¹⁶ GA The Hague, NIG, no. 1, fol. 142.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 31.

for this surprising phenomenon. So we can only speculate that there was some form of agreement between the bank and the community not to create such close ties between them. Although the Boas bank evidently assisted the community in managing its affairs.

The distribution of loans over the period is the key to identifying periods of higher economic activity in The Hague. In the early years two loans of 3,000 and 1,000 guilders were raised in 1723 and 1725.¹⁸ Between 1736 and 1738 three loans totalling 7,000 guilders were acquired,¹⁹ in part to pay off previous loans. Thirteen years later, the property purchase on Waagenstraat was financed with the largest loans recorded in the *pinkas*. Another ten years passed before the next loan in 1761. Presumably the purchase of the Waagenstraat plot had been planned for some time, perhaps explaining the period of financial caution before 1751. Three loans were recorded in the 1760s²⁰ and one in 1784.²¹

It seems that the community always managed to pay off its debts, although this may occasionally have required considerable effort. Annual interest rates varied between three and four percent, which was moderate, and apparently normal for the period.

Compared to the large loans raised in The Hague, the four sums mentioned in Leeuwarden's *sefer zikhronot* seem modest. All the information suggests that the dimensions of this community's activities were much smaller. The amounts varied between 200 and 500 guilders; the total sum being a mere 1,500 guilders. This was raised between 1772 and 1792; two loans in the early 1770s, and the other two in 1786 and 1792.²² As in The Hague, the lenders were non-Jews,²³ and, as the case of a loan of 300 guilders in 1786, the orphan fund. Unlike in The Hague, most of these records in the *sefer zikhronot* are in Dutch. They appear to be copies of the bonds. This shows again the willingness of Leeuwarden's governors to accept Dutch as a common language in

¹⁸ Ibid., fols. 17, 31.

¹⁹ Ibid., fols. 92–92v, 96v, 100v.

²⁰ Ibid., fols. 173v, 184, 209.

²¹ Ibid., fol. 259.

²² Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 161, 187, 258, 301.

²³ This may reflect the *halakhah* that a Jew is prohibited by Torah law from charging interest on a loan to another Jew (see Lev. 25:37 and Deut. 23:20), and that a Jew who borrows at interest from another Jew is also culpable. The *heter iska* had already been developed by this time, effectively enabling Jews to borrow and lend from other Jews; see *Encyclopaedia Judaica*, *op. cit.*, vol. 12, p. 252, and vol. 16, pp. 31–32.

the official records. As we have seen, no loans are mentioned in the Middelburg and Oisterwijk *pinkassim*.

In The Hague, the governors in charge of financial matters used another method to improve the community's financial situation. Starting in 1751, several records mention financial services provided for private persons by the Ashkenazi community. The community accepted considerable sums from private persons in return for which the depositor received a life annuity. These investments varied between 600 and 5,000 guilders, and the annuities were paid either weekly (around three guilders) or twice a year (around 160 guilders). At first only Jews took advantage of the service, but after 1756 the majority were non-Jews, beginning with a person called Du Val.²⁴ Many of these investments were used to buy bonds, which gave the community an additional income from the interest.

Two examples reveal the considerations of the governors in this matter, as well as the exemplary way in which they did business. In the spring of 1768, Martin Jacob Diodati, a non-Jew from The Hague, deposited 5,000 guilders with the *parnassim* of the Ashkenazi community, who in return promised to pay him and his mother Gertrude Slott, a life annuity of 350 guilders at seven percent interest.²⁵ With Diodati's capital the community purchased a large share of a private bond (5,000 guilders of a total 6,000), which was due ten months later at an annual interest of four percent, a total of 400 guilders.²⁶ In other words, after fulfilling their duties to Diodati a small profit of 50 guilders could already be expected in the first year. Similar transactions seem to have been made in subsequent years too. It is unlikely that this kind of business would have been carried out without professional assistance. So the mention of Abraham and Shimon Boas, Tobias's sons, as keepers of the 6,000 guilder bond is not surprising, and presumably the brothers helped the governors in this matter, and similar transactions. The bank seems to have served the community only in transactions that were free of risk, such as deposits. As long as the business involved holding bonds and shares of the community, the Boas bank was willing to assist.

In 1780, Abraham and Shimon Boas reported on their investments involving several private bonds held by the community, among them

²⁴ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 159.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 204.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

two issued by the Duke of Brunswick. They had deposited the total sum of over 8,000 guilders with the Jewish bank of Aaron and Solomon Norden in London, who guaranteed the bonds at a value of 1,200 pounds Sterling;²⁷ a considerable amount. It seems unlikely that the *parnassim* in The Hague would have undertaken such sizeable international transactions without the reassurance of the Boas bank. None of the other manuscripts examined here mention financial activities of such proportions: they could not rely on the (possibly free) services of an experienced and successful bank. The Hague community was, therefore, in a much better situation than many other communities elsewhere in the country, as long as the Boas bank remained successful.

The *parnassim* of The Hague made another interesting attempt at managing financial problems and the related issue of community charity in 1784. A factory had opened in The Hague, supported by public funds. The Ashkenazi community was able to acquire jobs in that factory (what it produced is not mentioned in the *pinkas*) for two young men and four young women, all unmarried, who were thereby able to earn a living from their own labour: the first indication of the integration of Jewish workers in early capitalist enterprise in The Hague. In 1784 the factory tried to improve its financial base by issuing shares at a total value of 10,000 guilders. Until the community decided to purchase three shares at a total value of 600 guilders, the factory had only managed to sell 2,000 guilders worth of shares, so that the community's investment was certainly welcome. However, the governors were unable to finance the purchase from its regular fund. Therefore, they had to raise a new loan to pay for the shares. The *pinkas* record emphasises that the factory employed workers regardless of religion, so that poor Jews could also find work there.²⁸ Unfortunately the records do not state how the investment fared, nor the number of Jews who worked there. In addition, a record dated 1803 mentions that the community started paying off the loan to the creditor's brother. This interesting matter deserves closer investigation in the light of other sources beside the *pinkas*.

Clearly the *pinkassim* of the communities discussed here were not the main registers for financial matters. In general it seems that the detail

²⁷ *Ibid.*, fol. 245.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, fols. 251v–252.

with which finances were recorded declined in the course of the eighteenth century, especially the annual cash reports. This does not mean that these important matters were neglected. It may indicate that administrative customs changed, with separate financial records being recorded in cashbooks. Nevertheless, some basic trends can still be discerned in the financial activities of all four communities. In The Hague and Leeuwarden a more dynamic situation prevailed, while Middelburg and Oisterwijk appear to have been less active. However, other material and sources must be examined before a more detailed conclusion can be reached regarding the economic and financial performance of these communities.

CHAPTER SIX

HEVRAS AND CHARITIES

Providing for the sick and needy was a central concern of every Jewish community in the early modern period. The supply of food and accommodation for the poor by Jewish communities and charities was particularly important from a religious perspective too, since it ensured that the food provided was kosher. Moreover, charity is a *mitzvah*, a religious duty and cornerstone of Jewish life. It is a crucial aspect of the development of a community and played a key role in the growth and integration of new Dutch Jewish communities. At the same time, providing for the many itinerant Jews who travelled in search of work, food or charity, was a problem for the *parnassim*.¹ Governors often found themselves in difficulty, since the poor fund was rarely sufficient.

Charities begin to appear in Jewish community records in the early modern period. The first extant mention of a *hevra kadisha* dates from 1564 in Prague. Records of similar bodies appear in subsequent years in other Ashkenazi communities in Europe; by the end of the eighteenth century there was scarcely any community that did not have a *hevra*. Membership of a *hevra*, whether a *hevra kadisha de kavranim* (burial society) or a *hevra kadisha bikkur holim* (society for the sick), lent prestige and respect, and many members were drawn from the elite of their community. *Hevras* operated with relative independence within the community; yet they remained subordinate to the *parnassim*. *Hevras* of Jewish women appear only rarely in the records. Those that are known seem to have been subordinate to the general *hevra*, and were set up as a separate women's section.²

¹ See Belinfante's description, *op. cit.*, p. 217, referring to Amsterdam, where the governors faced a problem of completely different dimensions. For a discussion of the Sephardi approach to the problem see T. Levic-Bernfeld, 'The Chosen Poor: Charity and Welfare among the Portuguese Jews of Seventeenth-Century Amsterdam', PhD thesis (Jerusalem 2005).

² See G. Zürn, *Die Altonaer jüdische Gemeinde (1611–1873): Rituale und soziale Institutionen des Todes im Wandel* (Hamburg 2001) pp. 93–97, for a concise introduction to the issue of *hevras*, describing the situation in Hamburg in detail.

The *pinkassim* examined here contain various records relating to both types of organised charity, providing information from the perspective of the governors and the *hevras* themselves. However, since poor relief was often a community's heaviest burden and a central item in its financial structure, the voluminous details were generally recorded in separate books, not in the *pinkas*.

The Hague

Charity and poor relief are rarely mentioned in the Hague *pinkas*. Interestingly, two of the four records dealing explicitly with the subject are about limiting the number of itinerant Jews in The Hague. The first is the text of a public announcement read in synagogue in the spring of 1724 prohibiting the accommodation of money changers, who were a *hillul hashem* (profanation) for the community. Other *orhim* ('guests' being a euphemism for needy itinerant Jews) could receive accommodation for two nights only, and their presence had to be reported to the governors.³ Moreover, it was also forbidden to lodge an itinerant Jew with a non-Jew. It seems that the community was overwhelmed by guests at the time, including various dubious individuals, who made their living by changing money. The accusations that often surrounded these individuals and quickly attached themselves to the Jews in general, led the governors to try to prevent them from moving into the area.

Forty-six years later, in 1770, a similar announcement was read in synagogue. This time, however, it was the local authority that took the initiative, since the text mentions a decree against Jewish beggars and paupers. Jews from outside The Hague were forbidden to remain in the city for more than eight days if they did not join the community. Beggars were barred from the city entirely.⁴ Apart from this ban, it is remarkable that Jews were allowed by the local authority to join the community, provided they were able to pay the usual taxes and contributions to the community and city.⁵ In most German towns Jews were required to undergo complicated and humiliating procedures imposed by the Christian authorities before joining a Jewish community, which

³ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 23.

⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 210 v; see also Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), p. 63.

⁵ Wherever Jews were permitted to live in Dutch cities there were usually no limits to their number, provided they were able to care for their own poor. See Fuks-Mansfeld, *op. cit.* (2002), p. 177.

was usually restricted to a maximum size.⁶ The situation in The Hague (and other Dutch towns) was truly liberal.

Clearly the community was involved in caring for the needy on a daily basis. However, the *pinkas* does not discuss the distribution of money to the poor, and nothing is revealed of the local *pletten* system, the obligation of established families to host poor Jews on Shabbat. All this presumably existed in The Hague (as in almost every Jewish community), but it was apparently recorded elsewhere. To have included these details in the *pinkas* would soon have filled the volume, rendering it unusable: the Ashkenazi community of The Hague was too large and complex, and required more than one register.

Yet the *pinkas* does provide some clues about further measures that were taken by the governors to support the poor of the community. For example, the *parnassim* employed a teacher to give lessons to poor but talented boys in a Talmud Torah school.⁷ The teacher was paid from the community fund. His appointment shows that the governors were conscious of the *mitzvah* of helping the poor to receive a religious education.

This is similar to the condition attached to the hire of the building housing the ritual bath in 1734, namely that free access should be guaranteed to 25 needy Jewish women, who otherwise would have been unable to use a *mikveh*.⁸

The *hevra kadisha bikkur holim* in The Hague, which organised visits and care of the sick, also employed doctors for the poor.⁹ They treated the community's poor free of charge and, although not stated explicitly, any other sick and indigent Jews in the town. In 1768, Leib Rofe, a doctor, stated that his annual income of 50 guilders from the *hevra*, did not cover his expenses and asked the governors to increase his salary. The *parnassim* agreed and granted an additional 25 guilders a year by reducing the cost of his seat in synagogue.¹⁰ This shared reimbursement illustrates the close cooperation between the governors and the *hevra*, which depended significantly on the community and its financial support.

⁶ See M. Breuer, 'Frühe Neuzeit und Beginn der Moderne', in: M. A. Meyer (ed.), *Deutsch-Jüdische Geschichte in der Neuzeit*, vol. 1: 1600–1780 (Munich 1997), pp. 85–247, esp. 133–134 on the Jews of Prussia in the eighteenth century.

⁷ See Chapter 3 section: *Rabbis and Poskim*, for a discussion of the Talmud Torah rabbis.

⁸ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 65 v.

⁹ Similar *hevras* in other communities did so too; see Zürn, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

¹⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 165 v.

The *hevra kadisha bikkur holim* of The Hague was apparently founded around 1720, since the first references in the *pinkas* date from 1724, when it was still called the new *hevra*. The few references in the *pinkas* do not indicate whether another *hevra* existed before, or whether it was an entirely new institution. No such *hevra* is mentioned in any of the *takkanot* of The Hague, which suggests that it did not exist or had not developed until 1723, the year of the last regulations. Obviously, a new *hevra* founded within a community framework would not have been able to act independently from its inception. Thus major issues continued to be handled by the *parnassim*. In 1724, the *hevra* presented its annual accounts and submitted its cash to the *gabbai tzedakah*.¹¹ A new *gabbai* was immediately appointed for the *hevra*, again by the governors.¹² This shows how closely the *hevra* was tied to the community, reflecting its relative short history until then.

The *hevra* remained active throughout the eighteenth century. After Leib Rofe, mentioned in 1768, the *hevra* appointed his son to succeed him as physician in 1784: Itzik ben Leib Rofe.¹³ No further details about the *hevra kadisha bikkur holim* in The Hague appear in the *pinkas*. In general little trace of its existence remains; no other documents are found in the main registers. Yet this institution pursued an endless variety of activities, since the problem of poverty and guests continued unabated in the eighteenth century. The *hevra* ran the local *hekdesh*, a kind of free small hospital for poor Jews.¹⁴ Unfortunately, the lack of sources makes it impossible to explore the activities of this *hevra* in further detail.

It is possible that this *hevra* may be identified with the *hevra kadisha shel gemilut hassadim*, which is also mentioned in the *pinkas*, although they seem not to have been identical. The *pinkas* offers no clue to the relationship between the two *hevras*. We have far more information regarding the *gemilut hassadim*, which was actually a burial society. The first reference to this *hevra* occurs in 1729, when the *gabbaim* of the *hevra* reported to the governors that it was no longer solvent.¹⁵ In response, the *parnassim* raised the fee for a gravestone to three guilders. The next and final

¹¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 23.

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 261.

¹⁴ See Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 374.

¹⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 57 v. Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), pp. 220–221, identifies the first reference to the *hevra* as the tombstone of Moshe ben Jacob Shohet dated 1753, which mentions his membership of the *hevra*. Van Creveld seems not to have used the *pinkas* in his research.

record relating to this *hevra* dates from 1783, when the *parnassim* fixed the fee for the burial of a child. Since no further reference to the *hevra* occurs, it had presumably developed such a degree of autonomy within the community that the *parnassim* no longer intervened in its business. The oldest (extant) *pinkas* of the *hevra kadisha shel gemilut hassadim* opens in 1770.¹⁶ Whether an earlier *pinkas* existed is unclear. Its statutes date from this same period, and were printed in 1771.¹⁷

A third *hevra*, the *hevat gemilut hassadim u-takhrikhim*, was the women's counterpart of the burial society.¹⁸ Unlike in other communities, in The Hague this was not just a section of the general burial society;¹⁹ it seems, at least for a while, to have led an independent existence. In the summer of 1749, the women of the *hevra* gathered to elect two *gabbaites*, which according to the *pinkas* was new. In fact this may have been the founding meeting of that *hevra*.²⁰ It is remarkable that the women of the *hevra* could elect their governors independently, indeed that they could elect women to function as governors. As far as is known this was quite unusual in the Ashkenazi world, so that the Hague community seems to have been one of the first in this regard, at least in the Dutch Republic.

The record of the election recalls that 25 votes went to Hanna, widow of Menahem ben Jacob, and 15 to Fegele, widow of Yitzhak Jacob bar Menahem. That both were widows may have been a coincidence, since we do not know the what the statutes stipulated. It is clearly possible however, that widows may have been considered more suitable for the position of *gabbait*. Each elector had two votes, so that the result shows that the *hevra* had at least 20 members. Each *gabbait* was in charge for half a year, Hanna first. The record also mentions the statutes of the *hevra*, which were kept by the governors, with a copy included in the *pinkas* of the *hevra* which is however no longer extant.

One year later a second record in the community *pinkas* mentions the *takhrikhim hevra*, as it is sometimes called. In the winter of 1750, the *gabbait* reported on the finances of the *hevra* to the governors, without mentioning the sources of revenue.²¹ From the name of the women's

¹⁶ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 990.

¹⁷ Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), p. 221.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 223–224 also mentions the *hevra*, but only in a nineteenth-century context.

¹⁹ Zürn, *op. cit.*, pp. 95–96.

²⁰ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 135.

²¹ *Ibid.*, fol. 139.

hevra it appears that it was probably not only concerned with burials, but also with the production of *takhrikhim* or shrouds.²² No further mention of the women's *hevra* occurs in the *pinkas*, although it was still active in the nineteenth century.²³ Presumably the records and accounts of the *hevrat gemilut hassadim u-takhrikhim* were recorded in the *hevra's* own *pinkas*.

Care for the needy in The Hague was highly specialised. As the *pinkas* shows, the governors were directly and indirectly involved, as well as three *hebras*. This unprecedented situation includes an unusual phenomenon in the Ashkenazi world, an autonomous women's *hevra* with its own governors, elected in independent elections.

Two other *hebras* existed in The Hague in the eighteenth century, which are not mentioned in the *pinkas*: the *hakhnassat kallah*, founded in 1726, a charity to provide poor women with a dowry; and the *meshivat nefesh mish'enet zekenim*, a charity for poor and aged Jews.²⁴ These raise the total number of *hebras* in the period to five, a remarkable reflection of the activity of the Jews in The Hague.

Middelburg

The Middelburg *pinkas* offers scant information about community life and administration, not least in relation to charity. One exception in the manuscript, which makes it unique among those examined here, is the annual *pletten* lists. Thirty-five lists occur in the *pinkas*, illustrating the efforts by the community to host poor itinerant Jews and providing the only source of socioeconomic data about the Middelburg community. The annual number of *pletten* in Middelburg grew from 179 in 1726,²⁵ to 258 in 1778,²⁶ the year of the last surviving list. This increase was due not just to growing number of paupers arriving in Middelburg, but probably also to the improved ability to host them.

Surprisingly the *pinkas* contains no reference to any *hevra* in Middelburg. The existence of a cemetery suggests there must have been a burial society. However, no record survives, and no previous research

²² The term *takhrikhim* mainly occurs in Eastern-Yiddish; the Western-Yiddish synonym is *sargenes*. This suggests that the initiators were influenced by the East-European Jewish vernacular. My thanks to Marion Aptroot for pointing this out.

²³ Van Creveld, *op. cit.* (1997 [b]), pp. 223–224.

²⁴ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 374.

²⁵ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 21.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 117.

into the community mentions such a body. Even the detailed record of the cemetery, dating from 1743, fails to mention a burial society, which would have been intimately involved in this compilation.²⁷ Given the generally ineffective performance of the community, it is possible that only a rudimentary form of *hevra* existed in Middelburg.

Leeuwarden

The Leeuwarden *pinkas* offers far more detail. It contains various records relating to charity, as well the activities of one particular *hevra*. One of the first records in the *sefer zikhronot* mentions the appointment of a person in charge of seating in synagogue and funds for the poor.²⁸ This appointment dating from 1754 reveals that the community's main income presumably came from the sale of seats in synagogue, the proceeds of which went towards charity. This is the only recorded appointment; this was organised differently in later years.

Care of the sick, *bikkur holim*, was not organised by a separate *hevra* in Leeuwarden, but by the community itself. In 1758 a special *gabbai* to supervise the fund was appointed.²⁹ Nine years later the arrangement was changed. In a record, dating from 1767, the three *manhigim* divided responsibility for community finance: one was responsible for the *tzedakah ma'ot* (poor fund), another for *ma'ot be'arakhah* (community taxes), and a third for *bikkur holim*.³⁰ This was an unusually rigid division of tasks by the governors.

A decade earlier the *manhigim* of Leeuwarden's community had been reminded of their duty towards Jewish paupers in a decree by the provincial assembly of Friesland of 1757 in which the various communities were required to look after their poor.³¹ Nine years later, the provincial assembly enacted a similar decree: apparently the problem still existed, and had probably become even more severe.

As in The Hague, the Leeuwarden community also employed a doctor. However, unlike the Hague community, he was employed exclusively by the governors of the community. Aharon ben Hayyim, was appointed

²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

²⁸ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 6.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, record no. 46.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, no. 127; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 25. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 31.

³¹ See the Yiddish transcript in the *sefer zikhronot*: Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 39. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 46.

doctor and made member of the community in 1760.³² His annual salary of 35 guilders was recorded twice, in 1760 and 1763.³³ In the following decades he became a respected member of the community, frequently standing as a candidate for *parnas*, eventually being elected in 1782.³⁴

In 1772, Leeuwarden's *parnassim* changed the regulations for the *mikveh*. This happened after Rivka, a widow who ran the ritual bath, complained that she was unable to earn sufficient income from the fees.³⁵ Presumably the governors were motivated by similar considerations as their counterparts in The Hague: they reduced Rivka's annual rent buy ten guilders, and allowed poor women to use the facility without charge.

The poor, not least the Jewish poor, were a constant concern for the burgomasters, as their regulations show. The *manhigim* could therefore count on the sympathy of the local authority in their efforts to solve the problem. Mounting arrears in contributions to the poor fund forced the governors to call on the local authorities for support in 1786. They levied a regular weekly contribution on community members for the fund. The involvement of the burgomasters explains why the annual tax lists were in Dutch.³⁶ These recorded the names of the members and their weekly contribution according to their means. The *sefer zikhronot* is the only manuscript examined here that contains this kind of information about heads of families. In the period covered here, the number of contributors remained stable at around 70, with some minor fluctuations.

A substantial portion of the support for the poor came in the form of matzo flour for Pesach and peat for heating in winter. Characteristically, the *sefer zikhronot* contains annual distribution lists for the whole period. Over forty years, both lists reveal a not unexpected increase in the total number of recipients. Given the relatively constant number of contributing heads of households, the community faced a difficult task in finding ways of financing the charity. In 1755, matzo flour was distributed to fourteen recipients and their families,³⁷ whereas for 1795 27 individuals

³² 8. Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 58.

³³ Ibid., record nos. 60, 89.

³⁴ See table 3 above in chapter 1, section: *Families and Individuals in Community Leadership*.

³⁵ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 90.

³⁶ The first list *ibid.*, record no. 254.

³⁷ Ibid., record no. 16.

are listed.³⁸ From 1763, the lists included a subsidiary list of those involved in producing flour for matzot. This enabled some of the poor (usually around twelve or fourteen) to be employed in supervising the production at the non-Jewish bakeries where the flour was made.³⁹

A similar increase is found in the number of recipients of peat, although on a different scale. The first record dating from 1755 lists eleven recipients,⁴⁰ which rose by the end of the period to eighteen.⁴¹ The disparity in number shows that the criteria for evaluating need differed. Many more were eligible to receive flour at Pesach than peat in winter. The threshold for receiving flour was lower than for the supply of peat, which was more expensive.⁴²

Surprisingly, Leeuwarden had few *hevras* in the eighteenth century. The oldest seems to have been *hevrat Talmud Torah* which was found in 1759, and was dedicated to promoting Jewish studies for children and adult men.⁴³ In 1784 members of the community combined to form the *hevra kadisha meshivat nefesh*. This *hevra* supported the poor and the study of religious texts.⁴⁴ Poor Jews received a stuiver a week from this *hevra*. There was clearly a need for this kind of support, which supplemented the community's own welfare system.

Most strikingly, however, no mention occurs anywhere in the *sefer zikhronot* of a burial society. Neither is there any reference to a burial society in the literature about the Jews of Leeuwarden in the eighteenth century.⁴⁵ The *pinkas* does not explain how burials were conducted, although several records demonstrate that the governors regularly discussed detailed questions regarding the cemetery,⁴⁶ which might be expected to have been dealt with by the burial society. This suggests that there was no burial society at all. Which would be rather surprising in such a well-organised community as Leeuwarden. Indeed it remains a mystery who carried out the burials in the community. Apparently, in

³⁸ *Ibid.*, record no. 332.

³⁹ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 48.

⁴⁰ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 16.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, record no. 331.

⁴² See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 48.

⁴³ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 50. See also Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 42, 60–61.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, record no. 185, a copy of the statutes of the *hevra*.

⁴⁵ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 451 points out that the burial society was found in 1829.

⁴⁶ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record nos. 249, 300, 308.

Leeuwarden charity was concentrated in the hands of the governors, unlike in other Dutch Jewish communities.

Oisterwijk

Because of its modest size, far less information is available about charity in the Oisterwijk community. No measures are fixed in the *takkanot*, and only a few records mention the subject. It seems that the governors only began to focus on the issue in 1789, when the *gabbaim* appointed Gabriel ben Meir to gather contributions for the itinerant poor, the *orhim*.⁴⁷ His appointment reveals that the problem had begun to manifest itself in the rural community too. In that same year, a list of 64 *pletten* was recorded in the second *pinkas*,⁴⁸ referring to the same problem. This list, however, is the only one in all the community's surviving manuscripts. Presumably therefore, earlier or later lists, which doubtless existed, were recorded elsewhere. The *minhagim* in the third manuscript define the criteria for hosting poor itinerant Jews.⁴⁹

The *pinkasim* records show that there was apparently no regular distribution of matzo flour or peat. Only one record in the first *pinkas* mentions the cost borne by the *gabbaim* for matzo flour for a woman in 1772.⁵⁰

All these activities were the responsibility of the governors; no *hevra* seems to have existed to distribute charity. However, there is evidence that a burial society existed in Oisterwijk, called *hevra kadisha degemilut hassadim*. The *pinkasim* reveal nothing about the date it was founded. The first mention in 1790 refers to a sum of money that was transferred to the *gabbai* of the community.⁵¹ This characterises the relations between the *hevra* and the governors which is reflected in other relevant texts of the 1790s and the first decade of the nineteenth century. Almost all of these refer to financial questions, from which it appears that the community treasurers looked after the finances of the burial society. A community like Oisterwijk certainly only had a small *hevra*, so that this arrangement provided a practical solution. None of the references⁵²

⁴⁷ Ros 282 b, p. 34.

⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 33.

⁴⁹ Ros. 283, fol. 19.

⁵⁰ Ros 282 a, p. 28.

⁵¹ Ros 282 b, p. 39.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 41–64.

state what the *hevra* did, or how busy it was. Due to the lack of other sources on the Jews of eighteenth-century Oisterwijk, historians have been unable to establish more substantial information.

In summary, the *pinkassim* reveal something of the workings of community charity, although they provide few comprehensive facts or details. Since care for needy Jews was a central concern for Jewish communities in the period, this pervasive and urgent subject could not be recorded in the central registers of the communities. The details were recorded in separate records or in the *pinkassim* of the *hevras*, many of which are no longer extant. Yet *pinkassim* may serve as useful auxiliary sources, providing information about activities in the field of charity and about the existence and purpose of *hevras*.

Pinkassim rarely supply information about another aspect of poverty and charity: the fate of individual Jewish paupers, whether local or itinerant. Jewish paupers were important enough to feature prominently in community policy, but little significance was attached to individuals at the lower end of the social ladder, who scarcely left a trace of their existence in the official records of the community. Scholars such as F. Egmont, in her studies on Jewish paupers and criminals, have therefore had to resort to other, mostly non-Jewish sources.⁵³

⁵³ See esp. F. Egmont, 'Contours of Identity: Poor Ashkenazim in the Dutch Republic', in J. Michman (ed.), *Dutch Jewish History*, vol. 3 (*Proceedings of the Fifth Symposium on the History of the Jews in the Netherlands*) (Jerusalem 1993), *passim*. In her article, she raises questions relating to identity and appearance, and finds answers to most of these in the official sources.

CHAPTER SEVEN

INTERCOMMUNAL FRAMEWORKS

The *pinkassim* examined here reveal something of the position their four communities occupied within the Ashkenazi world of eighteenth-century Europe. Little direct evidence is found since *pinkassim* do not contain records of correspondence with other Jewish communities. Clues can be found in records that mention other communities in the context of official contacts involving both secular and religious leaders. The issue of migration also sheds light on this subject since migrants naturally settled in communities they knew by reputation. This reflects unofficial ties between individuals in different communities. Another aspect of this subject is the varying importance of official *bnei mediene* (regional organisations) for the four communities discussed here. This phenomenon, which was widespread in Germany and Poland, was rare in the Dutch Republic.

Contacts between Communities

Occasionally, especially in the Dutch Republic, Ashkenazi and Sephardi communities existed side by side and naturally maintained close contacts. Of the four communities discussed here, it was only in The Hague that an Ashkenazi community existed alongside a Sephardi community during this period.¹ The Sephardim were a major influence on the nascent Ashkenazi community in 1701. Later, the communities shared an abattoir for *shehita*, Ashkenazim attended the Sephardi synagogue and Sephardi women used the Ashkenazi *mikveh*,² while Ashkenazi women worked as maids in Sephardi homes.³ Relations were not always cordial; yet in general ties between Ashkenazim and Sephardim seem to have been close, both officially and unofficially. After an initial period

¹ See Chapter 2.

² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 165; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 7.

³ See e.g., the case of Gitle bat Hirtz, who worked at the home of David Delsato; fol. 162v; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 6.

of inequality—the Sephardim were well established and considerably wealthier than the Ashkenazi newcomers—the growing Ashkenazi community achieved a certain parity which is reflected in the records of the Ashkenazi *pinkas* relating to the Sephardim.

When the Ashkenazi community was founded in Middelburg, a Sephardi community had already existed there since the seventeenth century. Because the demise of the Sephardi community in 1725 coincides with the start of the Ashkenazi community, no records exist about relations between individuals of the two communities. Yet since some of the remaining Sephardim in Middelburg joined the new Ashkenazi community⁴ there must have been some previous contact, at least between those Sephardim and the Ashkenazi governors.

Each community maintained contacts with other Jewish communities outside their town. Most of the *pinkassim* examined here provide records of these contacts, albeit sporadic. The paucity of evidence of direct contact between communities is because a *pinkas* was mainly an administrative tool for internal matters, not an archive for correspondence. Evidence of contact is only found where this involved internal community business.

The records in the Hague *pinkas* recall one case involving direct contact with another community: the Jewish community of Venice. In the autumn of 1775, the governors of The Hague's Ashkenazi community discussed the case of Jacob Morisco, whose origins, Ashkenazi or Sephardi, were unclear. He claimed to be from Venice, so the *parnassim* wrote a letter to the Venetian community asking for clarification regarding Morisco's origins. The letter—in Hebrew—was copied into the *pinkas*,⁵ although no reply is recorded. Nevertheless, some ten months later a record states that Morisco was fined six guilders for attending the Sephardi synagogue.⁶ Presumably, for some reason while he claimed to be an Ashkenazi, he preferred to pray at the Sephardi synagogue.

A number of letters to other European communities on other matters were copied into a book of announcements made by the governors. Most date from the 1780s, yet there are indications that this was not the only correspondence of this period. The items include letters to Gelnhausen in Germany, to Lvov in Galicia, to Pressburg (Bratislava)

⁴ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 477.

⁵ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 232 v.

⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 235 v.

in Slovakia and to Nijmegen in the Dutch Republic.⁷ Clearly a more copious correspondence must have existed than these few items, but this was not recorded neither in the *pinkas* nor in the book of announcements.⁸

No letters are included at all in the Middelburg *pinkas*. Yet the doubts surrounding the credentials of the new cantor, teacher and scribe Tzvi Hirsch in 1755 show that the *parnassim* exchanged letters with other communities, in this case with the governors in Altona, Hanau and Rotterdam.⁹ While the letters themselves are not recorded, we know that they were written.

The Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk manuscripts also contain little direct evidence of contact with other communities. When the Leeuwarden community employed Rabbi Katriel ben Yehuda Leib, they tried to find out more about his qualifications. They contacted Rabbi Saul Halevi in The Hague, who reassured them in a letter of Katriel's qualities.¹⁰ Oisterwijk's *memorbukh* mentions the efforts of Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe in raising funds in Amsterdam, Rotterdam and The Hague.¹¹ He apparently travelled to these towns to collect the money. Since he had originally been sent out by Amsterdam it is not surprising that he was able to find patrons there and in the other towns.

Beside these direct contacts, some indirect connections are also suggested. These resulted from requests for financial aid from other Jewish communities. Naturally, communities that needed help contacted as many Jewish communities as they could throughout Europe. This reflects a collective consciousness among Jews rather than any genuine bilateral contact between communities. The Hague *pinkas* lists several collections for Jewish communities such as Prague (twice: 1743 and 1772),¹² Groningen (1756),¹³ Leszno (1768)¹⁴ and Brod (1771).¹⁵

⁷ See in GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 790.

⁸ No further correspondence is found in the community archive.

⁹ Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, no. 1, p. 81. See Chapter 3 section: *Cantors, Ritual Slaughterers, Teachers, and Beadles*. Few items of correspondence remain in the Zeeuws Archief in Middelburg; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 18.

¹⁰ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 144; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 26.

¹¹ Ros. 283, fol. 1 v.

¹² GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fols. 118, 219.

¹³ *Ibid.*, fol. 160.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, fol. 203 v.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, fol. 214.

Collections were presumably also held in Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk, although their *pinkassim* do not record this.

The Hague and Leeuwarden manuscripts also refer to a widespread phenomenon in the Jewish world: the religious duty of raising funds for the Jewish communities in Eretz Yisrael. Both *pinkassim* refer frequently to local funds and emissaries from the Holy Land who came to collect money from European communities. Interestingly, the Hague fund not only supported the four traditional communities there, but also the community in Belgrade (even though this was not in the Holy Land).¹⁶ Like other occasional collections, donations to the communities of the Holy Land do not indicate close ties with these communities. The emissaries knew which communities to visit to collect sufficient sums of money, and it is unlikely that they only received donations from communities with strong ties to the Jews of the Holy Land. This may be why no mention is found in the Middelburg and Oisterwijk records: they were too poor to attract the emissaries.

Amsterdam, the large and dynamic centre of Dutch Ashkenazi Jewry, was a model for the smaller provincial communities when these began to emerge in the eighteenth century. The *pinkassim* examined here include records referring to Amsterdam in various contexts. The first specific mention of Amsterdam in the Hague *pinkas* is in 1748, with the arrival of Rabbi Saul Halevi, a scion of the famous Loewenstamm rabbinic family of Amsterdam. The new rabbi tried to adopt various Amsterdam customs, encouraged by his father-in-law, Rabbi Arye Leib Loewenstamm. One related to specific honours for bridegrooms in the synagogue service,¹⁷ another concerned the proportion of the wedding fee payable to the rabbi.¹⁸ In both cases the record mentions Amsterdam as the source for these customs.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, fol. 140. Another list is on fol. 215, mentioning emissaries and travellers to the Holy Land, aided by funds in The Hague. These include a certain R. Eliyahu from Vilna in 1778. Arie Morgenstern states that this was the famous Gaon of Vilna, then on his way to the Holy Land. However, it is unlikely that a visit from such a prominent figure would not have been mentioned more widely. Ties between Eastern European Jews and Dutch Ashkenazim were strong. He would certainly have been known in the Dutch Republic. Since the record mentions no titles he was probably another Jew from Vilna of the same name. See Morgenstern's article 'R. Elijah', identifying R. Eliyahu as the famous scholar.

¹⁷ GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1, fol. 132.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, fol. 137 v.

Amsterdam seems to have served as the centre for collections for needy communities and for the forwarding of the sums collected. In The Hague, the collections for Leszno and Brod were channelled through Amsterdam, as the records state. Other communities probably did the same, reflecting Amsterdam's central role in Dutch Jewry, even in the relatively poorly documented eighteenth century.

The paramount authority of Amsterdam's rabbis in Leeuwarden is clear from the governors' decision regarding the selection of candidates for the post of rabbi in 1769.¹⁹ This question had been raised in 1747, when Rabbi Nahman ben Jacob Levy's ordination in Emden was challenged by his opponents in Leeuwarden.²⁰ These members wanted a rabbi trained in the Dutch tradition; ordination by another Ashkenazi authority was clearly not good enough. This may mark the start of an independent Dutch Ashkenazi tradition in the mid-eighteenth century.²¹ Although to date no information has surfaced regarding similar incidents in other Dutch communities of the time; Rabbi Saul Halevi of The Hague, for example, was not ordained in Amsterdam, and no such requirement was made when he was appointed. Even Amsterdam's Rabbi Arye Leib Loewenstamm and his son Rabbi Saul Loewenstamm were more Polish than Dutch, both with a foreign *smikhah*. In fact a Polish ordination would probably have carried more weight in the Dutch Republic than a *smikhah* from Germany. Polish Jewish scholars were highly esteemed in Central Europe in the early modern period.

Amsterdam played an active role in encouraging Jewish life in Brabant. The Amsterdam based *hevrat se'adat zekainim* or *Reis hevra* sent Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe to Oisterwijk to lead the new Jewish community there.²² His mention later of donations by Jews in Amsterdam toward the new synagogue in Oisterwijk affirms this special connection, as does the *misheberakh* (blessing) for Aryeh Leib Loewenstamm and the Amsterdam community in the Oisterwijk *memorbukh*.²³

These examples illustrate the importance of Amsterdam's Ashkenazi community to the smaller provincial communities. Amsterdam *pinkasim* and community documents doubtless contain more about these

¹⁹ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 142.

²⁰ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), pp. 27–29. See above, Chapter 3.

²¹ A thorough study of this tradition and its various idiosyncrasies has yet to be made.

²² *Idem*.

²³ Ros 283, fols. 1 v, 2 v.

contacts and relations, and Amsterdam's role in the Jewish world of the Dutch Republic.

Unofficial and personal contacts are reflected in records relating to the migration of Jews from one community to another. In many instances migrants were well informed about their destination. This implies a certain direct or indirect contact between members or inhabitants of these communities. Indeed, a wide Ashkenazi network existed that extended well beyond the Dutch Republic.²⁴ While Amsterdam occupied a central position in European Jewry, Jews also came to The Hague from other towns in the Dutch Republic, such as Rotterdam, Leiden, Haarlem, Nijmegen and Eindhoven. Migrants from Germany came mainly from Fürth, Hamburg, Worms, Dresden, Mannheim, Berlin, Bonn, Breslau and Offenbach. Others came from Prague, Poznań, Türkheim and elsewhere.

Migrants to Middelburg came from Dessau, Workum, Hamburg, Leeuwarden, Prague and Breslau, while most Jews who settled in Oisterwijk came from Dutch towns and villages, such as Den Bosch, Rotterdam and Oirschot.

No such information survives regarding Leeuwarden. However the community's marriage registers of 1772 to 1810, analysed by H. Beem,²⁵ show that many of the brides and grooms originated from outside Leeuwarden including Amsterdam, Frisian and other Dutch communities such as Harlingen and Groningen, as well as outside the Dutch Republic, such as Arle in East Friesland and Friedrichstadt.

This data illustrates the wide range of private contact between Jews from different communities and countries. There were plenty of opportunities for contact: fairs, commercial travel and religious study, business contacts and family ties. These also reflect the irrelevance of political borders in the Ashkenazi world. It was only later in the eighteenth century that Dutch Jews tended to develop closer ties among themselves.²⁶

²⁴ See above, Chapter 4.

²⁵ Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 86.

²⁶ See above, Chapter 4.

Regional Organisations

Jewish regional organisations are characteristic of the early modern period. They emerged mainly in Central and Eastern Europe between the fifteenth and eighteenth century.²⁷ Wherever Jews were dispersed in a country, province or region, they tried to create organisational structures. Where there were too few Jews in a town or village to set up a local community they often created regional organisations, with the same officials and institutions as a local community, while local communities might also exist within this wider framework. Most members of a regional organisation referred to the body by the Hebrew term *medine*: land. These organisations were run by *parnassim*, employed a regional rabbi, and sometimes maintained one or more synagogues, usually in the towns or villages with the largest Jewish populations.

Another reason for establishing a regional organisation was to find a way of sharing the financial burden that Jews had to bear in most parts of the Holy Roman Empire. Local rulers forced Jews to pay an annual collective tax, which obliged them to develop ways of dividing the amount between families and individuals based on their ability to pay. This was always a central concern at the annual meetings of community representatives in a region, called *yom ha-va'ad*.

Besides dealing with common religious and economic issues, regional organisations enabled Jews to combine and thus improve their position in discussions with the local ruler.

This was a characteristic structure among Jews living in the Holy Roman Empire. In the Dutch Republic, however, different realities applied. There were no regional rulers who admitted Jews arbitrarily and demanded a collective tax. Jews in the outlying regions and provinces therefore organised their affairs in a less rigid manner. Previous research into Dutch Jewry has consistently failed to investigate this phenomenon in the Dutch Republic, although it certainly existed, as the *pinkassim* examined here reveal: there are clear indications of the existence of regional organisations. Ashkenazi Jews arriving from Germany and

²⁷ See the important research on this topic by D.J. Cohen, esp. his PhD thesis on the regional organisations in Germany (*op. cit.* [1967]), and his recent three-volume edition of selected sources on the history of these organisations: *Landjudenschaften in Deutschland als Organe jüdischer Selbstverwaltung von der frühen Neuzeit bis ins neunzehnte Jahrhundert*, 3 vols. (Jerusalem 1996, 1997, 2001).

Poland apparently imported the concept and adapted it to the liberal circumstances in their new country.

Of all the communities examined here, Oisterwijk clearly formed part of a regional organisation. Records in the oldest *pinkas* reveal the existence of an organisation of Jewish communities and settlements in the *meierij* of Den Bosch. In 1764 it included Oisterwijk, Waalwijk, Schijndel, Dinther, Veghel and Eindhoven,²⁸ whose representatives confirmed the organisation's statutes. This record in the Oisterwijk *pinkas* is not only evidence for the existence of the organisation, it is apparently the only proof of Jewish life in Dinther, and the earliest mention of the Jews of Waalwijk²⁹ and Schijndel.³⁰

The first paragraph of these regional *takkanot* mentions Jews in and near these towns and villages who attended synagogue elsewhere, since there were no synagogues where they lived.³¹ Thus in the *meierij* Jewish families and individuals lived in the same scattered pattern that required the formation of regional organisations elsewhere in Europe. Article three of the *takkanot* obliged representatives of the various groups to meet every three years for a *yom ha-va'ad*, which the regional rabbi would also attend. Apparently the main point debated at these meetings was invariably how to pay the rabbi's salary.³²

Also included in the *takkanot* is the question of *shehitah*, the admission of new members (paralleling the admission of new members to local communities) and weddings. All these points indicate that the participants saw themselves as a regional community with a similar structure to the regional organisations of Central Europe.

The Oisterwijk manuscripts do not reveal whether assemblies were held regularly, as the *takkanot* required. Most regional organisations in Central Europe kept a separate *pinkas* for decisions by the regional governors, which may also have been true in the *meierij*. A second record in the Oisterwijk *pinkas* refers to a meeting of the organisation in 1783 to choose a new rabbi: Eliya ben Nathan. This *yom ha-va'ad* record mentions other towns and villages than those recorded twenty years earlier: Eindhoven, Helmond, Bakel, Veghel, Oirschot and Oisterwijk.³³ No

²⁸ Ros. 282 a, p. 8.

²⁹ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 584.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 537–538. The article on Schijndel starts in the mid-nineteenth century.

³¹ Ros. 282 a, p. 1.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 2.

³³ *Ibid.*, p. 39; the record appears in Appendix 2, no. 27.

hint is given of what happened to the other communities; and other sources for these villages are scant. This record is the earliest evidence of Jews living in Bakel and Helmond.³⁴ Interestingly, towns such as Den Bosch and Tilburg are never mentioned in connection with the regional organisation, although both lie within the territory of the *meierij*, and both had Jewish communities in the late eighteenth century.³⁵

Another major factor influencing the foundation of regional organisations was the need to join forces and speak with one voice to the local authorities. In most Dutch regions with a large Jewish population the rulers were the provincial assembly or the city councils. In the *meierij* the situation was more complicated. The *meierij* was part of States Brabant, which was governed by the States General. None of the Oisterwijk manuscripts mention the local authority in relation to the community itself or the regional organisation. Clearly there must have been contact, but the *pinkassim* remain silent and only non-Jewish sources can be relied on here.

Rabbi Yekutiel Süsskind Rofe presumably also functioned as the regional rabbi, as his signature sometimes suggests: **הַקָּטָן יְקוּתִיאל זִיסקינד רופא חונה פה ק"ק הנ"ל והמדינה**.³⁶ The additional *ve-ha-medine* indicates that his authority was not confined to Oisterwijk, but encompassed the other Jewish concentrations in the region too.

This addition to the rabbi's title is also found in records signed by Rabbi Katriel of Leeuwarden. In 1780 he regularly signed his name as rabbi of Leeuwarden and the *medine*.³⁷ Presumably, therefore, either his mandate had been extended, or a regional organisation had been established around 1780. The *sefer zikhronot* does not mention either an extension of the rabbi's authority or the founding of a regional organisation. Rabbi Katriel may have been responsible for all the Jews of Friesland in the final decades of the eighteenth century. Jews lived in Bolsward,³⁸ Franeker,³⁹ Gorredijk,⁴⁰ Harlingen,⁴¹ Heerenveen,⁴²

³⁴ Neither place is mentioned in Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999).

³⁵ On Den Bosch see C. Rijnders, 'Joden en Overheid in 's-Hertogenbosch van de 18de tot de 20ste eeuw', *Varia Historica Brabantica* V (1976), *passim*.

³⁶ Ros 283, fol. 1 v.

³⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 228.

³⁸ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 236.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 351.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 357–358.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 414 and Beem, *op. cit.* (1974), p. 51.

⁴² Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 420.

Hindeloopen,⁴³ Noordwolde,⁴⁴ Sneek⁴⁵ and Stavoren.⁴⁶ These towns and villages had Jewish inhabitants from the second half of the eighteenth century on, but too few to employ a rabbi of their own. Rabbi Katriel apparently served as a provincial rabbi, and as his signature indicates, Friesland was in effect a *medine*. Yet there is no suggestion of a regional organisation in the *sefer zikhronot*, so the administrative structure of this regional association remains elusive.

Although there was no community in Workum, the cemetery there apparently played a central role for the Jews of the region. The Jews of Hindeloopen certainly used this burial ground. A record in the *sefer zikhronot* lists revenues from Amsterdam, The Hague and Leeuwarden.⁴⁷ Thus even Leeuwarden's community was involved in the cemetery, although it had a cemetery of its own.⁴⁸

No information is available regarding organisational ties between the community in The Hague and smaller concentrations of Jews in the vicinity. Since The Hague was a major community with a large Jewish population, there was presumably no need to combine forces with small neighbouring communities. None of the records in the *pinkas* use the term *ha-medine* in the rabbinic title. If there was no regional organisation in the area surrounding The Hague, this reinforces the theory that regional organisations were generally only established in rural areas where small, dispersed Jewish settlements existed. Similarly, since Middelburg was the only Jewish community in Zeeland at this time, no regional organisation was required here either.

The *pinkassim* reveal that the familiar pattern of regional organisations in Central and Eastern Europe also existed in the Dutch Republic. They may have been established under different circumstances, but the religious needs of dispersed pockets of Jews were the same. Other similar organisations may have existed elsewhere in the Dutch Republic. Clearly, however, *pinkassim*, the focus of the present study, are not the only source for this kind of structure. Official non-Jewish sources, on which research has concentrated to date, may shed more light on the

⁴³ Ibid., p. 436.

⁴⁴ Ibid., p. 486.

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 545.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 546.

⁴⁷ Tresoar, *Jewish institutions and communities*, no. 1, record no. 251.

⁴⁸ Michman e.a. (eds), *op. cit.* (1999), p. 449.

phenomenon, as with countless regional organisations in Germany and Poland, whose existence in some cases has only been revealed through non-Jewish sources.⁴⁹

⁴⁹ See Cohen *op. cit.* (1996, 1997, 2001), who for some regional organisations found no surviving Jewish records.

CHAPTER EIGHT

CONCLUSIONS

What is the advantage of examining the history of the communities of The Hague, Middelburg, Leeuwarden and Oisterwijk by referring only to their *pinkassim*, and what can be learned from the rather distorted picture of reality that these eighteenth-century manuscripts present? Naturally, the *pinkassim* are the key source for questions relating to administrative matters. Electoral procedures and attempts by governors to manage community affairs are all dealt with in the *pinkas* records. In addition, the *pinkassim* provide insights into the position of community officials such as cantors, teachers and slaughterers. Rabbis receive neither concentrated nor equal mention in these manuscripts. The occasional fragmentary references to rabbis viewed from the perspective of the *parnassim* doubtless reflect the occasionally ambivalent relationship between *parnassim* and rabbis in some communities. Yet scholars examining the power, influence and community involvement of rabbis should not overlook these manuscripts, even though they were written by the *parnassim* and so are not exactly objective. *Pinkassim* clearly provide a useful and indispensable resource for the administrative history of Jewish communities.

Revenue and finance are mentioned only occasionally in the manuscripts examined here, since *gabbaim* usually kept their own detailed records of income and expenses. The information in these *pinkassim* is therefore superficial. Detailed lists of economic status of families in the community were rarely found, so that data for socioeconomic research is neither comprehensive nor consistent.

As with finance, matters relating to charity and *hevras* were recorded sporadically, since this was not the concern of the governors as a body but rather of single officials. These officials probably kept separate records of their accounts. As a result *pinkassim* contain only general information about charity. Lists of *pletten* in Middelburg, and data relating to flour distribution at Pesach and peat in winter in Leeuwarden provide some insight, but these items are not found in most *pinkassim*. Moreover, *pinkassim* provide scant information about *hevras*. As the Hague and Leeuwarden manuscripts show, considerable data may appear in

the formative period of a *hevra*, when it still relies on the community for support. However, once a *hevra* operated independently, it apparently kept its own records and only appeared in the *pinkas* on rare occasions, mainly when a financial or other crisis occurred.

Evidence also exists in the *pinkassim* examined here of contacts with other communities in the Dutch Republic and abroad, although in most cases these are mentioned *en passant*. Since the primary source for these contacts is letters, only a few of which were copied into the *pinkassim*, this area of research focuses on minor references to other communities and rabbis. It is often the mention of rabbis of other communities that reveals that these contacts existed. However, the scarcity of records relating to contacts between communities shows that *pinkassim* are a secondary source for this subject. Close contacts in The Hague with the neighbouring Sephardi community feature more regularly; as with communities in neighbouring towns or villages in other *pinkassim*. Interestingly, the existence of a regional organisation in the *meierij* of Den Bosch is revealed in the records of the earliest Oisterwijk *pinkas*. The inclusion of these records in the *pinkas* is hardly surprising, since this was an important administrative matter.

The value of a *pinkas* as a historical source depends on its specific character. There is clearly a connection between the thoroughness of a community's administrative apparatus and the information contained in its *pinkas*. Since the communities examined here found themselves at different stages of development, without a common standard for keeping administrative records, the historical value of their documents varies considerably. Yet there are some elements that emerge as essential to a *pinkas*.¹ The present study reveals the full range of information that *pinkassim* can provide. While these have often been neglected in favour of non-Jewish material, it is clear that in order to gain a comprehensive historical picture, internal Jewish sources must be examined in combination with documents of the local authorities. Just as focusing exclusively on internal sources produces a distorted picture, the same applies the other way round, as many recent studies show. An integrated approach is essential in the study of Jewish history, whether local or regional.

To date no comprehensive analysis of a *pinkas* of any Dutch community has appeared in print. In addition to editions and studies on German, Polish and Italian manuscripts from the early modern

¹ See e.g., Introduction, section: *What is a Pinkas?*, and chapter 2.

period, the findings of this study will hopefully help provide a better understanding of the genre as a European phenomenon. Naturally the *pinkassim* of Amsterdam are a key source for Dutch Jewish history. An analysis of Amsterdam's administrative records and its repercussions as a role model for other Dutch Ashkenazi communities will provide a fascinating study.²

Despite the limitations of the *pinkassim* as comprehensive historical sources, they have been shown to reveal a number of previously unknown aspects of the Jewish communities examined here, not least the surprisingly different levels of community administration. For example, the Hague *pinkas* reveals how the Boas family dominated their community. The Middelburg *pinkas* shows the serious administrative problems, which were well documented, from a previously unknown internal perspective. Other significant new information includes the regional organisations in the *meierij* of Den Bosch and possibly also in Friesland, while the *pinkassim* of The Hague and Leeuwarden show how community ties weakened in the second half of the eighteenth century. This phenomenon has been described in relation to German communities;³ the examples revealed in the *pinkassim* examined here show that it was far from being a purely German-Jewish problem. In addition to improving knowledge and insight into various aspects of Dutch Jewish life outside Amsterdam, it is hoped that this study will also help to improve our understanding of the late pan-Ashkenazi Jewish world of early modern Europe in general.

² See the informative study by Sluys, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

³ See Shochat, *op. cit.*, *passim*.

ABBREVIATIONS

GA	Gemeentearchief (Municipal Archive)
ZA	Zeeuws Archief (Zeeland Archive)
CAHJP	Central Archives for the History of the Jewish People
NIW	Nieuw Israelietisch Weekblad
YIVO	Yidisher Visnshaftlekher Institut
NIG	Nederlands Israelietisch Gemeente

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Middelburg—I

Name	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	503	504
Eisak (Yizhak bar Chajim) Levi		P	P	E	P	P									P		P?	E	
Eisak bar Moshe, Jakob	P	P																	
Shiomo ben, Jizchak			P	P		E													
Boas ben Yizchak	P			P															
Shimshon bar Meir Abraham		E		E	P		P	P	E	P	E	EP	EP		P	E	P		
Mordchai bar Abraham Hacohen		E																	
Menachem Mendel ben, Joseph Menachem			E																
Shimon ben Benjamin			E																
Meir Boas			E															P	
Gad bar Hayyim				E		E												P	EP
Jonathan bar Shlomo					E				P	E	P								
Hayyim ben Moshe Benjamin Hacohen					E				E			E							

Middelburg—1a

Name	485	486	487	488	489	490	491	492	493	494	495	496	497	498	499	500	501	503	504
Eljakum bar Israel Meir					E	E		E						EP					
Joseph Menahem ben Mosche Shimon Jacob					P	P		E											
Juda bar Aharon Halevi						E	E	E	E	P	E	EP	EP	E		P			P
Joel bar Yona							E												
Gotschlick bar Israel Meir							E		E							P			
Joel bar Yehuda, Joseph Nathan Hacohen								P	P	E	P				P		P	E	
Yizchak bar Jehuda Hacohen											E								E
Meir bar Baruch													E			E			
Jisrael ben Alexander														E	E	E	E		
Bezalel bar Meir Abraham														P	P	P			EP
Bendit bar Eljakum															E		E		
Kalman ben David Hammerstein [?]															E				P
Leib bar Jakob Levi																	E	E	

Middelburg—2a

Name	505	506	507	508	509	510	511	512	513	514	515	516	517	518	519	521	522	523	524
Tuvia bar Moshe								E			P		E			P	P		P
Yitzhak Shimshon ben Leib Dessau									E		EP		P					P	
Levi Bloch										E									
Leiser bar Joseph											E	P	P	P					
Leib bar Jehoshua											E								
Saul ben Hayyim Boas											P	E	P	EP					
Jehuda ben David												P							
Ante Leib bar Yischai													E						G cem
Salman ben Jonathan													E						
Itzik bar Josef														E					
Yehuda bar Gerschon														P		P	G cem		
Jakob Alexander Suess(kind) ben Israel																P	P	P	P
Shimon bar Yehuda Leib																	P		P

Lecuwarden—I

Name	527	528	530	531	532	533	534	535	536	537	538	539	540	541	542	543	544	545	546	547	548 ¹	548 ²	549
Juspa b. Heshel Levi	CM	M	M			CM	M	M								CP	P	P					
Efraim b. Joseph	C	C	CM	M			C	CM	M	M		CP	P			C	CP	P	P				
Joel Polak		C																					
Itzik b. Menahem Mendel		CM	M	M	M	M				C	CM	M	M							C			
Itzik b. Heshel Levi			CM	M	M			C															
Lcib Polak			C	C	C	C				CM	M	M					C	C	C	C	C		
Anshel Levi			C					C				C	C								C		
Hirsch b. Josef				G																			
Aharon b. Hayim Rofc				C	C	C	C	C	G	C	C	C	G	C	CP	P	P		C			C	C
Moshe Hayim b. Aharon	C				CM	M	M																
Nahum b. Koppel							CM	M	M					CP	P	P							
Elhanan Levi									CM	M	M		CP	P	P				CP	P	P		
Hayyim b. Aharon											C												
Itzik b. Shmuel Harlingen																						C	C
Eisak b. Jakob Minden																					CP	P	PCP
Salman Drogist																C	C			CP	P		
Hirtz Katz																							
Nathan b. Shmuel																						C	
																						CP	P

¹ First election.

² Second election.

Leeuwarden—2

Name	550	551 ³	551 ⁴	552	553 ³	553 ⁴	554	555
Juspa b. Heshel Levi	C							
Aharon b. Hayyim Rofe	C	C	C(P)					C
Elhanan Levi	CP	P		P			CP	P
Eisik b. Jacob Minden		C(P)		P	P			CP
Salman Drogist	P	P			C(P)			
Hirtz Katz		C	C(P)	C			C	
Nathan b. Shmuel	P			CP	P		P	
Meir b. Pinhas				C				
Gabriel b. Anshel Levi					C	C		
Rafael b. Benjamin Segal						CP	P	P
Beer b. Jacob						C		
Meir b. Nathan							C	
David b. Nathan								C

³ First election.⁴ Second election.

Oisterwijk

Name	525/ 26	526/ 27	527/ 28	528/ 529	529/ 30	530/ 31	531/ 32	532/ 33	533	534/ 35	535/ 36	536/ 37	539/ 40	543/ 44	544/ 45	546/ 47	547/ 48
David bar Akiva Oisterwijk	G			G						G	G						
Mordechai ben Simha		G		G			G		G		G	G					
Jacob Baruh		G								G							
Shalom			G														
Itzik BE			G														
Gabriel ben Meir				G		G		G				G		E			
Feibel bar Hayyim						G			G					G	G	G	G
Nathan bar Abraham							G										
Wolf ben David								G									
Nathan bar Yitzhak													G				
Jacob Meir bar Aharon													G	G		G	G
Leib bar David														E			
Itzik Sofer														E			
Akiva bar David s.A.															G		

Name	548/49	549/50	453/54
Mordechai bar Simha		G	G
Akiva bar David	G	G	
Jacob Meir bar Aharon	G	(G)	
Leib Kleve			G

APPENDIX TWO

SELECTED RECORDS FROM THE *PINKASSIM*

The following extracts from the *pinkassim* discussed in this study deal with the incidents and situations referred to the first part of this volume and reveal something of the style and language of the documents.

The Hague Pinkas, GA Den Haag, NIG, no. 1

1

Worshippers at the Ashkenazi synagogue involved in conflicts with the Sephardi community may not be called up to the Torah or be given other synagogue honours.

8 August 1726

Fol. 38, record 2

יו' ה' י"א אב תפ"ו
איז גידיליווירט גיווארדן בייא קהל באם איינר אין אונזיר ב"ה מעכטי
קומין דער איין סכסוך מיט קהל ספרדים הוט דש זיך מהיום והלאה
קיינר זאל דר וועגן דעם זעלביגן אוף צו רופין אונ' קיין מצוה צו קופין
אונ' קיין מישבירך צו מכין בלי ידיעת פרנסים יצ"ו
ממני מאיר בן משה עמדן נעמן הקהלה

2

Announcement in the synagogue: it is strictly forbidden to fight on Shabbat or holidays in public, since this is a severe desecration of the Holy Name.

20 February 1730

Fol. 61v., record 3

ביו' ב' ג' אדר שנת ת"צ ל' האט קהל יצ"ו לאזין אויז רופין בב"ה
מאחר דז מן האט שוינט כמה פעמים דעם עולם מזהר גיוועזין דז מן זאל
קיין מהומא מאכין אויף דיא גאס בשבת וי"ט ופשיטא ניט פֿעכטין אודר
שלאגין וועלכיש גדול חילול השם איז אונ' מחלל שבת וי"ט אונ' כמה
וכמה לייטן ניט דאר אן נזהר זיין ע"פ זיין אלופי' מנהיגי' דקהלתנו יצ"ו
דעם עולם מזהר באזהרה אחר אזהרה דז מהיום והלאה יהי' מי שיהי'
ווער דא ווערט פֿעכטן אודר שלאגין אפילו נור מהומא מאכין אויף דיא
גס בשבת וי"ט אונ' אלופי' מנהיגי' דקהלתנו יצ"ו ווערין ידיעה דאר פון

קריגן, זוא ווערט מאן דיא זעלבגה לייט ניט לאזין בב"ה קומן ויותר חרפות וביוש"י אן טוהן וויא זעלכה לייט צו קומיט דיא מחלל שבת וי"ט זיין אוני גדול חילול השם מאכין וואר נאך אידר זיך האט צו רעגוליהרן וכל העם ישמעו ויראו. אליי ב"ה בנימן פאס זצ"ל נאמן הקהלה

3

Former Rabbi Jacob Shalom appears before the parnassim following the decision of the municipal court confirming his dismissal, and asks for an extension of his contract

5 December 1734

Fol. 82, record 2

היום יום א' יוד כסליו תצ"ה ל' נאך דעהמי דער גוועזינר רב מהור"ר שלום, מיט אייניגה בעלי מחלוקת ובראשם ר' איצק לעוורטן, זיך אן גיקאנט הבן קעגן דיא ריזוליציע מן קהל יצ"ו עם ז' אנשים בדף 81, אוני דעשט וועגן אצל השררה ביא הערן בורגימיינשטרו יר"ה גקלאגט, אוני פיל שקרים אן געבן הבן אוני ענטליך עש"ק העבר ח' כסליו מן השררה יר"ה אז גשפרא כן איז, דש אליז וואש קהל יצ"ו ריזולפירט הבן Wettig איז. אוני ער זיך אצל קהל יצ"ו מוז סובמיטירן. זוא איז דער גיועזינר רב הנ"ל היום אצל קהל יצ"ו גיקומן אוני בזה הלשון גיזאגט, "ווייל איך אצל השררה יר"ה מיין משפט פֿר לאהרן הוב זוא קום איך אצל קהל צו בעהטן מיר קצת צו צו ליגן" וואור אוף קהל יצ"ו אים גיפראגט, מה טעם ער זולכש ניט פֿריאר גיטאן האט. והשיב דש עש אמת איז, בפרט ר' חיים אים זולכש אן גראהטן האט, רק ער איז פֿר פֿיהרט גיווארן. אוני האט זיך זוא וויט איבר געבן דש קיין ברירה האט גיהאט. דא אוף הבן קהל יצ"ו ריזולפירט אום עד מחר אירה גידנקן צו לוזן גין אוני אים תשובה צו געבן טוב"י בועז נאמן הקהלה

4

Brothers Sussman and Yehuda ben Shalom Nerden struck Merle bat Yitzhak Jacob in the synagogue courtyard and are required to answer the charge before the parnasim and to apologise; they refuse to do so.

24 October 1736

Fol. 92, record 1

היום הבן קהל יצ"ו פר גאדירט, ה"ה ר' זלמן בן יעקב פה"ח, ואחי כמר משה עמדין פרנס, יעקב ב"ה יצחק גבאי, אוני ה"ה הר"ר טוב"י בועז נאמן הקהלה, וועגין המהומה אונ גשלעג זוא יום ב' העבור קודם יציאת מבית הכנסת ובשעת התפילה, בחצר הקהל איז פאר גיפאלן בין האשה מערלה בת יצחק יעקב, ובין זוסמן ב"ה שלום נערדין ואחי יהודא ב"ה שלום, אונ וויילן הפי"ח וגבאי צדקה ונאמן הקהלה, קרוב"י ופסולי עדות מן האשה

הני"ל זיין, אוב שון זולכה בדינר ב"ה מותר זיין, הבין קהל יצ"ו צור איבר פֿלוס דא בייא גרופֿין ב' אנשים פרנסי' ישינים, דיא קיין נוגעים בדבר זיין הי"ה מהור"ר אברלה לוי יצ"ו והי"ה הר"ר איצק ב"ה ישראל יעקב (דער זיך עקסקיזירט האט) ובמקום נאמן הקהלה אני ח"מ, ובא האשה הני"ל לפני קהל יצ"ו קובלת וצועקת, דז ר' זוסמן הני"ל ואחיו יום ב' הני"ל אן איר הינטרווערליך האבין גשלאגן מכות גדולות ואכזריות, אונ פר קהל יצ"ו אך גוויזן דיא פר קלארינג זוא כ"ב אוקטובר 1736 פר דעם נוטריוס לעאנדרט בילאנד אונ זיכרה עדות פאסירט איז, אונ וויל קהל יצ"ו אצל ר' זוסמן הני"ל ואחיו יהודא שלשה פעמים הבין גשיקט דז זיא זאלין קומן פר קהל יצ"ו אום אירה התנצלות צו טוהן, בפֿרט ווייל דא ניט אליין דיא גימיינה רושט מיט גשטארט ווערט זונדרן אויך איסור גדול פאסירט איז דז אן אשתו נוגע גיוועזן בעת נדתה, אונ דיא זעלבה הבין לאזין זאגן דז זיא אצל קהל יצ"ו או בייא דיא בעלי בתים ניקש צו טוהן הבין, זוא איז גבליבן אצל קהל יצ"ו דז מען דעם ר' זוסמן הני"ל ואחיו יהודא בייא פרווישיין זאלין דיא שוהל פר ביהטן ביז זיא קומן אירה התנצלות צו טוהן אונ אן קהל יצ"ו סאטיפאקצין געבין, וועלכה בוטשפֿט מען זיא עיי קהל יצ"ו אך האט לאזן ווישן, וואר אויף זיא עיי אחותם הבין לאזין ענטפרין עש איז גוט, גם זאת איז גבליבן אצל קהל יצ"ו באם זיא זולטן עובר אונ דאך בב"ה קומן דז מען זיא תיכף ומיד זאלין אין דיא הכרזה טוהן, נעשה ביום ד' י"ט חשוון תצ"ז לפ"ק פה ק"ק האג ליב ב"ה יצחק עמדן ע"ע במקום נאמן הקהלה

5

Some members of the community who had contributed to the salary of Rabbi Saul Halevi are unable to continue their payments. The parnassim ask them to present an official declaration that they are unable to continue their contributions; presentation of the declaration.

17 November 1754

Fol. 155

מאחר איזה אנשים מהחתומים תחת השטר נדבה לסיועת אב"ד נר"ו, כמו על דף 130 צו זעהן, זיך ברייטש קודם ר"ח אייר תקי"ד לי אצל קהל יצ"ו אדרעסירט הבן אונ' פר זוכט אנטשלאגן צו זיין פֿון אירה צייכנונג זוא זיא הי' אייר תק"ח לי תחת השטר נדבה הני"ל גטאהן. אונ' זולכש אונגר [!]¹ פרעטעקסט, דש איהר מיינונג נור וואהר פר ששה שנים. בפֿרט וויילן הגאון אב"ד נר"ו זיין רבנות בריב, אך נור על ששה שנים אן הלטנד וואהר.

¹ Error, should be: אונדר.

באותו פעם הבן קהל יצ"ו זיא אב גוויזן, אוני גזאגט דש קהל יצ"ו זיא ניט אנטשלאגין זענין. ואדרבה דש זיא גהלטן זיין פערנר צו קונטינוואירן. זוא לנג הגאון אב"ד שלנו מו"ה שאול הלוי כאן נוהג רבנות איז. אוני שפעציאל וויילן תוך השטר נדבה פערמעלד שטיט כל זמן שזכינו שיהא אצלינו הרב הנ"ל²

יעדאך וויילן אייניגה מהחתומים הנ"ל בשבועה הבן וואלן פר קלאהרן, דש איר מיינונג נור גוועזין איז על ששה שנים, אך דש אייניגה פר קלאהרט הבן, זיא השטר נדבה זוא אין לשון הקודש גשריבן³ איז, גאר ניט פרשטנדן. זוא הבן קהל יצ"ו אום קיינה משפטים עם יחידים צו הבן, אוני קיינה שבועות צו גדולדן, אך דבייא קונסידיריהרט דש ברייטש אייניגה מהחתומים הנ"ל גשטארבן, אוני אייניגה אויסרשטנד גראהטן צו צאלין. גוט גפונדן להחתומים הנ"ל צו זאגין, דש זיא זאללן ברענגן אדוויז מב"ד של ישראל, או מן ב' פארנעהמי אדווקאטן, וואור בייא מען זיא מחתימת ידם בפרייאט. ואזי ווערדן קהל יצ"ו דא מיט גניהגן נעמן. על זה הוט ר' הירץ בר בנימן אלז איינר מהחתומים הנ"ל אן גנומן אינן אדוויז מן ב' אדווקאטן צו בזורגין.

נון הוט כהיום ר' הירץ בר בנימן הנ"ל אצל קהל יצ"ו גבראכט איין אדוויז דאטה ב' נובעמבר 1754 גצייכנט מן אדווקאטן יוהאנניס שכופמן אוני קורנעליס דע ווילה שונואר, וואור בייא זיא פר מיינן דש החתומים פון אירה פר בינטיניס ליבעריהרט זיין, וואור מיט קהל יצ"ו אלזוא גניהגן⁴ גנומן. אוני החתומים הנ"ל: מן ה' אייר תקי"ד והלאה אנטשלאגין. אוני רעזולפיהרט אן יעדער מהחתומים (דער זולכש פודרט) פון דיזה רעזולוציע קופייא צו געבן צור אירה רעשרשה. האג יום א' ג' כסלו תקט"ו ל' הקטן סענדר לוי נאמן הקהלה

6

Negotiations between the parnassim, the Sephardi David Delsato and the municipal council about the estate of Delsato's maid, Gitle bat Hirtz, who recently died; the estate remains under the parnassim's administration until news is received regarding Gitle's brother, apparently in the East Indies or New York.

27 November 1757

Fol. 162 v.

בהיות דש הבתולה גיטלה בת ר' הירץ בן ר' אלי שמש ע"ה שהיתה משרתת בבית הספרדי דוד דעלסאטה יום ב' ג' חשון תקי"ח ל' נפטר

² Underlined in manuscript.

³ Erased: גשריבן.

⁴ The manuscript clearly states גניהגן, although the Dutch Yiddish would suggest גנוהגן. My thanks to Marion Aptroot who drew attention to this.

ווארדן ונקברת יום ג' די דיטן, אלזוא האט דוד דעלסאטה הנ"ל איזה ימיו דא נאך רעקוועסט אן הערן שעפינו פריזנטירט אונ' פרו זוכט, אים דעלסאטה צו אוטהאריזירן, דיא זאכין מהבתולה הנ"ל צו אדמינישטרירן אונ' זוא לנג אין זיין בוואהרונג צו הלטן ביז צייטונג מאחיה ר' ליפמן בן הירץ דער זיך כעת בוועשט אינדיע או ניא יארק זול בפנדן, קומט, דוך השררה יר"ה הבן גוט גפונדן דא אויף צו Apoincteeren דש דיזון רעקוועשט זול גשטעלט ווערן ביד קהל יצ"ו אום דא אויף צו בריכטן. על זה הבן קהל יצ"ו דיא פריינד מהבתולה הנ"ל גשפראכין וועלכי זיך שטרק אופינרט אונ' ניט ליידן וואלין דש דעלסאטה הנ"ל דיא זאכין זול אדמינישטרירן, אך הבן קהל יצ"ו דעלסאטה הנ"ל גשפראכין אונ' אים גראהטן כבודו צו אוברווהרן אונ' מבוקשתו אב צו זעהן. גלייך ער זיך ענטליך אך רעזולפיהרט אונ' אונטר רעקוועשט שלו נאגדר גשטעלט דש ממבוקשתו אב זעהט אונ' וואול ליידן מעג דש דיא זאכין בידי קהל יצ"ו זוללין גשטעלט ווערן. על זה הבן השררה יר"ה אוטהוריאציע פרו לעהנט על קהל יצ"ו דאטו²⁷ נובעמבר 1757 אין הלטנד: אום זולכי זאכין דיא הנפטר הנ"ל מן אנדרי אונטר איר בוואהרונג גהאט אן דיא אייגינרז אויז צו ליורן, הוצאות קבורה ושאר צרכים צו צאלין, הכל צו Inventariseeren אונ' זוא לנג ליגן צו לוזן ביז צייטונג מאחיה הנ"ל קומן מעכט.

על זה הבן קהל יצ"ו היום אין פרעזענץ מן נוטאריז דנסיא לוזן אינווענטאריזירן, אונ' דיזם נוטאריז אורדר געבן מזה אקטע צו פאסירן. אן מזומנים הוט דעלסאטה הנ"ל אויף געבן צו מוזן צאלין f 107:16 וואור פון קהל יצ"ו קוויטונג פאסירן מוזן כהנ"ל מן שארי זאכין אום זולכי צו עמפפנגין

אונ' פערנר גוט גפונדן לאני ח"מ ליפמן בן קלמן אלז נ"ה צו ערוזכין דיא f 107:16 אין עמפפנג צו נעמן דא אויז צרכי קבורה ושאר הוצאות כמו מן מליצים וכו' צו צאלין והמותרת להג"צ מוסר צו זיין.

כהנ"ל וואש פון דיא קליידונג או ווייש צייג אן אנדרי גהערט כמו קהל יצ"ו פאר קומן איז דש אייניגה לבת אנשיל ב"ה אליי שמש גהערן גגן בהערליכה קוויטונג אויז צו ליורן

האג יום א' ט"ו כסלו תקי"ח ל'
ליפמן ב"ה קלמן ז"ל נ"ה

7

David Pinero of the Sephardi community complained that a Sephardi woman was permitted to use the Ashkenazi ritual bath; the cantor's wife, who runs the mikveh, is required to refuse Sephardi women in future.

2 July 1758

Fol. 165, record 1

לעייע פרנס מקהל ספרדיים
 וויילן הגביר דוד פינערא אן פ"ו אברהם בועז גקלאגט דש אשה מספרדיים
 מקוה של קהל אשכנזים גברויכט, אונ' איר מקוה דא דורך צו קורץ קומט,
 זוא הבן קהל יצ"ו זיך אצל אשת החזן לעייע מקוה פרא אינפורמירט,
 וועלכי דעקלאריהרט הוט דש זולכש נור פעם אחת גשעהן, אונ' דש מען
 איר דא צו פערסואדיהרט הוט. להבא אבר הבן איר קהל יצ"ו מזהיר
 גוועזין, קיין אשה מספרדיים גיהן צו לוזין, וויילן קהל יצ"ו זוא ווינג איר
 מקוה זוכין צו בנאך טיילן, אלז זיא איר אייגן הכנסה צו קורץ טוהן לוזין
 וואלין. האג יום הני"ל [26 Sivan 5518]
 ליפמן בייה קלמן זי"ל נ"ה

8

The parnassim decide to appoint Tobias Boas and Leib Tiehl as the community's official emissaries to Stadholder William V. Together with the emissaries of the communities of Amsterdam and Rotterdam they will congratulate him on attaining his majority and beginning his reign and ask for protection for the Jews in general.

10 March 1766

Fol. 195 v., record 3

יום ב' ער"ח ניסן תקכ"ו ל' היט הפה"ח באסיפת קהל יצ"ו ראפורטיהרט
 וויא פו"מ ר' טובי בועז יצ"ו איהם בקענדט גמאכט דש מקהל אמשטרדם
 ומקהל רוטרדם איז אן גזוכט ווארדן אום נעבשט דעפוטיהרטי מקהלתינו
 יצ"ו אודיענץ אצל אדונינו הפרינס שטאטהאלטר יר"ה צו ערלאנגן אום
 להשר יר"ה צו זיינר Majoriteyt אונ' Aanvaarden מן רעגיהרונג צו
 פיליסיטיהרן אונ' זיינר פראטעקציאהן פר כלל יהדות צו סאליסיטיהרן, דש
 ר' טובי הני"ל זיך ע"ז אצל החצר אינפורמיהרט אונ' איהם צו גזאגט דש
 זיא אודיענץ נאך שבוע הלז ווירט פר לעהנט ווערדן אונ' וויילן הקהלות
 אמשטרדם ורוטרדם יעדרר אפרענט שני פרנסים דא צו דעפוטיהרן זויא
 פראפוניהרט הפה"ח הני"ל בה"ע שני פרנסים מקהלתינו צו דעפוטיהרן
 ע"ז איז אין קונסידראציע גנומן וויילן בשנת תקי"ז אצל הפרינס המנוח ע"ה
 דערא גלייכן אודיענץ אובטיניהרט איז אונ' דיא דעפוטיהרטה מקהלתינו
 ווארן ר' טובי בועז הני"ל אונ' ר' ליב טיהל באותו פעם בידי רעגיהרנדה
 פרנסים. אונ' השני פרנסים ר' הירץ אונ' ר' אברהם בועז וועלכי בליכר
 מאסין העטי מוזן דעפוטיהרט ווערן, מזה הבן רענונציהרט זויא הבין קהל
 יצ"ו גוט גפונדן דא צו צו ערוזכן אונ' צו דעפוטיהרן השני פרנסים ישנים
 הני"ל ר' טובי בועז אונ' ר' ליב טיאל אום בשם קהל יצ"ו צו אגיהרן אונ'
 צו אובסערפיהרן אלש וואש דא צו ניהטיג איז וידיהם כידינו בדבר הזה
 אונ' זול מזה קופייה אטענטיהק געבן ווירן לכל אחד משני דעפוטיהרטי
 הני"ל אום צו דיהנן צו איהר נאך ריכט

9

David bar Nahman has sent a letter from Puerto Rico to his wife, Sere bat Leiser Emden, and asks about her and her son. He promises to send money via Tobias Boas.

9 August 1767

Fol. 202, record 2

יו"א י"ד מנתם תקכ"ז לפ"ק הבן קהל יצ"ו אן האשה סערה בת ליזר עמדן כתב מבעלה דוד בר נחמן דאטו פארטה ריקא יו"א י"ד אדר ראשון תקכ"ז איבר ליפרט, וארין שפעציאל שטיהט דש זיא איהם זול שרייבן וויא זיא ובנה זיך בפ"נדן. ואז וועהר ער ע"י ר' טובי' בועז שי' אן איהר מעות איבר מאכן. כתב הני"ל איזט איהר מרושא לסופ' אין פרעזענציע מקהל יצ"ו ע"י שמש דקהילתינו פ"ר גלייבנד וואורדן.
הקי קאשל ווייל נ"ה

10

Michel ben Benjamin Haas was seen going to the Bosch on Shabbat. Since the Bosch, the military parade ground, is situated outside the eruv (within which Jews may carry on Shabbat), the parnassim and the rabbi warn Michel and everyone else not to do this again, since carrying objects (a watch) to the Bosch is forbidden on Shabbat.

26 April 1772

Fol. 219 v., record 1

שבת הגדול תקלב⁵ הוט הגא"בד שי' בדרשה שלו שטארק מזהיר גוועזן דש קיינר זיך דר וועגן זול בשבת אין בוש צו גיהן, וויילן מען זיך ניט גנוגן פאר זעהן קאן דש מען ניקש ביא זיך טרוגן זול ובנקל מון קען קומן חלילה לכדי חילול שבת דאורייתא
יום א אסרו חג דפסח תקלב זיין קהל יצ"ו פר גאדרט בבית הגאב"ד שי' הוט מון לוזן רופן אן מיכל בנימן הז, הבן איהם קהל יצ"ו בצירוף הגא"בד שי' גפראגט וויילין מון גאנץ וואוהל וויישט, ער ביום אתמול בשבת קודש אין בוש איזט גוועזן אונד ביא זיך גטראגן זיין אורלושי ווארום ער מחלל שבת הוט גוועזן, אויב ער שבת הגדול ניט גהערט הוט דער רבי דא פון דרשנן, והשיב זולכש בשוגג גטאהן צו האבן דש ער שבת הגדול ניט צו דיא דרשה איזט גוועזן, ער הוט גמיינט איין אורלאשי מעג מען וואוהל ביי זיך טראגן חוץ למקום, אונד פר שפראכן זולכש ניט ווידר צו טוהן וואו אויף קהל יצ"ו איהם גזאגט הבן דש ער ראוי ונכון וועהר גשטראפיט צו ווערן איהם ניט שולין צו לאזן וכהנה רבים שארי עונשין, אך ורק וויילין

⁵ 11 April 1772.

ער זיך עקסקוזהרט דש זולכש ניט גווישט הוט אונ וויילין עש ערשטי מאהל איזט, איהם קהל יצ" דייזש מאהל ניט ווערדן מענש זיין אונ ער אצל הגא"בד שי זול מקבל תשובה זיין על חטאי ע"ז הבן קהל יצ" פרייטאג צו נאכט פולגנדי כרוז בבה"כ לוזן פובליציהרן (אונ מיכל הנ"ל שולין גוועזן)

מאחר בשבת שעברה זיך לייטן ניט ענטזעהין הבן, אום בשבת קודש אין בוש צו גיהן וקצתן הבן גטראגן מרשות לרשות, כמו זיא זעלבשטן הען מודה גוועזן וועלכש בעו"ה איין חילול שבת גמור איזט, וכמו כן בשנה העבר איזט פרצה גדולה דלא יעשה בישראל גשעהן שיצאו אנשים בני בליעל, במרד ובעל מחוץ לתחום בשבת קודש, אויף זולביגי פלאץ וואו דיא עקסערציציע מבעלי מלחמות גשעהן אום זעלביגש צו צו זעהן, אונד וועהר ראוי ונכון גוועזן זעלביגי לייטן מפרסים ברבים צו זיין פר רשעים גמורים אונד זיא מחרים ומנדה צו זיין רק אין עונשין אלא מזהירין, ובפרט דש זיך עקסקוזהרט הבן בחסרון ידיעתם

בכן זיין קהל יצ" בצרוף הגאון אב"ד שי מזהיר באזהרה גדולה דש קיינר הן איש הן אישה מגדול ועד קטן זיך דר וועגן זול מהיום והלאה בשבת אין בוש צו געהן אויב שוין זיא ניקש ביא זיך טראגן כדי שלא לפרוץ הגדר ח"ו ומי שיערב לבו לגשת ולעבור על הגבול ווערט מען דעם זעלביגן מחרים ומנדה ומפריש מקהל ישראל זיין שיהיי בכלל ארור אשר לא יקים, וויא זולכי עוברי עבירה צו קומן דיא מחלל שבת בפרהסיא זיין לכל השומע תבוא עליו ברכה

11

Michel ben Benjamin Haas was seen walking to the Bosch on Shabbat again. The parnassim summon him, but his mother appears instead and states that this time he was not carrying a watch. She asks the parnassim not to condemn him without a hearing

4 May 1772

Fol. 219 v., record 2:

יום א' דר"ח אייר תקלב ל' זיינן קהל יצ" פר גאדירט בחדר הקהל ובאו עדות לפני קהל יצ" הי"ה אייזק שליזר אונ וואלף בן מנחם ב"ב אונ מיכל ב' אנשיל ביקטן והעידו, דש זיא ביום אתמול בשבת קודש הבן זעהן אויז עש בוש ארויז קומן אן מיכל בן בנימן הז

קהל יצ" הבן מיכל הנ"ל ווידר לוזן רופן וועלכר עד הנה נאך ניט לפס[ק] קהל קומן אמו הענא אשת בנימן הז איזט קומן אונד גזאגט בנה הנ"ל איזט אין בוש גוועזן אבר הוט ניקש ביא זיך גטראגן אונד שטארק אן גהאלטן אצל קהל יצ" דש מען קיין פסק על בנה מיכל הנ"ל מאכן זול שלא בפניו, זיא פר שפרעכט דש ער זיך פר קהל שטעללין ווערט

12

Announcement in synagogue: The sisters Sarah and Haya Goch are condemned as prostitutes because of their premarital promiscuity, resulting in the pregnancy of Haya. Both are excluded from the community.

26 July 1773

Fol. 223 v.

העתקה מהכרוז שנכרז בבה"כ יום בי' ו' אב תקל"ג ל'
מאחר שהקרה בקהלתנו י"ץ מקרה בלתי טהור הוא שמבנות אנשי
קהלתנו י"ץ הנמצאות בעיר יצאו שתי נערות פרוצת שפרצו נדריהן,
אונד הבן זיך מפקיר לזנות גוועזן האחת בשמה שרה גאך והשני אחותה
הצעירה ממנה, בשמה ח"י גאך וועלכי זיך ניט הבן ענטזעהין בשום פני
עובר צו זיין בפרהסיא על לא תהי קדשה⁶ לכל מי שעבר דרך ביתם. כמו
זיך אויז גוויזן הוט, שהאחת מהנה הצעירה, איז ווארדן הרה לזוננים וילדה
בת זנונים, ואחותה הבכורה הוט מסייע לדבר עבירה גוועזן כידוע לנו
ולהיות שהדבר הרע הזה נתברר ונתגלה לנו והנגלות לנו ולבנינו חלילה
דש ע"י עונותם קענט קהלתנו הקדושה י"ץ נענש ווערדן, זויא דש מען
הען [2] פלילה כזאת ניט נהער צו גדולדן אונד מיט שטיל שוויגן לוזן פר
בייא גיהן שלא יהי' אשמם תלוי בראשנו
בכן לבער הקוצים מכרם בית ישראל ולגדור הפרצה הבן קהל י"ץ גוט
גפונדן השתי אלו הפרצות שרה גאך אונד ח"י גאך מענש צו זיין דש זיא
חזקת הקהלה בזה זוללין פר לאהרן הבן, ומהיום והלאה זוללין זיא מופרש
ומובדל זיין שלא יהי' להם עוד שום טענה ותביעה וחזקה בקהלתנו י"ץ.
אונד אויך איז מען היר מיט מזהיר באזהרה גדולה דש קיינר זעלביגי זול
אינוענטיהרן אויף איין חתונה או שאר שמחה ובטוחים וסמוכים אנחנו
על כל מי האיש הירא וחרד לדבר ה' ווירט בוודאי הרשעיות האלו ניט
פר לנגן אויף זיין שמחה להכריע בחורי ישראל חלילה, אפס לקצה העם
גשיכט אזהרה זו, משום קיין קרבות אונד גמיינשאפט עם הפרוצות אלו
צו מכן, בפרט בשעת שמחה פן יכשלו וילכדו במצודתם חלילה רק
להרחיקם בהרחקה גדולה ויחשבו נפקות ברא. לען יוסרו ויתגנו בעונש
כל הקהלה קדושה י"ץ אונד איין יעדר זיך דא עקסעמפל אן נעמן ווירט
כדי שלא תהי' קדישה מבנות ישראל חלילה ותהא עונתם על עצמותם
ואנחנו נקיים מחטאתם ורשם הטוב יכפר בעדנו ומשל חטא ועון יצילינו
ויברך את חילנו אמן
וכל השומע תבוא עליו בע"ה

⁶ Deut. 23:18.

13

Cantor Matatyahu and baal koreh (Torah reader) Benjamin are warned by the parnassim not to go to the opera or theatre; otherwise they will be suspended from office.

20 June 1779

Fol. 244, record 3

קהל יצי הבן גוט גפונדן להחזן ר' מתת'י ולהקורא ר' בנימן היא מיט אן צו זאגן דש זיא זיך מהיום והלאה ניט אונטר שטיהן זוללין אין אייניגה קומעדיע או opera צו גיהן, ובאם שיעברו על זה, זיא אודר איינר מהם זיך אונטרשטין זעלט אין קומעדיע או opera צו גיהן פר פעם ראשון 6 וואוכן משירות שלו דעפורטירט זיין משך אותו זמן קיין שירות צו גניסן ובפעם שנית פון אירה אופיסיע פעליג דעפורטיהרט ווערן, מזה זול מען יעדרם העתקה ע"י השמש איבר ליוורט ווערן אום זיך נאך צו רעגוליהרן נעשה בחדר הקהל פה האג יום א' ו' תמוז תקל"ט לפ"ק
הקי איצק ליידין נה"ק

Middelburg Pinkas

Zeeuws Archief, NIG Middelburg, No. 1

14

Widow Miriam quarreled in the synagogue and was fined one rijksdaalder.

24 March 1725

P. 15, record 1

הפ"ת ל'י

היו יום שבת קודש הוא שבת הגדול יו"ד ניסן האט האלמנה מרים עובר תקנה גיוועזין בסימן מ"א וסימן מ"ב אונ האט גיצענקט אונ' גיפלוכט בשבת הנ"ל בשחרית בבה"כ אלזו האט הפרנס חודש האלוף כמר אייזק א"ב יצ"ו איר לאזין אן זאגין ע"י החזן בייא א' ר'ט קנס ולא השגיחה

15

Widow Miriam quarreled again in the synagogue and was again fined one rijksdaalder. She refused to remain silent and was therefore banned.

30 June 1725

Record 2

שבת פרשת פנחס י"ט תמוז האט האלמנה מרים הנ"ל במנחה⁷ בשעת התפילה גיצענקט בבה"כ אונ' גיפלוכט אלזוא האט איר הפרנס חודש האלוף ר' בועז ש"י לאזין אן זאגין אן איר ביא א' ר"ט קנס דז זיא שווייגן זאל אבר האט דען רבי משיב גיוועזין זיא וויל ניט שווייגן ווען מן איר שון אן זאגט ביא ד' ר"ט קנס אונ' האט זיך ניט ווערין לאזין אונ' נאך ערגר גיצענקט אונ' מבלבל הבה"כ גיוועזין אלזו האט הפרנס חודש זיא לאזין מכריז זיין אין הכרזה

16

Shimshon, Miriam's son-in-law reached an agreement with the parrassim and paid two rijksdaalders and 39 stuivers. In return Miriam's ban was rescinded.

27 February 1727

Record 3

היו יו' הי' ו' אדר תפ"ז לפ"ק האט כמר שמשון במ"א זיך משה גיוועזין בשביל חמותו מרים הנ"ל עם פ"ו הרר שלמה בה"ר י' אונ' געבין אן ר' שלמה פ"ו שני ר"ט ל"ט ב"ש אונ' באותו יו' אויז הכרזה גירופין אפרים פישל סג"ל באכנר ש"יך ונאמן פה ק"ק מ"ב

17

Rabbi Meir ben Peretz is appointed rabbi of the community in Middelburg

29 January 1730

P. 29, record 1

למזל טוב

בהתאסף ראשי עם קודש יחד עדת ישורן בצירוף כל יחידי סגולה נתקבל למז"ט מהור"ר מאיר ב"ה פרץ להיות אצלינו אב"ד ולישב על כסא הוראה לפסוק דני איסר והיתר וילמוד לנו בכל שבת ושבת הפישורה חצי שעה קודם זמן התפילה ולדרוש בש"ת הגדול ובשבת תשובה מהיום עד כלות שנה תמימה והשכירות שלו יהי מקופת הקהל ס"ך ארבעים ר"ט והברירה ביד מהור"ר מאיר הנ"ל באם שלא ירצה להיות אצלינו שנה תמימה אזי מוכרח להיות מהיו' עד כלות חצי שנה והשכירות שלו יהי סך עשרים ר"ט לרי"א מהמנא באתי על החתום היו' יו' א' י"א שבט ת"יך לפ"ק בפקודת אלופי הפרמסי ובצירוף כל יחידי סגולה נאו' יהודא ליב א"א הי"ה ר' עזריאל ז"ל מקראטשין ולעי"ע ש"יך ונאמן קמ"ב

⁷ Erased: בשחרית.

18

Having been denounced by the former cantor, the cantor and slaughterer Tzvi Hirsch's credentials are confirmed by three rabbis: Abraham Eybeschuetz of Altona, Isaac Ashkenazi of Hanau and Abraham ben Yehuda Lipschuetz of Rotterdam; Mordecai Glogau, the former cantor, is accused of being a liar.

16 May 1756

Fols. 81–82

באשר שה"ה האלוף התורני מהורר צבי הירש הלז כבר העידו בו גאוני עולם שהוא צורבא מרבנן ידיו לו רב למשול ולמטרח בשמעין ובקי בש"ס ופוסקים ה"ה הגאון מופת הדור מאור הגולה מהורר יונתן אב"ד דק"ק אה"ו והרב המופליג המאה"ג מהורר יצחק איצק אב"ד דק"ק הענא והרב מהורר יצחק והרב מהורר יצחק הנ"ל נתן לו ג"כ סמיכות על שו"ב שהראוי לסמוך עליו כאחד מן שו"ב מומחנא בישראל וזה כמו שנה שמהורר הירש הי"י לעבור דרך מכאן לק"ק מיטל בורג אולי יגיע שם איזה שירת וטרם צאתו מכאן בא אלי וביקש ממני לנסות אותו במשא ומתן של הלכות שו"ב כדי ליתן ג"כ קבלה ובהיות שלא הי' העת פנוי לפני והוא הי' נחוץ לדרכו שלא יקדמנו אחר הראה לפני סכיננו ובדקתי אחריו ומצאתי יפה כדת וכד"י אח"ז ותהיתי על קנקנו והישבתי להם כדברים האלה בענין⁸ הוראות איסור והיתר [...] ⁹מנכר סמך ידיו עליו הגאון מהורר יהונתן הנ"ל ובוודאי

Fol. 82

ובוודאי כדאי הגאון הנ"ל לסמוך עליו בלי שום שאלה ותשובי ובנידן דדן שו"ב הראה לפנינו סכיננו יפה וגם יש לו קבלה כבר מהרב מהר"י הנ"ל אומנם החתימה של הרב מהר"י לא ניכר לי אם מכירם החתימה בוודאי גם בזה ראוי לסמוך עליו ולית כאן שום מיחוש כלל ועי"ז הניחו הצדיקים בני הקהלה הנ"ל את ראשים לקבל עליהם את מהורר הירש הנ"ל. וכהיום תקופת השנה בא לשם איש בליעל ובעל מדון ורצה להשיג גבול רעהו ושמו רע מרדכי גולוא וכאשר ראה שלא תעשנה ידיו תושיו ולא הי' לאל ידו להוציא מחשבתו הרעה אל הפועל הבעיר אש בעדתם והוציא שם רע על המ"ץ דנידן השאלה של ר' גד ואח"כ נתברר לנו על בני הקהילה קדישא ששקר ענה בו לצוד ציד לצבי אשר חמיד ורגיג באוריית' בין להסיר מאתם עקשות פה שאיש הנ"ל הולך וסובב ממדינה למדינה עם כתב מזויף להחזיק קלא בישא ותהיתי על קנקנו מחדש בדיני שחיטות ששחט לפני ולפני שני שוחטיי שלשה עופות וגם ניקר בפני מנקרים שלנו

⁸ This word appears twice.

⁹ Illegible.

וגם הדרא דוכתא¹⁰ ומצאנו שהוא תמים בכל מעשיו וישר בכל הלכותיו כדת וכדין תורתינו והוא רשע גמור¹¹ כגון ר' מרדכי גלוגא פון [?] מכאן והלאה ח"ו לשום בר ישראל להזר [?] אחר רבי הירש בעניני הנ"ל וכדי לסמוך עליו בכל תפוצות ישראל בלי שום מיחש וחשש וח"ו שום אדם אל ישעה עוד בדבריו שקר וכיזב של ר' מרדכי גלוגא. בכך אהובי כבודו ווירט זיך ווישן צו רגלירן להיות דש ר' מרדכי איז איין רשע גמור ואין ראוי לעמוד לפני תיבה דיזיו עש גשעהן בפני הפרנסי' חתומות מטה דקהלתינו ולראי' בא אב"ד מראטדורדס ב"ד המדינה למען אמת ושלוש לכבוד התורה ולכבוד הבריות הקטן אברהם באמ"ו הגאון המנוח מהורר יהודא זצ"ל הי"ה החונה פה ק"ק ראטורדס וגם ע"י זה קבלתי מיינה הוצאות וואש איך גיהט האבי ע"י מכשול זה מן הפרנסי' ח"מ היו י"א ט"ז אייר תקט"ז ל' מיטל בורג

12[--]

תקט"ז

באנפאי חתמו הפרנסי' הנ"ל חתימות ידיהם ממש ולראי' באתי בחתימותיה'
הקטן צבי הירש מ"ץ ושן מיטל בורג

19

The municipal council has appointed new parnassim for the community.

25 November 1758

P. 94, record 1

שבת קודש פ' חיי שרה ד"ד מרחשון שנת תקי"ט ל' ד"ה נאווענבר 1758
איז עפ"י השררה יר"ה אהן גישטעלט הפרנסי' הנקובי' בשמותם פוי"מ
כ"מ יואל בן יהודא נתן כהן [...] ¹³
וכ"ה גד בהר"ר חיים
וכ"ה יהודא ליב בהרר דוד מדעסוי

20

The new parnassim ask the former parnassim to sign the accounts and protocols; they refuse.

14 January 1759

Record 2

¹⁰ In the manuscript: דכותא.

¹¹ Word erased, illegible.

¹² Signatures blackened.

¹³ Three words illegible.

אי י"ד שבת הבין פרנסים גשיקט נאך פרנסים ישנים משנת תקי"ט לי
אירה ביכר אונטר שרייבן וועלכש גיוויגירט האבין אום צו קומין

21

The municipal council requests all heads of households to meet in the assembly room.

18 February 1759

Record 3

ערב שבת קודש פ' יתרו האבין אלופי פרנסי לאזין מכריז זיין דש אידר
בעל הבית מקהלתינו זאל קומן אויף קהל שטוב לערך יוד שלעק וחצי
כפי אורדר השררה יר"ה יו' אי ד"א שבת תקי"ט לי

Leeuwarden's Sefer Zikhronot

*Tresoar (Friesland provincial archive), Jewish institutions and communities,
no. 1*

22

Since Tzadok bar Tzvi refuses to give up his private mikveh, he resigns from the community and produces a document from the municipal council to confirm this. The manhigim emphasise that from now on he is not longer a member of the community and has no part in it any more. Other Jews are warned not to eat meat at his house and not to have contact with Tzadok or any of his family.

28/29 July 1758

Record 45

אלזוא צדוק בר צבי האט זיך פורש גיוועזין מקהל יצ"ו, אונד איין מקוה
בביתו האט, וועלכס נגד תקון הקהל ארטיקל 29 איזט, וואור איבר זיך
קהל יצ"ו האבין מוזין אדרעסיהרן פר רעקוושט אן השררה יר"ה דאש
נאך גיהערט צו האבין עש ראפארט פֿון דען בורגרמיינשטר פריזענדענד,
פאר אפפוינטימענט איזט גיקומין גלייך פֿולגט, וועלכש צדוק הנ"ל נאך
זעלבשטין אן קהל יצ"ו האט לאזין אינסינואיהרין, גלייך היר ביא קאפיא
פֿולגט

Verklare ik an desiges gesegts Bade uit de Naam van Zadok Haartog
geinsinueert te hebben aan Benjamin Josephs, als Mede gecommiteerde
van de Jods gemeente een Appointment Staande an de Rescriptie van
Sadok Hartog als volgt: de E. Raad alles gesien en gehoord hat Rapport
van den Heeren Presiederende Burgerm. J. Baurboom in gevolge de

Gedaane verklaringe van het aff Scheid des Rescrib. van de gemeente haud 't verschil ten Requeste gemeld voor gesletan, actum den 28 July 1758 (was getekend) E. Baurboom in kennisse myn hand, actum Leeuwarden den 29 July 1758 (getk.) J. v. Sloten met halen

זוא זיינין האלופים מנהיגי זאלכש מודיע אן אללי ב"ב אורחים ותושבים דקהלהנו דאש צדוק הנ"ל איזט נפרד ונפרש מקהל יצ"ו, אונד קיין חלק ונחלה אן קהלתנו, וויא אויך אשתו וכל הנלוים לו, אונד ביתו וכליו גיאסרת ווירדן, אונד קיינר ווירט עסין בשר בביתו, אונד אללש וואש בטל יהדות פֿרמעלד איט, סורו ממנו אל תגעו בו, אונד זעלביגר וועלכר יוא בחברותו קומט, אונד עסין בביתו, דער נחשב כמו הוא, אונד קיינר קיין בשר פֿאר איהם ווירט קויפֿין, וויא אויך קיין פֿאטין ווירט פֿאר איהם זעטצין, וכל העם ישמעו ויראו, ולא יידון לעשות כדבר הזה. איזט גיפובליציהרט בב"ה פ' מטות כ"ג תמוז תקי"ח ל' בפקודת המנהיגי יצ"ו

[signature, unreadable]

23

The manhigim announce again that Tzadok bar Tzvi is no longer member of the community and that everyone should avoid contact with him and his family.

11 October 1759

Record 52

בוויילין יעדר ב"ב תושב או אורח ביקאנד איזט, דאש צדוק בר צבי זיך האט פורש גיוועזין מעדת ישראל, גלייך זולכש געפובליציהרט וורדין איזט, אונד ביז דאטו נאך צו ליינין איזט, בב"ה אן גיפלאקט, וועלכש ער זעלבשטין אין פריזענטציא מהשררה יר"ה גיטאהן, וואור בייא ער פֿרקלאהרט זיין פרישות מעדתינו יצ"ו אין דאטו דען 20 יולי פון פֿרגאנגין יאהר, זוא וואהל אויך אשתו ובתו וכל הנלוים לו, זוא נון האלופים מנהיגי יצ"ו צו קעניס איזט גיקומין, דאש נון בייא איין ב"מ או בייא עסין [?], אודר זונשטין בייא איין שמחה הן חתונה או ברית מילה, זיך ער או אשתו וביתו, דאר בייא פֿרפֿיגן, אודר דאך אייניגה גימיינשאפֿט ווילן האבין, אן זאכין וועלכי כלל יהדות בטריפֿן, וויא אויך אייניגה לייטן חברותה מיט איהם האלטין, אונד איהם עשטימיהרן כשאר בן ישראל, וויא אויך עצלו עסין אונד טרינקן, זוא זיינין האלופים מנהיגי יצ"ו היר דורך נאך מאהלין איין יעדרין מזהיר ומודיע, קיינה אייגן שאפֿט אדר גימיינשפֿט מיט איהם או אשתו וביתו וכל הנלוים לו צו האלטין, אונד וואור נור איין זאך גשיכט, ניכטש אויש גיאנדרט, וואש נור דת יהדות בטריפֿט איהם או אשתו וביתו וכל הנלוים לו, מוציא מכלל יהדות צו זיין אונד יעדרין וואהל שטיפטליך ווירט גיווארט זיין איהם או אשתו וביתו וכל הנלוים בייא קיין יודישה סערמוניע צו לאזין קומין, דען ער איזט מכלל הפורשים מדרכי צבור, גלייך עש אפאנטימענט אויש וויישט. ובאם שיעבור אחד על זה ווירדן

איהם המנהיגי יצ"ו קנסן כפי ראות עניהם, אונד נאך ביפינדונג דער זאכי ולור יחשב בעניהם כמו הוא, כי כן גוי עשה בישראל. נעשה פ"ה קהלתינו לעווארדין היו יו' ה' ד' דח"ה סוכו' תק"כ ל' בפקודת המנהיגי יצ"ו [signature illegible]

24

The manhigim decide to re-organise the alternation of leaders for future years since one of the former leaders intends to leave Leeuwarden and the others complain about the burden of their duties.

24 February 1765

Record 106

היו יו' א' ג' לחדש אדר שנת תקכ"ה ל' זיינין מיר ח"מ ביחד באסיפה בחדר הקהל גיוועזין, אונד איזט גירעזולפיהרט ביווילין נון משנת תקי"ד ל' קהלתינו איזט גירעגיהרט ווארדין ממנהיגי גלייך אויף איהר האבינדה אקטא נקובי שמם זיינין, אונד אללי זאכין זוא וואהל מקבלה והוצאה גיאדמינישטריהרט, גלייך בפנקסי הקהל צו זעהן איזט, עד היו' דלמעלה גימעלד, זוא אבר משנה לשנה ממנהיגים הנייל זיך האבין מתמעט גיוועזין, אונד לע"ע המנהיג ר' איצק בר מענדל זי"ל, בדעה האט אפשר מכאן עוקר דירה צו זיין, זוא האבין זיך דיא איבריגה בשוואהרט ביפונדין, אונד איהנן צו לאשטיג פאלט, אליין וואהר צו נעמין. זוא האבין זיא רעזולופ יהרט יו' א' לפני ר"ח העבר שני נייעה מנהיגי צו עלעקסיהרן, אום דען ווידרום יחדיו צו אדמינישטרירן כבראשונה. ביווילין אבר ממש כל ב"ב דקהילתינו זיך דאר טעגין גיאופעניהר[ט]¹⁴ האבין, אונד ניט בייא קרובי זיין וואללין, זונדרין קהלתינו זאל רעגיהרט ווירדן מאנשים וועלכי קיין קירבה ביחד האבין, אוב שאהן זאלכש עד הנה ניכט האט קענין אנדרש זיין. זוא איזט עש דאש ע"פ ז' אנשים מקהלתינו זיינין גשטימט שני ניאיה מנהיגי דהיינו ר' ליב במהורר אברהם זי"ל והחבר ר' יוסף בר משה דראגיסט זי"ל וועלכי זיינין מבחר ווארדין אצל ר' הירש בה"ר יוסף, ור' יוזפא בר העשיל סג"ל, וועלכי ארבעה מנהיגי ביחד קונטינואיהרן עד ר"ח אדר שנת תקכ"ו ל' הבע"ל ומר"ח אדר תקכ"ו ל' עד ר"ח אדר תקכ"ז הבע"ל קומין ווידרום שני אלטי מנהיגי דהיינו ר' איצק בר העשיל סג"ל ור' בנימן בן משה יוסף זי"ל אצל המנהיגי ר' ליב וכי"ה יוסף הנייל ארבע מנהיגי הנייל זאללין אללש וואש בקהלתינו דעפענדיהרט צו וואכט נעמין גלייך כמקדם איזט רעגוליהרט גיוועזין בספר התקנות ובספר הזכרונות, אונד דיא פראשומשיאנעהלי מנהיגי וועלכי בלייבין קיין דעה האבין תוך שנה א'

¹⁴ Last letter missing due to trimming of left margin.

ובאם אבר דיא ארבע מנהיגי דעות שוות זיינין, אונד ניכט איבר איינש קענין קומין, זוא זאללין זיא אונטר זיך ציהן שלשה אנשים ב"ב זקנים דקהלתינו, אונד זיא בתדר הקהל לאזן רופין, אונד אלש דאן ע"פ רוב הדעו' מוז גירעגוליהרט ווירדן מוזין אבר אויך ניט אין קירבה בישטעהן מיט מנהיגי זוא שאוהן בתדר הקהל מנהיגי זיינין.

אללי תקנות זוא עד הנה גימאכט זיינין, זאללין מוזין גיאובסערוויהרט ווירדן. אכן, באם עטוואש לטובת הקהלה מוז פרענדירט ווירדן, זאלכש זאל קענין גשעהן, באופן זוא אין ארטיקל בוך בסוף קודם החתימה איזט גימעלד, אונד אללש וואש אן קהל דעפענדיהרט, מהוצאו, והכנסות, ע פֿעקטין וכיוצא, ניכטש אויש גיזונדרט, זול מוזין סעסיהרן אין בימעלטי קוואליטעהט גלייך עש עד הנה גיאדמינישטריהרט איזט ווארדין.

ר"ח אדר שנת תקכ"ח ל' הבע"ל, טרעהטין המנהיגי ליב פאלק ורי יוסף הנ"ל אב אונד ווירדן ווידרום שני נייאה מנהיגי במקומם גישטעלט, אלזא אויף ר"ח אדר תקכ"ז ל' הבע"ל דיא צווייא אלטי מנהיגי אב טרעהטין, אונד צווייא נייאה במקומם גישטעלט מוז ווירדן, אונד גישיכט באופן זה, דיא ארבע מנהיגי זעצט יעדד איינס מהנ"ל א' אויף נאמינאציא, אונד ווירדן¹⁵ ג' אנשים כשירים גיצאגין מב"ב דקהלתינו וועלכי ב' ב"ש ולמעלה ערך מעו' צאהלין, וועלכי איהר דעה געבין אויף שנים מן הארבע זוא אויף הנאמינאציא שטעהן, וועלכי על פי רוב הדעו' מוז אנשים נבחר ווירדן להיות מנהיגי פר ב' שנים אלזא ר' ליב פאלק וכ"ה יוסף הנ"ל שלשה שנים בלייבין כל המנהיגי הן אלטי אודר נייאה זאללין ניט קענין אויף דיא נאמינאציא קומין להיות מנהיג, עד אחר כלות שנה תמימה פרייא איזט גיוועזט. אבר לאחר א' שנה זאל ער ווידרום קענין נבחר ווירדן, ואם דען ווידרום ווייגרן ווירט זאל מוזין קנס געבין ג' טוקאטין כפי תקנות הקהלה אונד כפי תקון הקהלה אחר במקומו פֿאלגין. ולראי באנו על החתום יום א' ג' אדר תקכ"ה ל'

נאו' הצאיר נחמן סג"ל החונה בק"ק לעוורדין יצ"ו

אהרן בן לא"א כהר"ר פנתס ז"ל

יצחק בן העשיל סג"ל ז"ל

הירש פאלק

יזופא לוי

בנימן הארלינגן

ליב במהורר אברהם ז"ל

יוסף בר משה דראגישט ז"ל

איצק בן כה"ר ר' מענדל קירכהאן

היו' יו' א' כ"ו חשוון תקכ"ו ל'¹⁶ אנטרירה מיך אונטר שריבנר אין אובין

¹⁵ Erased: גיצאגין.

¹⁶ 10 November 1765.

בימעלטי אקטא אין קוואליטעהט עש מנהיגות מקהלתנו יצ"ו אהרן
רופא

25

This year only one new manhig will be elected. In future, one of the three manhigim will resign each year and a replacement elected.

1 March 1767

Record 127

היו' יו' א' א' דר"ח אדר שני תקכ"ז ל' איזט גירעזולופיהרט אצל המנהיגי
יצ"ו דאש בשנה זו זאל נור גימאכט ווירדן איין מנהיג, וועלכר קונטינואיהרן
זאל שלשה שנים רצופים, ביווילין אונזר צדקה בישטעהט אין שלשה
צדקות, איינר זאל זיין גבאי מצדקה מעו', איינר ממעו' דערכה, אונד
איינר ממעו' דביקור חולים, זוא תמיד אללי שלשה אין דיא באנק זאללין
קענן זיטצין. אלזוא אין קונטינואציא איינר זאל אב טרעטין אונד איינר
זאל בייא גימאכט ווירדן.

יהודא ליב במהור"ר אברהם ז"ל

יצחק בר העשיל סג"ל ז"ל

אהרן רופא

26

Current and former manhigim investigate rumours regarding the qualifications of the newly appointed Rabbi Katriel ben Leib. Rabbi Saul Halevi of The Hague sends a letter stating that the rumours are untrue.

18 November–10 December 1769

Record 144

עש"ק אור ליו' א' י"ט חשוון תק"ל לפ"ק זיינין מיר חתומי מטה בעלי
בתים בק"ק לעווארדין ביחד באסיפה גיוועזין בחדר הקהל. ביווילין מן
איזה אנשים, וכה"ג בכתבים, שמועה אשר לא טובה איזט גיקומין על מהו'
כתריאל במהור"ר יהודא ליב ז"ל, אונד נאך קיינר האמת דא פאן ביוואשט
איזט, זוא איזט עש דאש מיר פילענקאמליך בייא דיין אוטאריזיהרן, אונד
פולמאכטין אן דיא טעגין ווארטיגה מנהיגים מיט דיא אלטי מנהיגי, אום
דיא זאכי אויש צו מאכין אין דאש יעניגה וואש בטריפט ממהו' כתריאל
הנ"ל וויא זיא עש גהט פֿינדן ווירדן, הן חקירה צו האבין עיי כתבים או
דורך משולחים ניכטש אויש גיוונדרט וואר אין מיר פֿילענקאמליך אין
אללין צו פרידן זיין אונד אין עפעקטא האלטין ווירדן. אלש וואן דורך אונש
פרשיינליך איזט גישעהן, וועלכש אללש בייא אונש אין פיא קוואנטוין [?]
ווירט גאקספטיהרט

משה חיים בן כהרר אהרן זצ"ל

נחתם) יוזפא לוי פרנס חודש

יצחק בר העשיל סג"ל ז"ל	איצק בן כהר"ר מענדלן קירכהאן
יעקב בר איצק ז"ל	אשר בר מאיר סג"ל
אפרים בר זופא דרעזין ז"ל	דוד בן כמ"ר יואל סג"ל
הירץ בר צדוק כץ	בפקודת זאנוויל בר משה יוסף
משה בר שמואל ז"ל	בפקודת יעקב בר יששכר
יוזפא בן כמר מאניס ז"ל	גאטליב בן ר' יוזפא מעץ
נסין בר שמואל ז"ל	נפתלי הערץ בר יצחק ז"ל
איזיק בן יאקב מינדן ז"ל	ליזר מינדן
נתן בר יהודא ז"ל	

נאך קאללאטציאהן טעגן זיין פרינציפאל וועלכש בירוויינדה איזט אונטר
 כת' ר' אהרן רופא איזט דיזן ביפונדין דא מיט צו אקארדיהרן, היו' יו' א'
 י"א כסליו תק"ל לפ"ק¹⁷ אהרן רופא

[additional signature illegible]

וואור אויף דיא אוטאריזיהדן גיריזולופיהרט האבין, אין בריב צו פרפערטיגן
 להגאון הגדול המפורסם מהוי שאול אבי"ד ור"מ דק"ק האג, וה ההעתקה
 מכתבו ממש אות באות, תשובתו

בע"ה אור ליו' א' כ"ו מרחשון תקלמ"ד לפ"ק¹⁸ האג יע"א
 שלוי רב, לכבוד אהוי אלופים קצינים פרנסים מנהיגי' עדת ישרה דק"ק
 לעווארדין יצ"ו איש איש לפי מעלתו וצו ה' אתו את ברכתו
 יא"ק

גי"ק מיו' ג' העבר האיר נגד עבר פני חכו ממתקים וכולו מחמדים ידי
 גלילי זהב במשכיית כסף צריך בעליל מזוקק שבעתים ינתנו עיניהם בי
 לברר הדבר בשמש בצהרים, ובאו לצאת ידי שמים, ואם אמנם שרצונו של
 אדם כבודו שלא להכניס עצמו בדבר מחלוקת. אך לגודל אהבתם מעודי
 ועד היו' הזה לא יכלתי להשיב פניהם ריקם, ולא רציתי להיות דן יחידי
 וצרפתי את כבוד פרנסים קצינים מנהיגי' קהלתי קדש יצ"ו ושלחנו לקרוא
 את ר' בער כי הרבני מו' אלחנן נ' כבר נסע מזה, ועשינו כדת וכדין של
 תורה וחקרנו את ר' בער הנ"ל ומי יוכל שיח כל מה שהפה ויכל לדבר.
 אך מתוך דברי ר' בער הנ"ל הבינו שאין בדבריו ממש לעכב בשביל זה
 לקבל את ה"ה מהוי כתריאל נ' לרב ומורה והי' בזה שלוי' בנפש א"נ
 המוכן לטובתם. כ"י אה"ו לנצח דשיית בלב ונפש נאמן אהבתם וחפץ
 שלומם (נחתם) הקי' שאול הלוי חוי' ק"ק האג יע"א

¹⁷ 10 December 1769.

¹⁸ 25 November 1769.

זוא נון בימעלטי בריב מהגאון הנ״ל פֿאר אונש ערשיינט איזט, אונד דען
 אינהאלט וואהל פֿרשטאנדין, זוא זיינין מיר דא דורך וואהל קונסענטיהרט,
 אונד רעזולופיהרין מיר אוטאריזיהרדן בפקודת בעלי בתים הנחתמים לעיל,
 אום אן הרב מ׳ו מהו כתר״אל הנ״ל מקבל צו זיין לרב ולמורה פאלגינש
 קונדיטציאהן פֿרמעלד אין נומר 142 כסדר וכנהוג בכל תפוצות ישראל
 גברויכליך איזט. היו י׳ א׳ י״א כסליו תק״ל לפ״ק
 ולרא״י באנו על החותם בפקודת ר׳ הירש פאלק [signature illegible]
 אהרן רופא גבאי ישן
 יהודא ליב במהורר אברהם ז״ל גבאי ישן

Pinkas Oisterwijk

Bibliotheka Rosenthaliana, Amsterdam, Ros. 282a

27

An assembly of the Jews in Meijerij 's Hertogenbosch confirms the new rabbi for the region, Eliya ben Nathan, without issuing an official appointment.

19 January 1783

p. 39

היום יום בית טוב שבט תקמגימ״ל איז יום הוועד גהאלטן גווארדן כאן
 בק״ק אושטרוויג מחמת אב״ד נר״ו וכל בני המדינה זיין מרוצה להיות
 הרב ודיין ומורה כמהור״ר אלי נר״ו בן מהו נתן זצ״ל במדינתינו וכל בני
 המדינה חתומים מהכתב של אב״ד נר״ו הנ״ל חוץ מענדהויבן הגבאי
 ר׳ נטע כץ ור׳ פֿאליק ור׳ שלמה בר יהודא ור׳ ליזר מהעלמונד ור׳ ליב
 מבאקיל ור׳ שילה מביהל ור׳ אברהם בר דוד מאורשכאט ור׳ מאיר בר
 מיכל מאורשכאט ונשאלם בשאלת פיהם ע״י נאמנה הקהלה הנ״ל להיות
 מרוצה לאב״ד נר״ו ואמרם הן ונשאלתם אותם לחתום¹⁹ על כתב רבנות
 מאב״ד נר״ו והושיבם בזה הלשון אונזר רב איז ער, אבר חתמן טוהן
 מיר ניט, מיר וועלין ערשט צייתי דין זיין
 בפקודת קהל יצ״ו הקטן זוסמן שץ ונאמן בק״ק הנ״ל

¹⁹ Erased: אותם.

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