

## Abstract

I wanted to emphasize right in the title of the study as well the particular situation the Jewish women occupy on the pages of my essay. The complex observation of a group of people and the description of the individual reflection of the observer – feminist in this essay constitute the essence of the research into culture. The description is authentic if man is apprehended in his peculiar existential situation. „It is this consideration from which I turned to the event of the settlement, by which a new Jewish existence form came into being in Pest – as before it all over the world over and over again.” In respect of the social statuses this lifestyle was characterised by men’s dominance. The women’s layer discovered within the men’s society was though far from being homogeneous, but of uniformly marginal situation as it can be detected on the level of the Society.

Although the Jewish society achieving middle-class status readily accentuated the importance of women, but the acceptance of the bourgeois values led to the quick change in the old role casting of the sexes that resulted in the reinterpretation of the social structure of the whole Jewish Society.

Reviewing the major tendencies of the Jewish and non-Jewish feminist literatures at the beginning of my essay, I found a place in the culture science also for my own feminist study. In the part following the Introduction I reviewed the historical, sociological, demographical and philosophical works on the settlement of the Jews of Pest, the establishment of the Jewish cultural and social structures in Hungary and on their operation after the settlement in Pest.

All the authors I made to speak – Sámuel Kohn, Sándor Büchler, Zsigmond Groszmann, János Kósa, Vera Bácskai and others – were striving for scientific truth and completeness. They could not achieve necessarily the latter, since they excluded from their description the Jewish female social layer, fixing thereby, as a matter of fact, the discriminated social situation of women.

It, however, is a mistake to think that my work does not do anything than merely criticising – under the pretext of the settlement in Pest - the Jewish social relations. I was making efforts to represent the Jewish woman in the first place as an independent human being. Restricted even to the margin, the women were vital and socially creative. If demanded by the situation, the women – for example as widows – managed the family, the business independently and took a stand for their interests. The women were able to turn even the least economic chance to their advantage; they were pleased to create communities (including the peculiar religious tradition as well).

The layer of the maid servants figuring in a separate place in my essay did not escape the attention of Vera Bácskai either. The authoress summarised this so that keeping servants had been characteristic of the Jews of Pest. The number of male servants was less, but maid servants could be found in every third household. Although the situation of the servants was characterised by the defencelessness, but several women used this situation for widening their living space. This too is addressed in the chapter discussing the Christianization of “women”. In the same place mention is made of cases when the women took independent decision on withdrawal of the religious community or conversely: they did not follow their husbands in becoming Christian.

Similarly to Vera Bácskai, I tell a few family stories, and not only about women, I mention a new type of qualified entrepreneurs speaking Hungarian as well, while the nameless, unknown peddling, begging women, family mothers and single mothers occupy the centre of attention. Slowly another Jewish world evolves from this before us, the main characters of which are women. The women do occupy the first place in history even if always men occupied the first place in the community documents forming the source of research.

A special place is ensured in my description to the linguistic analysis of the research sources, in the course of which I present the handwriting of the tax-books written in the official Yiddish language of Pest as well. The detailed description of the conditions of Pest is preceded by the short presentation of the Jewish community of Óbuda and the environs, which was one of the major human sources of the Jewish society of Pest.