

היסטוריה דמוגרפית וכלכלית של יהדות הונגריה בתקופה הקדם תעשייתית, 1830-1700

חיבור לשם קבלת תואר דוקטור לפילוסופיה

מאת

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**חוגש לסיננט האוניברסיטה העברית בירושלים
יולי 2008.**

עבודה זו נעשתה בהדרכתו
של
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Demographic and Socio-Economic History of Hungarian Jews, 1700-1830

**Thesis Submitted for the degree
„Doctor of Philosophy”**

by

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Submitted to the Senate of the Hebrew University, Jerusalem

July, 2008

This work was carried out under the supervision of
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ABSTRACT

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the demographic and economic history of the Jewish population living in Hungary in the approximately century and a half that begins at the turn of the 18th century up until to the first half of the 19th century. It will focus not only on certain areas, communities and significant individuals, but will also treat the history of the entire Jewish population of the country, contextualizing it at times within a broader regional and European-wide framework. It will also depict the lives of individuals through case studies, as representative of tendencies that spanned generations. The analysis focuses on three main areas: demographic, economic and some aspects of cultural history demonstrating the prevalent tendencies within the Hungarian environment on the regional and national levels. It tackles problems that have not yet been treated and reinterprets other previously treated problems by placing them in a broader context.

The first large unit of the essay is devoted to the areas of the demographic history of Hungarian Jewry. The first chapter examines population changes. However, we cannot simply rely on summarizing the available statistical data on a countrywide level when establishing the number of Jews. Jews migrated to Hungary anew, from different directions, in more than one wave and at different times. The question of where they came from is important in itself. From the turn of the 18th century they began to arrive mainly from the Moravia and Bohemia where the reigning Habsburgs, faithful Catholics, were successful in placing a limit on their numbers. This was not the case in Hungary, which was also part of the Habsburg Empire, where the size of the population was not limited by such measures. Another important aspect of this problem was to ascertain how long immigration affected the size of the population and, for what length of time was it a determining factor? While immigration of Jews characterized the entire period (accompanied by substantial internal migration), its effect on population numbers begins to decline by the 1820s. Beside the countrywide data, the region-by-region analysis highlights several factors. At the beginning of settlement the place of origin was an important factor as the migrants chose to settle in areas close to their former homes. It also influenced their choice of migratory direction within Hungary. Moreover, new waves of migration from other points of origin led to changes in the Jewish population of individual regions. This becomes apparent when one region is compared to another: thus, the primary target areas of immigration were initially the western regions at the beginning of the 18th

century, and later, the northeastern counties from the middle of the century. However, there are also further factors that cannot be ignored. The roles of these factors will be emphasised in the dissertation, such as internal migration between the individual regions, and the economic, legal as well as cultural background of Hungary, which also contributed to certain areas being preferred or marginalised locations for settlement. Thus, these factors also influenced population changes in such regions.

Comparison of the figures for the Jewish and the overall population of Hungary, highlights their differences. Further comparison of Jewish population change between their former residence and Hungary, also highlights the fact that the Moravia and Bohemia restrictions were not applied. Moreover, it demonstrates in a systematic fashion the argument, which has been proposed in the past few decades, that calls into doubt the thesis that the mass immigration originating in Galicia that began about 1760 lasted until 1848 (or even longer) and was the major factor in the rapid growth of the Jewish population in Hungary. This is not supported by the statistical data of the sources. The fact that in the 1780s the number of Jews in Hungary was approximately half of that in Galicia, while by the mid 1830s almost equal is adequate reason for caution. (The “Galician thesis” which argues that migration instead of a high rate of natural increase explains the population explosion of Hungarian Jewry, would need to assume two very different rates of population growth: a very high one for Galicia to explain not only its own rapid growth, but also account for those who emigrated for Hungary, and at the same time, a very low rate of natural increase of these same Galicians the moment they crossed into Hungary.)

The second chapter covers the role of natural population growth in population change. As a starting point, we began by examining the well-known Hajnal thesis. According to this thesis, there were two family models in Europe: a western model (marrying later and having a smaller number of children) and an eastern model (marrying earlier in the case of both sexes and having a higher number of children). The geographical dividing line in Europe stretches from Helsinki to Trieste, neatly dividing Hungary to two parts, and implying the presence of these two family models. Although this thesis has been the subject of criticism, nevertheless, it is worthwhile to examine it in our context. Since the family models of their former places of residence—the Bohemian lands on the one hand and Galicia on the other— seemingly fit this model, the question arises: how relevant is this theory in the case of Jewish families? This also raises the question whether the two models really existed in the Hungarian environment. Was it possible that only the legal restrictions in the Bohemian lands accounted for their

western type of family model, while once in Hungary, these same migrants produced the same family models as the Galicians?

The statistical data poses problems since the censuses were conducted at one given time rather than serially, they did not record the age of the parents, and considered only the number of children present at home at the given moment. (It can only be speculated that a significant number of those classified as servants could be counted in the category of children.) Consequently, we can conclude that no significant differences in family size was found between the regions covered by the thesis (the small family model is dominant), which does not support the Hajnal thesis. We attempted to deepen the scope of the survey by examining those few areas for which the age of the parents was also available. However, this did not result in supporting the two models of the Hajnal thesis concerning Hungary.

Our next chapter focuses on the role of migration. Migrations had an indisputable effect on the period's population numbers. However, we found it important to emphasise that while immigration did exist even in the second decade of the 19th century, its role should not be reduced into the shorthand "mass immigration from Galicia". The first subchapter of the chapter examines the directions, waves and times of immigration of Jews from abroad. Immigration from abroad had more places of origin than the two main sources, namely, Moravia and Bohemia to the northwest, and Poland, later Galicia, to the northeast. The most dominant period of immigration from the northwest is generally accepted to be the end of the 17th and the beginning of the 18th centuries, although data at our disposal verified that immigration from this direction existed even as late as 1848, albeit in sporadic waves. The reasons behind immigration, beside the legal and economic restrictions at the former places of residence, may have been the attractive conditions in Hungary, supported by the testimonies of the immigrants (seemingly in spite of the economic backwardness of Hungary). Similarly, migration from the east happened throughout the entire period, likewise in waves. The increase in the intensity of immigration from the second half of the 18th century was a result of the events in Poland and the policies of Joseph II in Galicia, although the attractive power of the conditions in Hungary may also be taken into account. The census of 1848 provides us with some interesting data. Contrary to the accepted wisdom, more Moravian and Bohemian immigrants lived in the country than Galician. This is important in light of the fact that the census was significantly incomplete on the western region. Even if we suppose that not everybody gave a true account of their origins, the population data mentioned earlier and these figures strongly contradict the supposition that there was mass immigration.

Beside immigration from foreign lands, the fact of internal migration of Jews had a crucial role throughout the period. It was of key importance in more than one way. One of these was its effect on the number of inhabitants in the various regions. The other is the way customs changed in families arriving from different locations, and their role in the economic life of their new homes (the detailed analysis of this topic can be found in the economic history chapter). Tracing internal migrations of the 18th century is not a simple task, since until Joseph II's the decree of 1787 most Jews did not have fixed surnames. Qualitative sources also serve to inform us about migration patterns. After 1787, the censuses with established surnames supply us with adequate data to study migrations, which we limited to the following areas due to the quantity of the available data: migration to a certain settlement type (royal free boroughs) and migration to certain counties, represented through the migrations of several generations of two families (the Weissburg and Munk families). In each case we found that the role of internal migration did not diminish throughout the period among the Jewish population, and that it was boosted by the dismantling of legal restrictions, which enabled settlement of the southern territories, and later, in free royal boroughs. Economic opportunities in these new areas of settlement obviously strengthened the tendency to migrate.

The fourth chapter focuses on the questions of settlement patterns. In the Middle Ages, Jews were permitted to settle in royal free boroughs. While the stereotype identifying Jews with urban population persisted throughout the Middle Ages, this picture is far from accurate. In Hungary, as a consequence of the policies of monarchs supporting cities, the medieval law of „de non tolerandis Judaeorum” was renewed, which kept the Jewry outside the boundaries of the city walls (despite this, some filtered in during the entire period). Changes in the system of dependencies resulted in changes in the places chosen for settling down. The majority of Jews settled down in villages and market-towns. This picture is generally valid on a countrywide level, although regional differences are apparent. In territories where the settlement policies of landowners were dominant, residents were concentrated in market-towns, mainly at the early stages (in Small-Burgenland). Naturally, this is in contrast with the settlement patterns prevalent in the majority of the population, that is weak urban centers alongside predominant rural (village) populations. Whether Jews were attracted to settle already existing market centers or whether market centers came into being as a result of Jewish presence is difficult to establish.

The last subchapter of this chapter examines the questions surrounding the concentration of Jewish settlement. The place of settlement was influenced by legal restrictions, controlled settlement policies and spontaneous settlement. The settlement policies of landowners were not consistent, differing at times even between their various estates. What they did allow everywhere was the settlement of larger groups. At the countrywide level, a general trend is perceptible from 1735 on toward the formation of larger communities in the western regions, and more sporadic, thin settlement in the east, often one or two families in a locale. However, at this time only about 13% of Jews lived in larger communities. By 1835 the situation had changed: only 38% of the Jewish population lived in settlements whose number of Jews did not reach 100. This points at a more centralised settlement pattern, which is supported by the formation of various regional centres: in Oberland: Pozsony (Pressburg); Small-Burgenland: Németeresztúr, Nagymarton, Kismarton; Transdanubia: Bonyhád, Nagykanizsa; central: Obuda; eastern: Nagykároly, southern: Makó, Temesvár.

The closing chapter on demographic history focuses on the role of the protection of the landlord. It is a generally accepted fact that the modern era settlement and countrywide presence of Jews was due to protection of the landlord. This paper attempts to examine this thesis in a broader context. In the Middle Ages, the protection and position of the Jewry was dependent on the sovereign. Medieval common law lived on in Hungary, but the sovereign, although in theory retaining the right to decide whether Jews could remain in the country or not, gave up providing protection in practice. For this reason, new factors appeared in the system of dependencies. The role of the landlord as a protector is relevant, but we must interpret this role. We must begin with the fact that the Jewish groups arriving into the country were already under the authority of somebody – they had their foreign lords in their countries of origin. These did not want to forgo the taxes of their former subjects, leading to heated disagreements between former and new lords. However, around the middle of the century, the connection with the former lord was successfully severed. In Hungary, the concept of landlord/lord is a generic term for more than one natural and legal entities, and for this reason it became necessary to determine who supported the settlement of Jews and where. In the paper, we examined the roles and settlement strategies, if there were any, of the various landlord types. In the case of noble patronage, we find that at the beginning the support of the aristocracy was of key importance, which later gave ground to the strengthening involvement of lesser nobles (which is an unambiguous sign of settling in more and more locations). At the same time, the variety of landowner categories becomes apparent: the chamber (the treasury)

and the church as landowners accommodate the Jewry even if their territories are not the most attractive. In the case of settlement strategies, we did not find an example of residents settled down exclusively via controlled settlement. Moreover, the issuing of letters of privilege – the symbol of the controlled settlement policy of aristocrats – often did not create a community, but legally acknowledged its existence, becoming a mere formality based on an earlier system of norms. Spontaneous settlement existed in Hungary from the beginning, and it became even more frequent in this period. This thesis is supported by the examining the settlement policies on the lands of some of the great aristocratic landowners (the Eszterházy, Schönborn, Károlyi families).

The second large section of the paper focuses on the role played by Jews in the economic history of Hungary. Jews arrived to an economically underdeveloped country at the beginning of the modern times, where a medieval legal system was still flourishing. This meant that their economic activities were confined from the beginning. In the eyes of their contemporaries and of posterity, Jews were seen as an economically successful group, and their main sphere of activity was determined to be the trading sector. However, this is an oversimplified view of the economic role of Jews in Hungary that does not place adequate emphasis on the changes that came about during the pre-industrialisation era, or the indicators that precede these changes. Moreover, it also fails to raise the question why it was the Jews who managed to become economically successful as opposed to other minorities active in the economy.

The section on economic history is divided into two major parts. In the first, the occupational structure of the Jewish population throughout the period is described, providing a more diversified picture than the commonly accepted one. As a starting point, we outline the differences that are apparent when we compare the contemporary economic activities and history of other minorities at the beginning of the period, differences which singled out Jews from among others in economic matters. Such groups were the Greeks and the Armenians who were also economically successful, had capital and extended trade networks, and moreover initially enjoyed the support of the monarchs. However, their knowledge of the territory (deriving from their settlement structures), and, to some extent, their mobility could not compete with those of the Jews. Moreover, upon losing the favour of the monarch and facing impending taxation, the Greek minority chose to emigrate in contrast to the Jews. One reason for this was that the Jewish population regarded the country, despite the restrictions, as their home, whereas the Greeks considered themselves subjects of another country. Finally, it

is not a negligible factor that the Jewish population continually increased due to immigration from abroad throughout the period, which was not typical of other minorities.

In the fourth chapter of the unit we describe the occupational structure based on conscriptions conducted during the period. For reasons of taxation, such surveys of Hungarian Jewry were carried out in almost every decade of the 18th century; however their formal framework and categories employed never became uniform. Although this changed somewhat in the first decades of the 19th century, a survey conducted in 1848 was again carried out according to a different type of system. This cautions us about the uncertainty of the various categories. Although it is true that the statistical data does really indicate that the bulk of Jewish economic activity was in trade, this in itself raises questions. For the classification of trade was not homogenous since three categories were found to be worthy of being separately listed: *mercator*, *quaestor*, peddler. Since in the 18th century income was usually not mentioned, it could not help us define these categories, nor was it possible on the basis of the products traded. With the introduction of income categories at the beginning of the 19th century the situation was not much clarified because now categories overlapped and products were no longer listed (at least until the 1848 survey).

Despite the limited nature of the conscriptions sheds light on the other economic areas where Jews were participated besides trade: they were leaseholders, artisans and servants. The importance of the role of leaseholder in Jewish society deserves attention, because in the eastern region of the country this was the occupation that flourished as opposed to the commercial sector. The ratio of craftsmen continually increased in Hungary, in spite of legal restrictions, and their sphere of activities became more diverse as is documented by qualitative sources and censuses conducted from the beginning of the 18th century until 1848. Jews who sought to enter crafts despite guild opposition, often received assistance of both the landlord and the administrative bodies especially in the 19th century.

The schematic categories of the censuses do not indicate changes that had been underway from the beginning of the 19th century. The data only recorded the sudden countrywide rise in the ratio of peddlers in the commercial sector, indicating that in this period a nationwide market network was taking shape increasingly capable of reaching customers all the way into the countryside. The sadly incomplete census of 1848, which cannot be viewed as accurate for the entire country, is nevertheless important in this respect because its subjects defined their spheres of activity by themselves. This presents us with the clearly broadening and diversification of the occupational structure. This in itself indicates that the changes were not the result of a few years, but the product of a long developmental

process, and the census-takers of previous years tried to simplify the occupational categories. This broadens and complicates the picture at the same time, since on the one hand, it became apparent that many pursued more than one occupation, and on the other hand, within the category of trade/commerce, a peddler could have a shop, just like a wholesaler, which in the past had served to distinguish one from the other. Moreover, a sphere of activity now appears that census-takers had previously ignored due to legal restrictions: the agricultural sector. Even more interesting, the beginnings of new spheres are also perceptible, such as the thin layer of the self-employed.

In the fifth chapter on occupational structure, we compare the results of the conscriptions and the division of various occupations found at the former places of residence of Jews living in Hungary. The analysis presents a seemingly uniform picture: The commercial sphere dominates in all of the territories (Moravia, Bohemia, Galicia). Apparently, the immigrants continued the trades they practiced in their former homes, as the breakdown of occupations in the western regions is similar to the ones found in their original western homes. However, we can witness a different process in the eastern region where lease holding was dominant. The explanation can be found in the character of the system of settlements in Hungary, the system of dependencies, the sporadic character of settlement and the dependence on the landlord. Further in this chapter, we trace the legal background and history behind the various occupations of Hungarian Jewry during the era that preceded industrialisation, and the reaction of the Hungarian society. The chapter, tries to provide an additional facet to the picture provided by statistical data, by emphasizing such change in the economy such as the growth of handicrafts in the industrial sector or the beginnings of the manufacturing industry.

The place chosen for settling down had a profound effect on shaping the employment structure. At the beginning, Jewish settlement took place in an organized fashion; however, spontaneity was ever present and became more and more significant. This raised the question: what kind of relationship and correlation was there between the market centres of the country and the employment structure of Jews? This chapter also attempts to find an answer to the question whether the Jewry settled in market centres, and to what extent can the existence of substantial Jewish communities be linked to these locations. During the period we did not find direct migration towards the market centres, although the countrywide ratio of those living there, rose somewhat between 1735 and 1835. This was so because, despite concentrated Jewish settlement, the ratio of sporadic settlement was still high.

The fact that a well developed market network which could reach the customer in the countryside only evolved at the beginning of the 19th century, did not encourage settlement in market centres. On the other hand, one could ask the question: what makes a settlement a market centre? The list of these settlements kept changing continuously throughout the period, consequently, it is possible that often it was very presence and economic activities of Jews that helped the economic development of certain settlements, among other contributing factors.

The last two chapters of the section on employment structure present a more detailed picture on the general and regional level through the examination of specific cases. First, the characteristics of the employment structure in various regional religious communities (Rohonc, Ungvár), was examined through a 150-year period. Examining the employment structure of religious communities in itself sheds light on the fact that while for the most part on the local level there were processes similar to the nationwide situation, in some cases significant differences were found. Thus, in the case of Ungvár, the source of income of the community's members was trade and industry (1835), although in these (eastern) regions the category of leaseholders was dominant. Different economic and legal circumstances were valid for each community, which also influenced the employment structure.

At the end of this chapter, we attempted to present a case study that illustrates the changes occurring in a migrating family – the Munk family - through several generations. The occupational diversity of the family members is apparent in those periods when the conscriptions recorded only three main occupational categories (trade/commerce, industry, leaseholding). The occupational distribution of the family members highlights the fact that not even the children of the same family embarked upon their economic activities on equal footing, since such factors as the capacity to study, making a successful marital match, good health and the ability to make a good decisions all could play a crucial role. The history of the Munk family highlights changes that take place over several generations of Jewish occupational structure, as well as changes in the economy at large. The possibility of realizing the traditional family ideal (the husband studies, the wife works); the economic rise of the family in the field of commerce: the grandfather is a peddler, the son a merchant, the grandson a wholesaler who might later turn towards the industrial sector. But we see failure also: the death of the husband undermines the economic situation of the family; turning towards new sectors: the professions, industry, white collar employment. On the other hand, it is clear from the data that often many had more than one profession (usually not recorded in general censuses).

The second major part of the economic history section attempts to provide a more detailed picture on the relationship between the social groups in Hungary and the Jews (which, naturally, also touches on their evolving legal status).

In the first chapter, the network of relationships between the royal court and the Jewry is examined. The monarch, renouncing the role of protector in the early modern era, nevertheless, retained the right to make decisions about the presence of the Jewry in the country. From the beginning raw economic interests played a role, as the introduction of a “tolerance tax” instituted in 1698 by Leopold I. The meaning of the tax underwent constant change: between 1698 and 1749 only Jews living in certain parts of the country were burdened by it (mainly those living on the eastern estates of the Royal Chamber). After 1749, a permanent and countrywide “tolerance tax” was instituted by Maria Theresa (reigned 1740-1780), not only placing a heavy economic burden on Jews, but also openly issuing a statement declaring that the status of the Jews within Hungary was that of an alien, tolerated people. Through changing the name of the tax, Joseph II (reigned 1780-1790) wanted to make it sound less offensive; he renamed it “the chamber fee”. However, he did not abolish the tax, despite the fact that his policy was to transform Jewish residents into useful citizens and to bring them closer to the other members of society. At the beginning of the Reform Era (1825-1848), the nobility and Hungarian Jewry raised their voices against the existence of the tax in concert: their argument had its roots in the spirit of emancipation (moreover, the nobility regarded the tax illegal, as it was introduced via bypassing Parliament). The abolition of the tax in 1846, lifted economic burdens and can be regarded as one of the milestones in the improving Jewish legal status. This chapter gives an account of history of the fight against the royal court, the creation of the tax system, the situation within the community and the relationship of the *kehilas* to each other, all of which contribute toward a more detailed picture of the period’s economic history and its system of legal relations.

The second chapter introduces the relationship of the Jewry and the cities. The conflict between the cities and the Jewry had been in existence since the middle ages. The struggle of the citizens of the city against Jews continued into the modern age, excluding permanent Jewish residence within the walls of the city. In the economy, the cities thought that through the use of medieval laws and the strengthening of the guild system it would be possible to marginalize Hungarian Jewry’s economic sphere of activity. Beside the pressure exerted on them by the magnates and the county, their power was further undermined by the prevailing economic circumstances. From the end of the 18th century urbanisation also began, which weakened their power to exclude (although only in 1840 was Jewish urban settlement

legalised). The guilds, the last bastion of defence representing the interests of the urban burghers, were also fundamentally undermined by the nationwide laws beginning in the early 19th century according to which Jews could also become guild members. From the Reform Era, the hostility towards the guilds increased in Hungarian society. Increasingly they were viewed as posing an obstacle to economic development, attempting to exclude productive members of society solely on a religious basis in an age when human rights were becoming recognized. The urban burghers could only secure temporary victories which could not be sustained in the long run.

The network of relationships between the landlords and the Jewry is analyzed in the next section. The monarch realized early in the modern era that the framework within which Hungarian Jewry functioned – settlement and economic activities – was determined primarily by the interests of the landlords. The initial signs that point to this can be seen in contents of the letters of privileges that were issued by aristocrats which are an important source of information on the system of economic life. However, issuing such letters of protection did not become universal practice in Hungary. At the same time, temporary contracts throw light upon the economic relationship between landowners and Jews, their contents uncover the practices of everyday economic life (both its positive and negative sides).

The description of the relationship between landowners and Jews cannot be complete without the description of the taxation system. The landowners, as a result of the reinterpretation of medieval legal practice, regarded themselves as entitled to impose taxes on Jews (connecting this to the role of the protector). The sources also give account of the claims of foreign landowners in the case of immigrants. Material in the system of taxation is only available for the 18th century; after this point the censuses did not have this category, and the landowners themselves sought to keep this hidden, referring to it only when the issue at hand was taking action against taxation by the government.

Our next chapter examines the relationship between the county institutions and the Jews. In Hungary, the counties defined themselves as independent, autonomous institutions, and as a result, regarded themselves entitled to make decisions concerning Jews arriving to their territory. The county's scope of authority in both economic and settlement matters was strongly limited by the monarch, the cities on its territory and the decrees of the local landowners. However, it seems important to present the defining characteristics of this factor of influence. The county also took its share of levying taxes, although it is remarkable that it always expressed its objections to royal taxation, whereas it accepted the precedence of the landowner in matters of taxation even over its own interest.

Last, the relationship of Jews and serfs is analyzed in detail. For the serfs, the intermediary role that Jews played was of key importance in their own economic activities: selling their crops, transporting goods to markets, delivering their products and receiving loans. Jews led a lifestyle that differed significantly from that of the serfs in terms of mobility, nuclear family model, different occupational structure. These characteristics together formed a complementary framework of economic cooperation. These two social groups knew each other very well through everyday communication as attested by the sources. In the history of serfs and Jews, a legal turning point came about at the same time: during the Reform Era, the liberal nobility decided to bestow equal rights on them. This is important from the perspective of future progress, because the intention was to give identical rights to two groups that had significant social and economic differences, leading to a divergence in the way they developed after the period under examination.

The third unit of the paper examined certain aspects of the cultural life of Hungarian Jewry in relation to the two main topics outlined above.

The first chapter focuses on the questions of conversion. In Hungary, the number of those converting to other religions within the Jewish population was small. However, the background of the conversions raises questions that are closely connected to the settlement and economic history of the Jewry. Data on those who converted came from two main sources: those converting in Hungary and those who converted in Vienna, but were residents of Hungary. The background of those who converted creates the image of two societies: of a traditional society and of a transitional society, where the framework of the traditional society lives on, but the beginnings of a new, modern society also appear. In the traditional society, conversion was chosen by people of disadvantageous position, whereas in the transitional society it was also chosen by those who hoped to gain economic and social benefits from it. Among the broad range of reasons for conversion, the economic factor was always dominant. In relation to settlement history, the data presents an interesting picture: in the west (where larger communities were more frequent) the majority of converts lived in villages, which can be attributed to isolation and the influence of the Christian environment. At the same time, in the eastern regions, where settling down was more sporadic, the communities living in market-towns had the highest number of converts. In conclusion, there were two processes moving in opposite directions. The conversions also raised legal and economic questions: the who convert left his community and often his family as well, losing his formal network of connections, nevertheless, could maintain his network of economic relationships.

This was also important for the government, as this meant that the convert was no longer liable to pay the tax. A person with a new legal status also enters into another social group and for this reason, as well as to avoid social tensions, the mass conversion of Jews was not in the government's interest.

The second part examines the questions surrounding names. Upon settling down, the Jews brought with them the names they had used in their former homes, but in the Hungarian environment the use of one or two personal names became common (although the linguistic origin had its roots in their old homelands). The increasingly bureaucratic state introduced in 1787 a decree on names that prescribed the use of permanent German family names for Jews. Two major questions arose concerning the examination of family names: what was the linguistic origin of the names, and what type are they? After 1787 the question of linguistic origin was determined by the state at all times: at the beginning, German family names were compulsory, nevertheless, in the eastern region Slavic names were dominant (at the early stages of immigration). During the Reform Era of the 19th century, a new, emerging trend was the appearance of Hungarian names, which at times could be indicative of nationalistic impulses. As to the matter of typology of names, the use of personal names as family names declined after 1787, replaced by toponyms and names derived from occupations. The types of occupation were chiefly industry and commerce, however, usually it did not refer to the actual occupation. The role of family names also gained ground in the 19th century, as a name that sounds right was often necessary for success in this field – many examples of this kind can be found in the Munk family.

The study of personal names raised the question: to what extent did the linguistic background of names change in the Hungarian environment? To what extent did synchronisation with the linguistic type of the family names take place? One's place of origin played an important role. Magyar names also appear in the Hungarian environment, their ratio increasing toward the end of the period. In the case of men, beside Hungarian patriotism, economic reasons played a significant role. Women also took Magyar names, however, in the impact of their social environment and the influence of fashion was more dominant.

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