After the formation of the Galician autonomy in 1867, as a part of the Austro
Hungarian Empire the Jews were beginning to feel the tensions between Vienna that
was losing its cultural and political influence and the Poles who quickly became the
region’s dominant political power. Not only did the latter become economic partners,
the Jewish youth found Polish culture with the then-dominant Romanticism more
appealing than the moralistic doctrine of Haskalah. Gradually, a shift of language
and cultural identity – from German to Polish – occurred.

These shifts reflect not only the political process, but a much deeper transformation
among the Polish population: breaking with Haskalah, conflict of generations, the
secularization of the Jewish youth, the quality and quantity of the Polish environment,
etc. Two cities in Galicia demonstrate two different models of search for both
cultural and ideological orientations. While Lviv quickly caught the mood of Polish
romanticism and nationalism, Brody remained committed to the principles of
Haskalah and liberalism. A thorough comparison of these two cities reveals the
breadth of the spectrum of the so called new modern identities and analyzes the
factors that influenced their formation among the urban Jewish population of Brody
and Lviv in the second half of the 19th century.