

UDC 26-872:274

DOI: 10.24919/2519-058x.14.197174

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Бібліографічний опис статті: Klimova, V. (2020). The Judeo-Christian polemic between the Karaite scholar Isaac ben Abraham Troki and the protestant theologian Marcin Czechowic in the book *Ḥizzuq 'Emuna. Skhidnoievropeiskyi Istorychnyi Visnyk [East European Historical Bulletin]*, 14, 8–18. doi: 10.24919/2519-058x.14.197174

THE JUDEO-CHRISTIAN POLEMIC BETWEEN THE KARAITE SCHOLAR ISAAC BEN ABRAHAM TROKI AND THE PROTESTANT THEOLOGIAN MARCIN CZECHOWIC IN THE BOOK *ḤIZZUQ 'EMUNA*

Abstract. The aim of the research. The article focuses on the analysis of the polemic between the Karaite Judaism – characterized by the recognition of the written Law of Moses and rejection of the Talmud – and Christianity – the most widely practiced religion in the Polish-Lithuanian territories of Eastern Europe. **The research methodology** is based on the search and comprehensive study of primary sources on the religious history of Eastern Europe. **The Scientific Novelty.** The study on the Judeo-Christian polemic between Isaac ben Abraham Troki and Marcin Czechowic is significant for reconstructing the religious life of Karaites and their relations with Christians in Polish-Lithuanian society. **The Conclusions.** The article confirms that the Karaite scholar and polemical writer Isaac Troki, who was well acquainted with Polish and Latin theological literature, succeeded in demonstrating the author's creed and exegetic skills in contrast to Catholic and Protestant beliefs. In response to anti-Jewish accusations as a result of strong differences in the understanding of God's law, the Karaite author managed to disprove the allegations and wrote "*Ḥizzuq 'Emuna*", where he questioned Christian dogmas. The analysis of the historical and theological aspects of "*Ḥizzuq 'Emuna*" through the lens of Polish Protestant reformer Marcin Czechowic's book "*Christian Conversations (Pol. Rozmowy Chrystianskie)*" lead to the conclusion that strong critical writing against Jews paradoxically contributed to the spread of Karaite dogmas among Protestant scholars.

Key words: Karaite literature, Isaac ben Abraham Troki, Marcin Czechowic.

ЮДЕО-ХРИСТІЯНСЬКА ПОЛЕМІКА КАРАЇМСЬКОГО ВЧЕНОГО ІСААКА ТРОЦЬКОГО ТА ПРОТЕСТАНТСЬКОГО ТЕОЛОГА МАРТИНА ЧЕХОВІЦА В КНИЗІ *ḤIZZUQ EMUNA*

Анотація. Мета статті – проаналізувати полеміку між караїмським іудаїзмом, який ґрунтується на визнанні письмового Закону Мойсея і відкиданні Талмуду, та найбільш широко розповсюдженною релігією на польсько-литовських територіях Східної Європи – християнством. **Методологія дослідження** базується на пошуку та всебічному вивченні першоджерел релігійної історії Східної Європи. **Наукова новизна.** Дослідження юдео-християнської полеміки між

Ісааком бен Авраамом Трокі та Мартіном Чеховіцем є важливим для реконструкції релігійного життя караїмів та їхніх стосунків із християнами у польсько-литовському суспільстві. **Висновки.** У статті стверджується, що караїмському вченому та полемічному письменникові Ісааку бен Аврааму Трокі, який добре знався на польській та латинській богословській літературі, вдалося продемонструвати авторське кредо та екзегетичні навички щодо католицьких і протестантських вірувань. У відповідь на антиєврейські звинувачення внаслідок значних розбіжностей у розумінні закону Бога караїмський автор спростував звинувачення і написав книгу "Хіззук емуна", де поставив під сумнів християнські догми. Аналіз історичних та богословських аспектів "Хіззук емуна" крізь призму книги польського протестантського реформатора Мартіна Чеховіца "Християнські розмови" (польською "Rozmowy Christianskie") показує, що критична література щодо євреїв значно посприяла поширенню караїмських догматів серед протестантських учених.

Ключові слова: караїмська література, Ісаак Троцький, Мартін Чеховіц.

The Problem Statement. The Karaites of Eastern Europe have a peculiar historical fate. For centuries, they have contributed their share to the treasury of European spiritual and religious wealth, remaining an exceptional sect of followers of the pure Mosaic doctrine without recognizing the Talmud. The publication of the work of *Ḥizzuq 'Emuna* by Isaac ben Abraham Troki (1533 – 1594) stirred up the Christian world and undoubtedly caused an increase in Judeo-Christian controversy. The study of this extremely sensitive topic is marked by formidable religious contradictions, so its objective study in the context of Christian literature will help to restore the integrity of historical memory.

The Analysis of Recent Researches and Publications. The biography and legacy of the Karaite scholar Isaac Troki is covered in the studies of Jacob Mann (Mann, 1933), Isaac Sinani (Sinani, 1890), Golda Akhiezer (Akhiezer, 2007), Rafał Witkowski (Witkowski, 2007) and Mariusz Pawelec (Pawelec, 2009). In particular, Mann published valuable manuscripts from the collection of Abraham Firkowicz, which contain biographical information about the scholar. Akhiezer made a critical analysis of the discourse of the Karaite-rabbinic polemics of Isaac Troki. The topic of Judeo-Christian polemics of Protestant reformer Marcin Czechowic regarding the vulnerability of Jews and Christians to the question raised has remained in a dusty corner, mostly untouched by researchers.

The purpose of the article is to study the features of the Judeo-Christian controversy between Karaite scholar Isaac Troki and Christian reformer Marcin Czechowic on the basis of the book *Ḥizzuq 'Emuna* by Isaac Troki.

The Statement of the Basic Material. The name of Isaac ben Abraham Troki is immortalized in Karaite literature, and his activity is closely linked to the cultural life of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and in the background of various confessional mosaics in the Commonwealth. The future theologian, polemicist, writer and poet was born in Troki in 1533 and died there in 1594¹. Due to the absence of credible historical sources, except for his three letters written to Isaac son of Israel from 1558 and to Galician ḥazzan Judah son of Aaron for the period 1581 – 1583, some biographical information from his own book *Ḥizzuq 'Emuna* and the book *Dod Mordeḳay* by Mordecai ben Nisan (grandson of Simḥa, brother of Isaac), the life of Isaac Troki remains a mystery. He is known to have studied Scripture and Hebrew literature under the guidance of Zephaniah son of Mordecai, whose name was certified by the ḥazzan in Troki in 1528. He studied in Christian schools

¹ Jacob Mann suggested that Mordecai ben Nisan, who lived a hundred years later, indicated a false date of death in 1594, and that according to Zerah ben Nathan, it should fall to 1586. Accordingly, the years of life must also be shifted to eight years, ie the date of birth is 1525 (Mann, 1972, pp. 591, 726–727, 1181–1187, 1475).

where he mastered Latin and Polish. The profession of doctor was probably acquired in the medical department of a Christian educational institution. In 1553, at the age of about 20², Isaac was appointed secretary of the Lithuanian Karaite Council (similar to the rabbinic *Va'ad Medinat Lita*). On this occasion, he was also delegated the responsibilities of a *dayan* (judge) in *beit-din* and in conjunction with the *shofet* for one year. Isaac was married, but apparently did not have children, as he addressed his will to his wife, several brothers, and student Joseph ben Mordecai Malinowski (Sinani, 1890, p. 164; Bersohn, 1905, pp. 72–73; Szczucki, 1961, pp. 132–133; Zajączkowski, 1962, pp. 193–194; Mann, 1972, pp. 591–592, 715; Schreier, 2002, pp. 65–66; Pawelec, 2009, pp. 3–4; Witkowski, 2007, p. 62; Akhiezer, 2007, pp. 438–439; Nemoy, 2007, pp. 155–156).

The immortal legacy of Isaac Troki's *Hizzuq 'Emuna (Strengthening of the Faith)* is considered one of the highest pinnacles of Judeo-Christian polemical literature. Even as a young man he was a well-educated person and author participated in numerous religious discussions, refuting anti-Jewish accusations and demonstrating a deep ethical conviction of the truth of the Jewish faith. However, only at the end of his life did he begin to record his views, thoughts, and arguments, giving his work the form of a coherent text that earned him recognition and fame. An unexpected death prevented him from completing his writing, but his student and successor, the aforementioned Joseph Malinowski from Troki, was able to finish the work, edit the text, and compile an index³.

The printed edition of *Hizzuq 'Emuna* first appeared as a Latin translation, prepared by orientalist and polyhistor, professor at the University of Altdorf, Johann Christoph Wagenseil. He included it in his work *Tela Ignea Satanae. Hoc est arcani et horribiles Judaeorum versus Christum Deum et Christianam religionem libri (Flaming Arrows of Satan, that is, the secret and horrible books of the Jews against Christ, God, and the Christian religion)*, published in 1681 in Altdorf. Translations into English (*Faith Strengthened*⁴, trans. Moses Mocatta (London: Privately printed, 1851)), German (*Befestigungim Glauben*, trans. David Deutsch (Sohrau: Selbstverlag des Herausgebers, 1865)), and Spanish (trans. Isaac Attias (Hamburg, 1621)), Dutch (trans. Daniel de la Pania (1729)), French (Rotterdam, 1730) and Portuguese (Shelomoh Benvenisti, end of the eighteenth century) languages subsequently appeared in European religious literature (Akhiezer, 2007, p. 437).

When working on *Hizzuq 'Emuna*, Isaac Troki realized that he wrote in the period of a most turbulent religious controversy on Polish lands between various Christian currents, and considered it a personal duty to advocate for the Jewish religion. It was unacceptable him that Christian theologians would spread hostile ideas against the Jews, who did not confess Jesus Christ. The polemical work consists of two parts, which are respectively divided into fifty and hundred sections. In each of these, the author presents a question from a Christian scholar and gives an answer—some examples: “Why do Jews not believe in Jesus as the Messiah?” or “Does Jesus deny requirements involved in keeping Kosher?” or “Does a stay in

² At the age of 28 according to the early dates of life (Mann, 1972, pp. 769–790 (Proceedings of the Assembly of the Karaites of Troki (1553 C. E., ratified in 1568 C. E.) [2. Firkowicz Collection, No. 221, marked 85–87]), 591, 1475.

³ It should be emphasized that Simḥa Isaac Lutski claimed that Isaac Troki also wrote two works on the Karaite ritual law “Qidduš ha-hodeš” (“Sanctification of the New Moon”) and “Hilḳot šeḥita” (“Rules of Ritual Slaughter”). “Qidduš ha-hodeš” focuses on the theme of the new moon, an important component of the technique for obtaining the Karaite religious calendar, with reference to the work of *Gan 'Eden (Garden of Eden)* by Aaron the Younger of Nicomedia. “Hilḳot šeḥita” is written in the form of questions and answers about the rules of animal slaughter. In addition, Isaac Troki wrote several religious hymns that were part of a prayer book published in Vilnius in 1892 (Pawelec, 2009, p. 4).

⁴ The text is not fully translated, often paraphrased by the author.

exile not confirm the fact that Jesus is the Messiah?” or “Will Israel not be restored after the destruction of the Second Temple?”.

Isaac Troki undoubtedly studied Karaite literature thoroughly, read the Talmud and rabbinic literature (by Saadia Gaon (882 – 942), Maimonides (1135 – 1204), Judah Halevi (1050 – 1141), Judah HeHasid (1150 – 1217) and Rashi (1040 – 1105)), but this knowledge was not enough in order to make persuasive arguments. The Karaite author became acquainted with the works of anti-Trinitarian authors who denied the dogma of the Holy Trinity: Niccolò Paruta (1537 – 1581), Marcin Czechowic (1532 – 1613), Szymon Budny (1530 – 1593) and Marcin Bielski (1495 – 1575). It additionally enabled him to use the “logical arguments” of anti-Trinitarian theologians against them (Witkowski, 2007, pp. 63–64; Schreier, 2002, pp. 68–69) and to emphasize the complexity and contradiction of the entire Christian world (Isaac Troki, 1705, pp. 31–32):

שכדורינו זה כבר הרבה מחכמיהם הנקרא בלשונם כת אבינויטי וכת סרוציאני וכת ארייני החולקי' על שתי הכתות הקרטאליש וכת לוטריש, מודים באחדות השיי וסותרים אמנות השילוש כי מה שכתב החכם ניכולש פריטא בספרו אשר חבר בלשון לטין באחדות הבורא ית' הנקרא בלשונם די אונו ווירו דיאו ר"ל הכונה בו ופירושו באחדות השיי. וכן החכם מרטין צהוויץ בספר דיאלוגו שלו שחבר בלשון פולניא במאמר הב' סותר דעת מאמיני השילוש בראיות עצומות מן הכתוב ומן השכל. וכן בספרו אשר קרא שמו ג' ימים מדה כ"ח עד דף ס"ט, בטל כל ראיות מאמיני השילוש אשר הם מביאים מאון גליון שלהם. וכן רבים מחכמי אלו הכתות הנ"ל, כל אחד בספרו בטלו כל ראיות מאמיני השילוש מעיקר' ודי בזה הענין:

In our generation, there are already many theologians from so-called in their language the Ebionite sect, the Socinian sect, and the Arian sect, who have split into two sects: Calvinist and Lutheran. They acknowledge the oneness of God, blessed be He, and reject the doctrine of the Trinity. This is exactly what the theologian Niccolò Paruta wrote in his book, composed in the Latin language about the unity of the Creator, may He be blessed, called in their language *De Uno Vero Deo*, in which he explains „the oneness of God”. Similarly, the theologian Marcin Czechowic in his book *Rozmowy 'Conversations'*, written in Polish, in the second chapter rejected the view of the Trinitarians, relying on strong evidence from Scripture and brain. And also in his book entitled *Three Days* from page 28 to page 67 he invalidated all the evidence of Trinitarians which they took from the Gospel. Also, many theologians from the above mentioned sects – each in his book – have completely denied all the evidences of Trinitarians, and that is enough for this case.

Protestant theologian Marcin Czechowic was at the head of the Socinian movement of the community of anti-Trinitarians in Lublin, the so-called *Ecclesia Minor*. In 1575 he published in Cracow *Rozmowy Christianskie. Ktore z greckiego názwiská, Diálogami zowiá* (*Christian Conversations, called in Greek Dialogues*) between a teacher and a student, and proclaimed a readiness for martyrdom for faith, renunciation of private property, and humility in the face of persecution. While teaching that a Christian's life should be characterized by faith, hope, love, humility, kindness, truth, justice, Czechowic did not restrain himself in critical and abusive statements about Jews: “stubborn Jews (vporni żydowie)”, “unfaithful Jews (niewierni żydowie)”, “freaky Jews (żydowie tak wykrętni)”, “foolish fleshly Jews (głupi cielefni żydowie)”, “Jewish loot (żydowłkie brednie)” (Czechowic, 1575, pp. 30, 67, 76, 116, 122). He tried to prove that the Jews' denial of Jesus as the Messiah was unfounded, and though they studied the Scriptures, they did not understand it because they did not ask God for understanding. Czechowic condemned some rabbis who claimed “many false gossips about our New Testament and about our Lord Jesus Christ (plotek wiele kłamiwych o nowym názwym teftámenie y o názwym Pánie Iezufie Chrifufie)” (Czechowic, 1575, p. 70), and stated that “it is a hard thing for a Christian to convert

a Jew, and I do not know if it is more difficult than to teach a wolf not to kill sheep or a cat not to catch mice (Trudna to iest rzecz Zyda Chriřtíaninowi návroćić á niewiem by nietrudnieyřza niř wilká od mordowania owiec ábo kotá od chwyćania myřzy odućzyć)” (Czechowic, 1575, p. 67).

Isaac Troki categorically denied all the allegations made towards the Jews. Based on the ideas of Czechowic, he rejected the doctrine of the divinity of Jesus, considering him only a perfect man. Although most Christian theologians, on the basis of Gen. 1:26, “Let us make man in our image, after our likeness⁵”, explain the doctrine of Trinitarianism, the Polish theologian in the section “About Jesus Christ (O Iezufie Chriřtulfie)” rejected the Holy Trinity dogma by explaining the names of God *'Elohim* and *'Adonay* in the light of the New Testament in terms of grammar and logic; in his opinion, none of the names testified to the existence of the Triune God as three persons. Isaac Troki refuted the view of the plurality of God from the plural verb *na'aše* (let us make) on the basis of the following verse Gen. 1:27, “God created man in his own image”, where the verb appeared in the singular “and [He] created” and “in his own image”, and not “and [They] created” and “in their own image” as might be expected. Without conceding or believing the grammatical arguments to be persuasive, the Karaite author presented a whole list of biblical verses that proved the absolute oneness of God: “Unto thee it was shewed, that thou mightest know that the LORD he is God (*'Elohim*⁶); there is none else beside him” (Deut. 4:35), “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God (*'Eloheynu*) is one LORD” (Deut. 6:4), “I, even I (*'Anoki*), am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour” (Isa. 43:11), “O LORD, there is none like thee, neither is there any God (*'Elohim*) beside thee” (1 Chron. 17:20) (Isaac Troki, 1705, pp. 29–30; Czechowic, 1575, pp. 16–17).

The use of the plural in the word God (*'Elohim*) was explained by the Karaite author that the word signified not only the Most High, but also angels and human authority (Czechowic, 1575, pp. 14–15). In the story of the birth of Samson after the departure of the angel, Manoah told his wife that “we have seen God (*'Elohim*)”, calling the messenger of God – the angel of the Lord (*Mal'ak' Adonay*) – the name of God (*'Elohim*) (Judg. 13:21–22); in the laws on compensation, the obligation was to bring a case before God when it concerned human authority: “the master of the house shall be brought unto the judges (*'Elohim*)” (Ex. 22:8). The question still remains unresolved in the consideration of the speech of the Almighty to Moses, when He said, “I have made thee a god (*'Elohim*) to Pharaoh” (Ex. 7:1) (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 113).

In the Scriptures, besides the word God (*'Elohim*) in the plural, the word God (*'Eloah*) appears in the singular. In the Bible one can find: “he [Jeshurun] forsook God (*'Eloah*) which made him” (Deut. 32:15), “consider this, ye that forget God (*'Eloah*)” (Ps. 50:22), “Is there a God (*'Eloah*) beside me?” (Isa. 44:8). Numerous use of the word *'Eloah* in the singular refutes the consideration of the plural *'Elohim* as an argument of faith in the Trinity (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 29).

Similar grammatical arguments were used in the analysis of Isa. 7:14, “Behold, a virgin (*ha-'alma*) shall conceive”. Isaac Troki stated that in the above verse, the word *ha-'alma* means a young woman, not a virgin or maiden, as is customary in Christianity. The author explained that in Hebrew, there were two expressions *han-na'ara* and *ha-'alma* used to delineate a girl or a virgin and a married woman, such as: “And let it come to pass, that the damsel (*han-na'ara*) to whom I shall say” (Gen. 24:14) and “when the virgin (*han-na'ara*) cometh forth to draw water” (Gen. 24:43). In some cases, the word *han-na'ara* was used to describe a girl: “And the damsel (*han-na'ara*) ran, and told them of her mother's house these things” (Gen. 24:28), and in other

⁵All biblical verses have been taken from the King James Bible.

⁶In printed copies of *Hizzuq 'Emuna*, the word God is recorded as *'Eloqim*. This article uses Biblical quotes from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, which is why the word God is written as *'Elohim*.

⁷In printed copies of *Hizzuq 'Emuna*, the word God is recorded as *'Eloah*. This article uses Biblical quotes from *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia*, which is why the word God is written as *'Eloah*.

cases to describe a married (young) woman: “Whose damsel (*han-na'ara*) is this?” (Ruth 2:5). According to Isaac Troki, a similar analogy can be applied to the word *ha-'alma*, which may refer to a girl: “the maid (*ha-'alma*) went and called the child's mother” (Ex. 2:8), just like the young wife (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 47).

The Karaite author presented the historical background of the verse when, during the reign of King Ahaz of Judah, an army of king Rezin of Aram, along with an army of king Pekah of Israel, went against Jerusalem. To add to the courage and bravery of Ahaz, God sent the prophet Isaiah, who announced that Jerusalem would not be conquered and that Samaria and Damascus would be devastated. Isaac Troki believed that the fact of Ahaz's inclusion in the prophecy of the birth of Jesus or inclusion of the birth of Jesus in the prophecy of Ahaz's victory seemed counter-intuitive. Isaiah prophesied of the misfortunes that would come upon the hated kings for sixty-five years: “For the head of Syria is Damascus, and the head of Damascus is Rezin; and within threescore and five years shall Ephraim be broken, that it be not a people” (Isa. 7:8) which had its beginning not immediately after their proclamation, but after the birth of the prophet's son.

According to the Karaite scholar, during the prophecy, Isaiah's young wife became pregnant and gave birth to a son, who was firstly given the name *'Immanu 'El* (*God with us*), and then called *Maher šalal haš baz* (*Make haste to take away the prey*⁸): “For before the child shall have knowledge to cry, my father, and my mother, the riches of Damascus and the spoil of Samaria shall be taken away before the king of Assyria” (Isa. 8:4). At the same time, it should be emphasized that the Christian theologian Czechowic focused on the analysis of the meaning of the words young maiden (*ha-'alma*) and virgin (*betula*) and drew attention to the use of the definite article (*ha-*): “Teacher. And how do those who explain Isaiah's wife and son prove it? Student. Based on what is written in section 8:3 below, we have that the prophet Isaiah himself says that he approached her or to the same (since there is also a definite article (*ha-*), as in the above section 7:14 *ha-'alma*). “She conceived, and bore a son” indicated that it was a prophetess – his wife (NAVZYCIEL. A čímžte tego dowodzą ci ktorzy to o żenie y fynu Ezáiafzowym wykłádáią. VCZEN. Tym co potym w káp: 8. y 3. nápiřano mamy gdje ták řam Ezáiafz Prorok mowi y przyřtápiřem do teyábo do oney (bo teř tákže iest tám ártykuř Háiedia iako y wyřřzey káp. 7. y 14. há Almá). Prorokini y pocęřłáy v rodziřá fyná: przez ktorá Prorokiniá žonę iego rozumieciá)” (Isaac Troki, 1705, pp. 47–49; Czechowic, 1575, p. 134).

Isaac Troki tried to convince his readers that the Law of Moses was not temporary, there was no limited period before the arrival of Jesus from Nazareth. The author denied that Jesus abolished the law of Moses and gave his followers new commandments. In doing so, he rejected the Christians' explanation that the Sinai commandments and prohibitions were characterized by high rigor, and their fulfillment turned out to be a completely or partially impossible task, as it was written in Matt. 5:17–18: “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled” (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 44).

The Karaite author paid special attention to observing the weekly peace day of Shabbat abolished by Christians. In his understanding, it is completely illogical to deny the persuasive arguments of Scripture, to change the correct interpretation of the text, seeking evidence for the benefit of the Sunday, and to persuade those who firmly believe to accept the possibility of breaking the commandment of God which says that the seventh day is a Shabbat for the Lord (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 45). However, the voices of the Apostolic Fathers were stronger and, as Czechowic himself wrote, a new meaning and new vision was implemented in the Shabbat (Czechowic, 1575, pp. 70–71):

⁸ Translation from Douay-Rheims Bible.

á cžemufz z nami [Rabinami] Soboty nie űwięć-
 ície áni záchowywaćie ták iáko Bog w zakonie
 rofkazał? ále onę odrzućiwfzy rádfzey Papieźá
 Rzymkiego űluchaćie: ktorego űobie ná žiemi
 zá Bogá jednego maćie... Szábát y ceremonie
 inűze były zwierzchowynym tylko podobieńftwem
 rzeczy przyűfzłych... á nie űámą wláfną chwałá
 Božá: to káždy űtád poznáć może: Iż ilekroć
 žydowie ná nim űie űámy záwiefzáli á zakonu
 nieprzyűtrzegáli cálym űercem tedy űie oto Bog ná
 nie gniewał űzábáty ich y ofiáry ktore hojne czy-
 nili precz odmíatál: y ná nie pátrzáć niechćiał...
 ten žydowűki űzábát ieűt jedná máűzkárá ábo
 dziećinnym igryűlkiem bes űkufku y chwały
 Božey.

[The question from rabbis] Why do you not
 keep the Shabbat with us, or obey, as God
 commanded in the law? But rather, by rejecting
 it, you listen to the Roman Pope whom you
 consider to be the only God... [Answer] Shabbat
 and other ceremonies were only a superficial
 resemblance to things to come... and not the
 mere glory of God. Therefore, everyone can
 know that whenever the Jews were focused on
 only one [Shabbat], but did not obey the Law
 with their heart, then God was angry with them
 for their covenants and sacrifices they willingly
 performed and did not want to look at them... this
 Jewish Shabbat is a complete abomination or a
 child's toy without the effect and glory of God.

It is worth mentioning that during the Council of Laodicea of the Christian Church, which took place around 336 and laid down the basic rules of church administration and Christian piety, observing the Shabbat was cancelled (Geiermann, 1934, p. 50). Isaac Troki, referring to the book by rabbi David Gans *Šemah David*, mentioned this Council, though he mistook the date of its holding, and expressed his dissatisfaction with the holiness of the Sunday accepted in the Christian world (Isaac Troki, 1705, p. 45):

[...] שלא בטלה התורה כדבריהם אפילו אחר זמן ישו, וכן גם השבת קיימו אותו ישו וכל תלמידיו ואחר ישו בכמו המש מאות שנה בא
 אפיפיור אחד וצוה לשמור יום ראשון במקום יום השבת, כמבואר בקרוניקה ב"צמח דוד". והנה יום השבת בעצמו קדוש בכח אלהי לא מצד
 המנוחה לבד כהנהגה הנמוסית. כאשר אמר הכתוב: "ראו כי ה' נתן לכם את השבת על כן הוא נתון לכם ביום הששי לחם יומים" וגו' (שמות
 ט"ז, כ"ט).

that the Torah did not annul its words even after the time of Jesus, who himself and all of his disciples kept the Shabbat, and five hundred years after Jesus the Pope came and commanded to observe Sunday instead of the Shabbat, as explained in the chronicle *Šemah David*. Therefore the Shabbat day is holy itself by God's power, and not just for the sake of rest, as is customary to think. As the scripture says, "See, for that the LORD hath given you the Shabbat, therefore he giveth you on the sixth day the bread of two days" (Ex. 16:29).

Undoubtedly, the decision to abolish the sanctification of the Shabbat was unacceptable to Isaac Troki as much as the decision to abolish the circumcision, which was a sign of a covenant between God and the people of Israel. He could not accept the words of Czechowic that "it is revealed in the word of God that circumcision, like Shabbat, finds its end in Christ, and is unnecessary for believers (to űowem Božym okazáno będzie iż obrzeűká iáko y űzábát iuž fwoy koniec w Chriűtufie wziętá á iž iuž wierzący nic nie ieűt pożyteczna)" (Czechowic, 1575, p. 73), and he agreed as to the new one – meaning the circumcision of the "foreskin of your heart" (Deut. 10:16). Isaac Troki underlined the fact of such practices' existence in the apostolic times, and recalled the story of Timothy from the New Testament. It is well-known that the apostle Paul circumcised Timothy, the son of a Jewish mother and a Greek father, according to Jewish tradition, so that they both could proclaim the gospel among the Jews who were aware of his Greek lineage in the paternal line: "Him would Paul have to go forth with him; and took and circumcised him because of the Jews which were in those quarters: for they knew all that his father was a Greek" (Acts 16:1-3). And to the rhetorical question posed by Czechowic: "Let the unbelieving Jews, Turks and Tatars circumcise themselves as

they wish, and what is it to us? (Niechay fie iáko chcą niewierni żydowie Turcy y Tátarzy obrzeziuią ná čiele á co nam do tego?)” (Czechowic, 1575, p. 76) Isaac Troki wrote that if, after the death of Jesus, circumcision had taken place, then this requirement of the Law of Moses could not get outdated and remained relevant to today’s society.

The Conclusions. In summary, it should be pointed out that the controversial work *Hizzuq 'Emuna* by Isaac Troki is a most striking example of the defence of the Jewish religion. Through his personal efforts, the Karaite scholar was independent in the study of the Holy Scriptures, skillfully displaying his knowledge of both the New Testament and Christian literature. Marcin Czechowic’s total rejection of Judaism and his religious intolerance could not leave Isaac Troki indifferent. Troki not only acquainted himself with the accusations made against Jews, but he also responded to them without fear, showing his exceptional rhetorical skills. He dared to assure readers in the supremacy of Judaism by the light of the Karaite doctrine, and also worked toward the refutation of Christian dogmas by the words of the same anti-Trinitarian writer. It is hoped that further literary critical analysis of *Hizzuq 'Emuna* will enter into the essence of Judeo-Christian discussion and to recreate a fuller historical understanding of Polish religious society in the sixteenth century.

Appendix (fragments from *Hizzuq 'Emuna* (Isaac Troki, 1705, pp. 12–14))

שאלני חכם אחד מחכמי הנוצרים באמרו אלי למה אתם היהודים אינכם רוצים להאמין שישו הנוצרי היה משיח אחר אשר הועד עליו מנביאי האמת אשר גם אתם מאמינים לדבריהם: וזאת היתה תשובתי אליו איך נאמין שהוא היה משיח אחר שאין לכם שום ראיה אמיתית בדברי הנבואה כי הפסוקים שמביאים כותבי האון גליון מדברי הנביאים להוכיח על ישו הנוצרי שהיה משיח... יש לנו ראיות רבות אמיתיות להפכו ר"ל: שישו לא היה משיח כלל. ונוכירם מקצתן: הא' משום יחוסו. הב' משום פעולותיו. הג' משום זמנו. הד' משום שלא נתקיימו בזמנו ההבטחות המיועדות להיות בזמן המשיח המקווה. ואלה עניינים הם תנאים הכרחיים להאמין במשיח האמתי: אמנם משום יחוסו הוא שישו לא היה בן דוד, לפי שנוגד לו מיוסף כפי עדות האי"ג שלהם. לפי שכתב במטיאש פרק א' כי ישו נולד ממרים בעוד שהיתה בתולה, וכי לא ידעה יוסף עד אשר ילדה את ישו, ולפי זה אין יחוס יוסף מועיל לישו כלום. ויחוס מרים גם כן בלתי נודע אצלם, ואפילו יחוס יוסף לדוד אינו אמתי...

ואמנם משום פעולותיו הוא שאמר ישו על עצמו לא תחשבו שבאתי לשום שלום בארץ לא באתי רק לשלוח חרב ולהפריד בן מאביו ובת מאביה וכלה מחמותה כדכתיב במטיאש פרק י' פסוק ל"ד אבל אנחנו מצינו שהכתוב מיחס אל המשיח האמיתי המקווה פעולותיו הפכיות לפעולת ישו כי הנך רואה שישו על עצמו אמר שלא בא לשום בארץ שלום אבל על המשיח המקווה הכתוב אומר בזכריה ט' ט' ודבר שלום לגוים וכו' ישו אמר על שבא לשלוח חרב בארץ אמנם על זמן המשיח האמתי הכתוב אומר בישעיה ב' וכתתו חרבותם לאתים וחניתותיהם למזמרות לא ישא גוי אל גוי חרב ולא ילמדו עוד מלחמה ישו אמר שבא להפריד בן מאביו וכו' אכן בזמן המשיח האמיתי יבא אליהו הנביא אשר עליו אמר הכתוב במלאכי בסופו והשיב לב אבות על בנים ולב בנים על אבות: ישו אמר על עצמו שלא בא שיעבוד לו בן אדם אלא בא לעבוד כדכתיב במטיאש פרק כ' פסוק כ"ח אבל המשיח האמיתי עליו הכתוב אומר בתהלים ע"ב וישתחוו לו כל מלכים כל גוים יעבדוהו ואומר בזכריה ומשלו מים עד ים ומנהר עד אפסי ארץ. ואמנם משום זמנו הוא שלא בא בזמן המיועד מהנביאים כי הנביאים ע"ה ייעדו ביאתו באהרית הימים כדכתיב בישעיה סימן ב': והיה באהרית הימים נכון יהיה הר בית י"י בראש ההרים וכו' וכתוב שם על מלך המשיח: ושפט בין הגוים והוכיח לעמים רבים וכתתו חרבותם לאתים וחניתותיהם למזמרות וגו' וכן על מלחמות גוג ומגוג אשר תהיה בארץ בזמן מלך המשיח...

ואמנם ההבטחות המיועדות בדברי הנביאים אשר לא נתקיימו בזמן ישו ועתידות להתקיים בזמן המשיח האמיתי המקווה הן אלו:
 הא' כי בזמן מלך המשיח לא תהיה כ"א מלכות אחת ומלך אחד והוא המלך המשיח האמיתי אבל שאר המלכויות ומלכיהן לא יוכלו להתקיים בזמנו...
 הב' שבזמן מלך המשיח תהיה בעולם אמנה אחת ודת אחת והיא דת ישראל...
 הג' שבזמן מלך המשיח יכרתו העצבים וזכרם ונביאי שקר ורוח הטומאה מן הארץ...
 הד' שבזמן מלך המשיח לא יהיו עונות וחטאים בעולם בפרט באומת ישראלית...
 הה' שבזמן מלך המשיח ואחר מלחמת גוג ומגוג יהיה שלום ושלחה בכל העולם ולא יצטרכו עוד בני אדם לכלי זין...
 הו' שבזמן מלך המשיח יהיה שלום בארץ ישראל בין החיות הרעות והבהמות הבייתיות שלא יזיקו אלו לאלו וכ"ש שלא יזיקו לבני אדם...
 הז' כי בזמן מלך המשיח לא תהיינה צרות ודאגות ואנחות בכל ארץ ישראל וע"כ יאריכו ימים עם יי' ויחיו חיים טובים...
 הח' שבזמן מלך המשיח תשוב השכינה עוד לישראל כבראשונה ותרבה הנבואה והחכמה והדעת באומה ישראלית...

One Christian scholar asked me, saying to me: "Why do you, Jews, not want to believe that Jesus Christ was the Messiah, testified by true prophets, in whose words you also believe?"

And this was my answer to him: how do we believe he was the Messiah after you have no real proof in the prophecies, as the verses given in the Gospel from prophets do not prove that Jesus Christ was the Messiah ...

We have much real evidence to demonstrate that Jesus was not the Messiah at all. Let's mention some of them: 1) his genealogy; 2) his actions; 3) his era; 4) non-fulfillment of the promises destined for the life of the expected Messiah during his lifetime. These components are compulsory conditions to believe in the true Messiah. In fact, according to the genealogy, Jesus did not refer to the lineage of David, as he was born not of Joseph, just as witnessed in your Gospel. According to what has been written in the first chapter of Matthew, Jesus was born of Mary, who was a virgin and whom Joseph did not know until she gave birth to Jesus. Therefore nothing links the lineage of Joseph to Jesus. The lineage of Mary is also unknown to them, and even the lineage of Joseph to David is not truthful...

In fact, concerning his actions, Jesus himself said, "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword to set a man at variance against his father, and the daughter against her father (sic!), and the daughter in law against her mother in law" as it is written in Matt. 10:34. However, we found the Scriptures that referred to the true expected Messiah, and therefore his actions expected did not correspond to those of Jesus. Here you see what Jesus said about himself. He said he did not come to bring peace to the earth. Instead, the Scripture states about the expected Messiah in Zech. 9:9: "He shall speak peace to the nations⁹, and so on", while Jesus said that he had come to bring the sword to the earth.

In fact, concerning the time of the true Messiah, the Scriptures says in Isa. 2: "and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more". Jesus said that he had come "to set a man at variance against his father, and so on". Therefore, in the time of the true Messiah, the prophet Elijah will come, to whom the Scriptures refer at the end of Malachi: "he shall turn the heart of the fathers to the children, and the heart of the children to their fathers". Jesus said about himself that he did not come to be served by a son of man, but he

⁹In King James Bible it is Zech. 9:10.

came to serve, as it is written in Matt. 20 in verse 28. On the contrary, about the true Messiah the Scriptures speak in Psalm 72: “all kings shall fall down before him: all nations shall serve him”, and in the Zechariah: “from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth”.

In fact, concerning the time of his life, he did not come at the appointed time according to the prophets, because the prophets, may they rest in peace, foretold His coming at the end of days, as it is written in Isa. 2: “And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the LORD’S house shall be established in the top of the mountains and so on”, and it is written there about the King Messiah: “he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks and so on”, and also about the wars of Gog and Magog, which will be on earth in the time of the King Messiah.

In fact, concerning the promises proclaimed with the words the prophets, which were not fulfilled in Jesus’s time but will be fulfilled in the time of the true expected Messiah, these are:

a) in the time of the King Messiah there will be only one kingdom and one king – the true King Messiah, and the rest of the kingdoms and their kings cannot exist at that time...

b) in the time of the King Messiah, there will be one faith and one religion in the world, namely the religion of Israel...

c) in the time of the King Messiah, the idols and the memory of them, false prophets and the unclean spirit of the earth will be destroyed...

d) in the time of the King Messiah there will be no iniquities and sins in the world, especially in the nation of Israel ...

e) in the time of the King Messiah and after the war of Gog and Magog there will be peace and serenity throughout the world, and the sons of man will no longer need any weapons...

f) in the time of the King Messiah there will be peace on the land of Israel between wild animals and domestic animals, so that they will not harm one another and they will not harm people...

g) in the time of the King Messiah there will be no distress, troubles and sighs throughout the land of Israel, and the days will be prolonged by God and they will live a good life...

h) in the time of the King Messiah, the presence of God will return to Israel, as it was in the beginning, and the prophecy, wisdom and knowledge in the nation of Israel will be multiplied...

Vocabulary

Hebrew	English
יצחק בן אברהם טרוקי	Isaac ben Abraham Troki
חזוק אמונה / <i>Hizzuq 'Emuna</i>	<i>Strengthening of the Faith</i>
אלהים (אלקים) / <i>'Elohim ('Eloqim)</i>	God
יהוה / <i>'Adonay</i>	Lord
נַעֲשֵׂה אָדָם בְּצַלְמֵנוּ כְּדְמוּתֵנוּ	let us make man in our image, after our likeness
נַעֲשֵׂה / <i>na'aše</i>	let us make
וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת-הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ	God created man in his own image
אֲנֹכִי / <i>'Anoki</i>	I
אֱלֹהֵינוּ / <i>'Eloheynu</i>	our God

מַלְאָךְ יְהוָה / <i>mal'ak 'Adonay</i>	angel of the Lord
(אלוק) אֱלֹהִים / <i>'Eloah ('Eloak)</i>	God
הִנֵּה הַעֲלֵמָה הָרָה	behold, a virgin shall conceive
הַעֲלֵמָה / <i>ha-'alma</i>	a girl or a virgin, a married woman
הַנְּעִרָה / <i>han-na'ara</i>	a girl or a virgin, a married woman
עִמָּנוּ אֵל / <i>'Immanu 'El</i>	God with us
מַהֵר שָׁלַל הָשׁ בָּנוּ	make haste to take away the prey
בְּתוּלָה / <i>betula</i>	virgin
צִמְחַ דָּוִד / <i>Šemah David</i>	<i>The Offspring of David</i>

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*The article was received on May 14, 2019.
Article recommended for publishing 26/02/2020.*