

Eötvös Loránd Tudományegyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar  
Történettudományi Doktori Iskola

SUMMARY OF THE PHD-DISSERTATION

JAKAB RÉKA

**THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC HISTORY OF THE JEWISH COMMUNITY IN THE TOWN OF  
PÁPA  
1748–1848**

Budapest, 2013.

## I. THE SUBJECT AND PURPOSES OF THE DISSERTATION

The urban integration of the Jewish population of the feudal era in Pápa is examined in my PhD dissertation. My research focuses on the definition of this community's social constructional features, as well as its role in the economic life of the town and the landed estate of the Esterházy family in Pápa.

The census, prepared at the dawn of the modern era, in June 1848, registered a population of 2962 people, which constituted 24% of the population of the town. This uniquely great number of people belonging to the Jewish community in Pápa, compared to that of other country towns, inspired me to aim at examining the influence of social and economic processes which resulted in producing such a large community.

In accordance with my topic, the starting point of the chosen era was the appearance of the first Jewish people in the town of Pápa and the establishment of their independent municipal organisation, which may be dated to the period around the release of the landlord's letter of protection in 1748. The coincidence of social changes occurring at the closing of the feudal era and the date of creation of the last Jewish census in Pápa justifies my choice of the release of this most detailed census ever as the closing date of my examination.

The demand for the social and economic emancipation of Hungarian Jews formulated in parallel with the social changes which ripened during Reform Age parliaments. As a result, in 1840 laws were created which wide opened opportunities for Jews to prevail in economic life. As a step towards the civil equality of rights, the special tax, the tolerance tax which had been paid by the Jews for a century, was abolished. These changes basically coincided with the end of the feudal era and the overture of the changes taking place in Hungarian society, which started new processes in the life of Hungarian Jews as well – for the time being primarily regarding the abolishment of the landlords' jurisdiction – and closed the first stage of their modern history in Hungary.

The general view of the Jews' social and economic features established in Hungarian historiography may be specified and detailed through the examination of individual local communities, with respect to legal, economic and social particularities, which served as a framework and together determined the way of development of the given community.

When defining and evaluating the demographic and social features of the community existing at the time of the census of 1848, the political, legal, economic and social changes that had taken place during the previous hundred years and accompanied the integration of urban Jews could not be ignored. In order to understand their situation, it was fundamental to examine and understand the estate policies and the urban legal, economic and social environment.

Considering all these, the urban settlement of the Jews was examined as the first step of their integration. Whether a permanent residence permit was granted or refused depended primarily on the landlord's discretion, as well as the attitude of the municipal magistrate. It also required clarification, to what extent these factors influenced the scale and location of their settling inside the town. In close connection with all the above mentioned, their housing conditions and acquisition of urban real estates were also investigated.

Another important issue was to examine to what extent the national laws determining the legal status of Hungarian Jews affected the life and opportunities of the Jewish communities living on private landlord estates, and whether opposite processes could be experienced in Pápa. On what scenes of social life were they present and where did they lose ground?

In the context of their legal status, their national, estate and municipal taxation were also investigated, supposing that the related data would reveal information about the local Jewish community's social stratification, financial power and the rate of their taxes paid compared to estate incomes and municipal revenues, which at the same time could reflect the balance of power between the estate and the municipality regarding their Jewish inhabitants.

Although I aspired to explore all the sources and reference literature related to the Jews in Pápa, I did not intend to write the history of a religious community. While examining the inner life of this community in a separate chapter, I was primarily interested in social aspects, namely their integration skills and, closely connected to this, their mentality contrasts, which surfaced in religious-liturgical and behavioural issues at the end of this period. The essence of the determining process, which took place while forming the answers to the expectations of the recipient society considering the social and religious emancipation of Hungarian Jews, may be captured by the examination of the conflict which arose at the constructions of the synagogue and the election of the rabbi. The few remaining sources on the inner life of the community disclose the cleavages between the community members who were wealthy, therefore more of middle-class character and open-minded towards religious innovations, and those less well-off, who generally lived as tenants in their co-religionists' houses and earned a living as a *famulus*, an itinerant trader or a pedlar, and who represented a much stricter view on religious issues and kept traditions and customs more. What fostered this open-mindedness and what commitments characterised this community that elected Lipót Löw, the most renowned rabbi of the era, who was respected even by the majority society, as its religious leader?

For the examination of the social integration process of local Jews, such areas were chosen where their interaction with the local inhabitants could best be observed. These are economic connections (trade, guild and loan affairs), housing conditions, and educational and social integration in the second half of the era. The last two shed light on Jewish assimilation skills.

The economic integration of the Hungarian Jews of the feudal era may be considered significant, apart from the isolation of guilds. Certain fields of economic life became almost exclusively Jewish dominated. It has long been established in the reference literature that the Jews, who were banned from royal free towns and superseded by town citizens in guilds, were considered mere amateurs in crafts, and their trading was limited to the occasions of fairs on the lands of *civitas*. These existing bans guided the Jews' economic activity to a compulsory course, namely, they had to pursue a job to earn a living which was not prohibited, or circumvent prohibitions, which meant becoming interested in tearing down prevailing feudal barriers. This way they became members of the same community of interest as the magnates of landed estates, which were involved in the economic changes of the era by joining production and sales, and were equally restrained by the existing shackles of economic life, the lack of investable capital available. Jewish merchants, who replaced the Greek, became the traders of agricultural products produced on the estates, the lessee of "regalia" of the landlord, and the traders of raw materials. Consequently, their settlement and activity concentrated on country towns, which played a central role in landed estates.

With the help of remaining economic documents preserved in the estate archive, I wished to conduct a thorough investigation concerning whether similar processes took place in the Esterházy estate in Pápa, which was formed in the middle of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, to those taking place in the country or in other estates in the Transdanubian region, and what roles the Jews in Pápa played in the economic life of the town and the estate, namely, what factors made it possible that such a huge Jewish population could make a living in the

town. For another example of such a high concentration cannot be found in other estates or country towns. In order to answer these questions I examined the economic activities (lessee of regalia, industry and trade) in which local Jews played a decisive role.

I intended to explore, understand and describe the demographic, migrational, social and economic conditions of the first one hundred years of the Jewish community in Pápa as a process, highlighting certain points, depending on available sources, which corresponded to my conclusions drawn from the analysis of the census of 1848, which provides a detailed description of the above mentioned conditions. A separate chapter was devoted to the presentation of the conditions in 1848, which date is interpreted as the end point of the process. The census allowed the accurate definition of the number of Jewish population in Pápa at the time, a detailed investigation of households and family structure, as well as a diverse socio-historical analysis.

## II. SOURCES

Both the issues examined in the present dissertation, and, consequently, the conclusions drawn are greatly determined by the available sources. All that was told about the Jews in Pápa is mostly based on “external” sources. Available sources show the Jewish community in Pápa at the time from the point of view of the estate and the municipal and county authorities, since there are no remaining documents of the religious community. As I see it, these diverse types of sources, however, are able to reflect the urban economic and social integration of Jews. The documents of the Jewish community could have given us a more accurate and complete understanding of the inner life of the community, its formation, social features and stratification and its connections with other Jewish communities. E disszertáció problémafelvetéseinek vizsgálatát, és így a kapott válaszokat is nagyban meghatározzák a forrásadottságok.

Four archive units preserved a greater number of documents concerning the Jewish inhabitants of Pápa. First of all, the archive of the Esterházy landed estate in Pápa, parts of which are preserved in several institutions today. A part of the existing documents is related to the administration, governance and management of the estate. The books of letter copies, which contain the daily correspondence between the landlord and the prefect, who was responsible for the direct management of the estate, belong to the former group, as well as the documents that record the daily work of other officers, correspondence with higher authorities (county, council of governor general, treasury), and those concerning the legal authority of the landlord. Among the economic documents, account books, urbarial documents, sources related to management and regalia can be found. The data concerning Jews that occur in the listed document types may be categorised as follows: 1. affairs concerning the legal authority of the landlord (protection, jurisdiction), the rights of settled Jews; 2. affairs concerning the taxes to be paid by Jews, and resulting estate incomes; 3. acquisition of the right of establishment and residence; 4. house and real estate affairs (purchase, rental); 5. economic activities: lessee of regalia, trade, industry, guild affairs. Due to the arbitrary nature of censuses found in the estate documents, it proved essential to look into the censuses found in the departmental records of the council of governor general, which were regularly made, mostly in connection with tolerance tax, and followed the same criteria. There are censuses from 1781 and the period between 1795-1846.

The third group of sources that was researched pre-eminently consists of the magistrate’s protocol in Belsőváros (inner town). From the archive documents, which were fragmentarily preserved, only the incomplete set of records from the period between 1794-1847 could be used for the research concerning urban Jewish affairs. These typically

inform us about the local Jews' smaller civil lawsuits (mostly about debts), disciplinary cases and provide data related to their urban real estate acquisitions.

County documents add up to a significant portion of available sources, which largely contain general administrative issues. These documents allow us to follow the matter of tolerance tax, which was paid by Jewish communities since the reign of Marie Therese. All the affairs that could not be handled by the manorial court or the urban magistrate forums, or were forwarded to the governor's court were submitted to the higher authority of the county. The intervention of the county authority was required in the 1840s in the intense and prolonged debates in the Jewish community about the constructions of the synagogue and the election of the new rabbi. As a result, county documents preserved valuable data concerning the inner life of the Jewish community, which are irrecoverable, due to the lack of community documents.

Further data were collected from the Estsrházy estate documents in Cseklész, which preserved the complete asset inventory and accounts of the landed estate in Pápa, which had been given to this line of the family as a collateral in 1829. Indirect data could be obtained from the guild documents in Pápa; I only researched the ones, however, from which I hoped to get information about Jewish craftsmen or raw material traders (tailors, cobblers, furriers, saddlers). Some insignificant pieces of information related to trade and regalia affairs came up while researching the economic documents of the neighbouring estates (the bishopric estate in Veszprém and the Benedictine estate in Tihany). Finding such scattered data was entirely a matter of chance, however, since the systematic investigation of further archives exceeded the scope of my research.

The nationally ordered Jewish census of 1848 was executed by the county authorities, therefore the collected data are preserved in the county archive in Veszprém. The main source of the dissertation, the roll-census of 1848, requires to be spoken about in more details. Its direct antecedent was the Jewish census in Pest, ordered on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, when, after the intensification of the turmoil, the citizens of Pest demanded the expulsion of Jews settled without a permit. The purpose of the census was to review residence permits.

The enumeration of the Jews produced a special national population census. The purpose of the census assumed that the entire Jewish population of a certain settlement, for instance Pápa, was put on the list. The census of Jewish residents without permits or temporary Jewish residents (such as apprentices) resulted in a broader and more complete data series, compared to any other former list, prepared for other purposes (e.g. taxation, population census). Previous censuses, made for the purposes of tolerance tax, did not contain *extraneus* and *indigena* Jews. This time the aim was to define the precise number of these as well as listing permanent residents and residents with a permit. Consequently, this data series, similarly to a population census, contains *migrant*, moving elements as well: students learning in the town, migrant apprentices, etc., in one word, the complete population present.

In order to carry out the analysis, the data of the persons had to be processed, normalised and coded in a database. The census contains the Jewish population in units of households. The status of family members and relatives living in one house(hold) was defined in relation to the breadwinner, by writing the status in front of their names (for instance: wife, son, daughter, grandmother, brother, sister, mother-in-law, daughter-in-law, son-in-law, grandchild, step-son, step-daughter, relative, etc.). These notations were put in separate boxes, and in the case when they were not clearly marked but could be undoubtedly deduced, I completed them. The status notations were unified and somewhat restricted. If several generations of couples lived together, the status of each member was marked in relation to the breadwinner. The maiden name of the breadwinner's wife was

marked accurately – with a few exceptions - together with the family name. The family names of children were not marked separately, however, therefore they had to be supplied in the database. Relatives living in the same household but having different family names had their names marked separately, which helped the clear definition of their status even where the census makers ignored it. Family names of apprentices, servants and personnel living in the household were also indicated clearly. So as to obtain statistical data series more easily, the status, gender, marital status and place of birth of each family member were unified with a code system. Furthermore, the classification of job types listed in the census was also necessary, so that I could analyse and evaluate the breadwinner and relatives, who pursued several jobs (29 craftsmen and a number of different traders) along uniform criteria.

### III. CONCLUSIONS

The economic, social and cultural integration process of the Jewish community in Pápa resembled the process taking place in the other settlements of the Transdanubian region, regarding its general features. Differences occur, however, in its starting point and intensity. The reception of Jews at the western border, on the Esterházy and Batthyány estates happened earlier than in other estate centres of Transdanubia, due to the direction of their immigration. The formation of the Jewish community in Pápa can be dated to approximately the same period, or even a few decades earlier. Resulting from the absence of detailed processing, I did not have the opportunity to compare the processes in each settlement, only general conclusions could be drawn. It can be established that there are general patterns which are characteristic of the local integration, legal status and economic activity of the Jews. In this respect the situation of the Jewish community in Pápa cannot be considered extraordinary. Significant differences can be observed in the speed and scale of their integration, though. These primarily show in the high concentration of the population, the great number of settled Jews, which reveals the mutual integration tendency of both the Jewish and the recipient community. The co-effect of these – sometimes opposing – integration factors were presented in my analysis, which contributed to the formation of this uniquely large county town community. In the absence of similarly detailed examinations, a comparative analysis could not be prepared, which might have answered the question of why it was precisely in Pápa, among all the county towns in Transdanubia, that such a great number of Jewish inhabitants could make a living. What was left is to emphasise local characteristics. In my opinion, the conditions required for the settlement and livelihood of Jews were best ensured in the case of Pápa. First of all the landlord's recognition that the economic activities of the Jews were beneficial should be mentioned, which resulted in their conscious resettlement and an open-mindedness towards their integration. Secondly, but not of less significance, the town's location (primarily the proximity of Győr), geographical features (hydropower available in winter), legal status (privileges), economic environment, market role, advanced trade and crafts promoted Jewish economic activities. These favourable conditions together determined the quality of social advancement and existence, which may be considered the reason for the continuous and rapid increase in the number of the urban Jewish population. This favourable environment allowed the pursuit of such ventures and activities that required further labour, and this way, this growing community was capable of providing more and more settlers with existence.

The integration and existential support of the Jews created a conflict between the estate and the town. Their social advancement and the growth of their community

depended on the landlord's decision, which – if granted – infringed the interests of the urban middle class almost without exception. By presenting these primarily economic conflicts of interests in details, my conclusions expand our understanding of Jewish history of the era in respect of the relations between the recipient estate and the town. Despite having lots of privileges, the urban middle class was not able to influence the processes taking place at the centre of the estate decisively. The predominant factor of the integration of local Jews was their economic activity. This played a central role in their integration and determined their social advancement and connections as well as their conflicts. Available sources give proof that no aspect of isolation or separation from the Jews can be detected in the era which could overpower economic, utilitarian considerations. The latter prevailed in housing and real estate acquisition affairs, taxation, landlord regalia, local trade and industrial ventures as well. Economic connections and potential had a decisive influence on social integration. This might explain why most of the social conflicts between the Jews and their environment found in the available sources of the era were grounded in some economic conflict of interests.

My research into the religious organisation of the Jews in Pápa, the inner life of the community, eventuated in new conclusions regarding the religious-ritual conflicts that arose in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the exploration of the cleavages between the members of the community. Through the representation of the incident in Pápa with the help of available sources, the schism between Hungarian Jews created by religious reform processes and emancipation was rendered more tangible.

The nature of the data contained in the roll-census of 1848 and the high number of the examined population allowed a detailed demographic examination, the results of which could reflect the true demographic features of the permanent Jewish population in Pápa at the time. Nevertheless, conclusions could only be drawn regarding the situation of the population in 1848; family reconstitutive examinations could not be carried out. Since the documents of the religious community had been destroyed, other sources, such as the parish register, were not at our disposal, from which population tendencies or processes in respect of the whole community could have been presented. To the best of my knowledge, a detailed family and household examination of such a large Jewish community has not yet been prepared. As a conclusion it can be established that the demographic features and family- and household- structures of the Jewish population in Pápa do not show significant differences from the non-Jewish Hungarian population at the time, according to the reference literature. The occupational distribution of the Jewish community became more varied over the examined one hundred years, and the pursuit of many different jobs promoted the social stratification of the legally homogeneous community.

Although the Jewish censuses of 1848 from the 31 counties of Hungary (in the narrower sense) and the 15 royal towns have been preserved, historiography has only used a fragment of them. No such comprehensive examination has been carried out so far that would allow the comparative analysis of the social, economic, demographic and cultural situation of the Jewish population at the time. Hopefully, my dissertation may contribute to this future synthesis.

The processes captured and described in the present dissertation can be closely associated to the issue of the forming middle-class. Above all, in the sense of the original interpretation of the idea that the social classes without privileges should be elevated into the constitutional framework. The drive of the formation of the Hungarian middle-class was the demand for the abolition of feudal shackles, which was initiated primarily by economic considerations. In the social advancement of the Jews, the circumvention of feudal frames or their abolition was of vital importance. Their legal emancipation, elaborated in feudal parliaments, aimed at the abolition of strict feudal isolation and the

discrimination of Jewish citizens, primarily by the abolition of tolerance tax and by granting them the same legal status as the one held by the taxpayer population. In the case of the Jewish community in Pápa, the examination proved that this process began to emerge much sooner, in the last third of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, since the recipient society was made more permissive by economic needs and utilitarianism.



#### IV. PUBLICATIONS

JAKAB Réka (2006), Pápa város zsidó társadalma a XIX. század első felében, *Acta Papensia* VI. 1–4. 95–122.

JAKAB Réka (2009), Egy zsidó órás a református Ókollégium udvarán. Pápa város zsidó társadalma az 1848-as összeírás tükrében, *Budapesti Negyed* (Nyár) 64. 17–41.

JAKAB Réka (2008), Pápa város zsidó társadalma a 19. század első felében. In: GAUCSÍK István, NOVÁK Veronika [szerk.], *Archivum Sala IV. Vágsellye*. 53–64.

JAKAB Réka (2010a), "Kóser-e a rabbi?" Ortodoxok és újítók a pápai zsidó községben az 1840-es években, *Századok* 144. évf. 3. 595–616.

JAKAB Réka (2010b), Zsidóság a veszprémi püspöki és káptalani birtokokon 1848 előtt. In: HERMANN István, KARLINSZKY Balázs [szerk.], *Megyetörténet. Egyház- és igazgatástörténeti tanulmányok a veszprémi püspökség 1009. évi adománylevele tiszteletére*. Veszprém. 227–255.

JAKAB Réka (2013), Zsidók az Esterházy család pápai uradalmának gazdasági életében a XVIII. században. In: BORSY Judit [szerk.], *Uradalmak térben és időben. Baranyai Történelmi Közlemények* 5. [to be published]