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**Hungarian Jewish Families in the Modern Era
A Prosopographic Study of the Munks and Goldzihers**

Mid-Term Report
(July, 2011)

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I. Introduction

This research was launched in October last year with the support of the International Institute for Jewish Genealogy and Paul Jacobi Center. The study focuses on two Jewish families, Munk and Goldziher, who settled down in Hungary in the 18th Century and seeks to collect, organize and analyze the related data in the course of more than two centuries.

The reason for the choice of the subject is that the case study of the two families has a potential to exploit a research area which has not been given attention in Hungary so far. The collection of genealogical data and the knowledge of the history of the two families holds promise for family background-based analysis and tracing a broader historical development through the case study covering several generations. On the other hand, the analysis of the genealogical data of the two families offers opportunities to carry out a comparative analysis in the area of demography, economy, society and cultural history. There are several outstanding family members in the two families, who fulfilled leading roles in the economic and cultural lives of both the Jewish community and Hungarian society. Therefore, the responses of the two family generations to expectations of the Hungarian state and society and challenges from the Jewish society merit highlighting and study.

II. Geographical, political, economic and cultural background

The legal and settlement history of the medieval Jewish population in Hungary can be summed up as follows: they lived mainly in royal free boroughs, under royal patronage as *servi camerae* ["servants of the royal chamber"]. While the stereotype identifying Jews with urban population persisted throughout the Middle Ages, this picture was far from accurate. In the modern period in Hungary, as a consequence of the policies of monarchs supporting cities, the medieval law of „*de non tolerandis Judaeorum*” [“the non-toleration of Jews”] was renewed, keeping Jews outside the boundaries of the city walls (despite some breaches over the entire period). For the legal status of Jews, two levels were to be distinguished: (1) on the local level, the landowners determined their fate; (2) on the countrywide (or national level) level, the monarch had jurisdiction.

As opposed to Moravia and Bohemia, the policy of the Habsburg court in Hungary was not clearly directed against Jewish settlement and residence. The monarch reserved for himself the right to determine the settlement and the residence of the Jews in the country. This also pertained in the 18th century, when he introduced a “toleration tax”. However, the era also witnessed the development of a more ramified system of mutually dependent relations in comparison with the previous period. A new legal level was formed, where private individuals (aristocrats, nobles) and institutions (church, the treasury) took the responsibility for the Jewish residents and protected them. The overwhelming majority of Jews settled in villages and market-towns. From the end of the 18th century the process of urbanisation also began - meaning in the case of the Jews, a shift into cities where their presence was legally recognized. The central Pest county and, within it, Buda and Pest (later combined as Budapest), became the economic and cultural centers of the country and from 1840, the restrictions that had constrained Jewish settlement in the cities were brought to an end.

At the beginning of modern period, the economic opportunities of Hungarian Jewry were limited by the restrictions that were carried over from feudal times. Jews could not live in so-called royal free cities or near mining towns. They could not lease or own land, or take on any artisan work. The guilds remained closed to them and, in addition to other limitations they were forced to pay excessive taxes. All of this further impelled Hungarian Jewry into a mercantile role, serving as economic intermediaries between the two most important segments of Hungarian society at the time – the nobility and the peasantry. The nobility itself was not ready to assume a commercial role as trade was considered irreconcilable with the “Hungarian spirit”. Moreover, the mostly German burghers in the royal free cities were economically insignificant. Thus, the economic role fell largely to the Jews.

From 1840 onward Jews could move into the cities. The overall changes taking place in Hungary had their effect and hence there was a shift among Jews towards crafts and self-employment. Beyond the abolition of the residential and economic restrictions, the relationship between the increasingly bureaucratic state and the Jews became more complex within the Habsburg Empire. The state undertook to extend its influence to domains that had earlier been under communal authority, such as education. Jewish emancipation (1867), the so-called Reception (1894) that recognized Judaism as an equal with other religions in Hungary, the development of Hungarian society, the process of Magyarization, the economic opportunities – all influenced the individual Jew’s choices.

Those Jews who settled in Hungary in this period underwent a dual acculturation process. From the end of the eighteenth century, German acculturation took place and from the mid-nineteenth century Hungarian Jewry increasingly identified with the Hungarians within the Habsburg Empire in terms of Magyarization, the use of Hungarian language, changing one’s name, even conversion.

However, following the First World War, the Austro-Hungarian monarchy disintegrated, and Hungary lost a significant part of its territory and population. The previously multiethnic country emerged as a quasi-homogeneous state. The war-related losses, events following the war and the economic crisis that followed it brought changes in the relationship between Hungarian Jewry and Hungarian society. The growing Christian middle-class now adopted a hostile view of the “disproportionate” presence of Jews in economy and culture. This was pronounced in the legal sphere with, for example, in 1920 the adoption of a *numerus clausus* law [a quota system for Jews in the universities and elsewhere]. Although the situation of Jewish community gradually stabilized and in some ways improved under Prime Minister István Bethlen (1921-1931), from the mid-1930s there was another sharply antisemitic turn in official policies and public opinion, influenced in part by developments in Nazi Germany. The First Jewish Law (1938) limited to 20 percent the ratio of Jews in the free professions, in administrative positions in the civil service and as employees of commercial and industrial companies. The Second Jewish Law (1939) defined Jewish on a racial basis and further limited the economic activities of those considered Jews.

In it against this complex and rapidly evolving background that the two families at the centre of this study – the Munks and the Goldhizers - have been studied. It should be noted that they settled in market towns at the beginning of the period and moved on, in their various ways, from there.

III. Challenges within Jewish community

Reforming ideas and modernity brought a new challenge to traditional society. People related differently to the present and the future and therefore, also, to the past. In the era of modernization, traditional society had to deal with issues of individual self-determination and

their relationship to the community. The Orthodox-Neologue hostilities were part of everyday life from the fifth decade of the nineteenth century. After the 1867-1868 Congress, the split occurred between the two camps. Jewish society was now divided into two separate groups, with one solely turned toward the Hungarian state and willing to assimilate, while the other remained strictly traditionalist though not necessarily rejecting all change. (Avraham Munk is a good example: he expressed his loyalty to Orthodoxy repeatedly but did not reject general culture and mastered German and Hungarian.) At the turn of the century, the two streams of Hungarian Jewry finally found a common cause: both Neologs and Orthodox condemned the Zionist movement which enjoyed but modest success in Hungary.

IV. Work done to date (June, 2011)

a) *Data collection*

The first step in the research was to find source materials related to the families. For both families, it was highly instrumental that the family members felt it significant to collect family data in the 1930s. Bernát Munkácsi produced *Munk Family Genealogy* (1939), and Sándor Büchler, from the Hungarian branch of the Goldziher family published data in the periodical "Múlt és Jövő" (1937-1938). These served as the starting point to explore for further data. In the first months of the research more genealogical data was collected about the two families, enabling the correction of already existing data. Completely new information was searched for, focusing initially on primary sources. A rich pool of resources was found in the document file of Hungarian State (MOL) and Country archives (registration, certificates, administrative documents (birth, marriage and death certificates), to which autobiographical data, correspondences, recollections of contemporaries, grave inscriptions were added.:

i. Birth and marriage records:

Beginning in 1788, Jews were required to keep records of births, marriages and deaths. Most Jewish communities did not actually start keeping records until the practice was again codified into law in 1840. However, the Jewish communities of Buda and Pest started keeping records from 1760. The databases allow kinship to be established. On basis of *Munk Family Genealogy* it became clear that Esther Felsenburg was born in Nagytapolcsány (Nyitra County). She was married to a Sailer, but his given name was unknown. Esther Felsenburg moved to Pest, and her firstborn son name was Manó. The examination of marriage records yields the following outcomes:

Groom/Bride	Groom's father, mother, Bride's father, mother	Groom Age, Bride Age	Marriage Date, Town, County	Comments
Sailer Manó	Lipót/Eszter Netty (Felsenburg)	25	1876	
Haas Mária	Ignác/Roza (Taube)	22	Pest, Pest County	

Upon the analysis of available information it may be concluded that the Sailer family head was Lipót. His wife was Eszter Felsenburg, and their firstborn son name was Manó. Thereafter, the research focused on birth records to trace children of Lipót Sailer and Esther Felsenburg:

Name	Date of Birth	Father	Town Registered / Record #	Town Born	Comment
	Sex	Mother	Jaras		
			Megye		
Sailer Zseni	? F	Lipót Sailer Felsenburg Esther	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Manó	1851 M	Lipót Sailer Felsenburg Esther	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Száli	1861 F	Lipót Sailer Felsenburg Esther	Pest	Pest	

In addition, the database also contains name of children of Manó Sailer and Mária Haas:

Name	Date of Birth	Father	Town Registered / Record #	Town Born	Comment
	Sex	Mother	Jaras		
			Megye		
Sailer Ignacz	1876 M	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Vilmos	1880 M	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	Died 1882
Sailer Armin	1882 M	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Szerén	1878 F	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Ilona	1887 F	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Janka	1889 F	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	Died 1890
Sailer Hermina	1891 F	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	
Sailer Jenő	1893 M	Sailer Manó Haas Mária	Pest	Pest	

Sometimes the records also contain the family members' occupation. The examination of birth, marriage (and death) records allowed to collect new informations.

ii. Autobiographical data:

Autobiographical data also allows to explore new genealogical information about the family. Avraham Meir (later Adolf Munk) was the first put the Munk family history to paper: *Sipurei Korot Hayyay*. He writes in his memoirs about cases of infant mortality – this is very important notes, because the census did not take into account those children who had died.

iii. Newspaper articles:

Newspaper articles published during this period also proved essential as they provided information either about family members or they were written by family members, introducing themselves and their professions. Both families are characterized by mobility (within the country and beyond borders as well). The branches of families settled in various regions:

- a. Munk family: Oberland (Nyitra, Nagytapolcsány), Small–Burgenland (Nagykanizsa), Center (Buda, Pest, Balassagyarmat), Southern (Szentes), Eastern (Nagyvárad).
- b. Goldziher family: Burgenland (Köpcsény), Oberland (Pozsony), Center (parts of Budapest, Székesfehérvár), Southern (Temesvár).

The local newspapers provided information about family members: *Szentesi Lapok* (1878. 10. p.) reports that Adolf Felsenburg was an outstanding teacher. His reputation grew among Jewish and Catholic teachers. He organized the Jewish school system in Szentes.

iv. Secondary resources:

Finally, the significance of secondary resources has to be mentioned. Certain monographs or studies describing the life of communities often provided fuller and more precise details about the life and activity of individual family members. (Harsányi László, *Szentesi hitközség története*; Várad Lajos, *A várad zsidóság története*).

Based on all the above mentioned, genealogical data for 1760 individuals in the Munk family and about 320 data in the Goldziher family will become accessible. (Naturally, as a result of further research, stillmore data are expected to come to light.)

b) *Analysis*

The second step was the systematization of the data. Existing genealogical data were specified and outlined the research areas lending themselves to in-depth analysis. The information collected confirmed that the histories of the two families were suitable for reconstruction and also for demographic, economic and cultural interpretation.

In the last weeks, special attention has been paid to drawing up the first main chapter. Besides the introduction of family biography, it focuses on the prosopographic reconstruction of demography (family size, infant mortality, lifetime, age and marriage), based on all the currently available genealogical and other data.

The brief outline of families' biography:

- a. The Goldziher family had lived in Hamburg until the beginning of eighteenth century when it entered northern Hungary (Köpcsény - now Kittsee, Austria). The founder of the Goldziher family, Moses, was born in Hamburg in 1710. Having succeeded as a merchant, he brought his family to Köpcsény in 1735. His sons also were merchants. Members of the families did not long remain in the market town. Later on, when there were no legal restriction, the generations also saw a pronounced increase in practitioners of professions requiring higher education. A few outstanding family members were: Ignac Goldziher – scholar, Kornfeld Zsigmond – financier, Izsó dr. Ferenczi (Fenster) – secretary of state.
- b. The Munk family had lived in Germany and the Bohemian lands until the mid-eighteenth century when it entered northern Hungary (Nyitra, now Slovakia). The Munk family's origins can be traced back to the seventeenth century. Although several of their ancestors lived in Hungary (Eisenstadt/Kismarton, Alt-Ofen/Óbuda), permanent settlement only took place during the eighteenth century. On both the family's paternal and maternal sides, they settled in the outskirts of Nyitra around 1770.

Members of the families did not long remain in that market town. The family members' employment structure not only indicates opportunities in Hungary, but more specifically in their hometowns. The numbers for the various professions manifest the families' values and education (rabbis, *dayyans*, and merchants). Often members of the family had several occupations, as Avraham Munk, an outstanding yeshiva student, later a teacher, and subsequently a certified grain merchant.

From the third generation there were no further legal restrictions on Jews; modernization had commenced in Hungarian economic life. Men's occupations showed two tendencies: while many remained in traditional professions, the changes occurring in Hungary had their effect and there was a shift toward artisan and self-employment. Two outstanding family members were: Adolf Munk; Bernáth Munkácsi – scholar.

b) The prosopographic reconstruction of demography:

On basis of geneological data of families, the research moved its focus on to a prosographic reconstruction of demography, examining the changing average number of children.

Average number of children in the Munk family

Generation	Average no. of children	No. of families
1 th	8	2
2 nd	4.13	16
3 rd	4.31	49
4 th	1.88	139
5 th	1.32	82
6 th	1	8

Average number of children in the Goldziher family

	Average no. of children	No. of families
1th	3	1
2nd	6	2
3rd	3	4
4th	3.1	7
5th	2..55	11
6th	1.7	10
7th	1.8	8

Early on, in the 18th. Century, the number of children can be considered relatively high (first, second, third generations) [i.e. the average number of children of families was higher than the average number of children of Hungarian Jewry]. In later generations, there is a marked decrease in the average number of children, although this happened earlier in the Munk family than in the Goldziher family. This underlines the difficulties in considering the census, which did not take into account those children who had died, nor those who lived outside the nuclear family.

The case study of one family can therefore clarify these issues. Thus, the significant decreases in the average values suggest that applying the “Hajnal thesis” is problematic. According to John Hajnal, pre-industrial Europe can be divided into two parts, based on the populations’ family models, by a geographical line running from Helsinki to Trieste. According to this theory, there is a West European and an East European model. The former is characterized by the small number of children and the high marital age of the parents (men after age 26, women after age 21), whereas the latter is typified by the parents’ low marital age (men before age 26, women before age 21) and their large number of children. Geographically Hungary is located in an interesting position: the imaginary Hajnal line cuts the country in two. According to the Hajnal thesis, one would find the West European model in western Hungary and the East European model in eastern Hungary. The table’s data focus on the western regions:

Average number of children in various regions

	Munk family	Goldziher family
Generation/region	Oberland	Burgenland
1th	8	3
2nd	3.91	6
3rd	3.1	3
4th	1.4	-

Based on the table's data, larger families are in the majority in the Munk family (first generation). Since the Munk families lived in Nyitra, the West European model cannot be adopted in a straightforward manner, especially because these families arrived from German and Moravian territories (meaning that the number of child should have been small). In the case of Goldziher family, the data conform with the Hajnal thesis; in the western areas

(Burgenland), the number of children is relatively small. In the case of second generation of Munk family, the Hajnal thesis fits the data: in the western areas, the number of children is relatively small (3.91). However, it was exactly during these years, around 1800, that the Oberland region could be considered the bastion of traditional values; hence one would presume the population would have more children. On other side, in Goldziher family the larger families are in the majority in Burgenland, thus the data does not support the thesis. During the next generation period the average number of children is on the decrease. Thus it apparently supports the thesis. However, deeper examination of other regions showed that the Hajnal thesis does not produce the predicted results and two clearly distinguishable models do not emerge. The number of children depended on individuals and their immediate surroundings as well as the general societal values.

The study seeks to highlight similar or contrary processes in the two generations of individuals in the two families, changes in the course of generations and to compare them against processes in a non-Jewish society. The analysis emphasizes the significance of genealogical data in performing demographic analyses.

Available data – as mentioned above – lend themselves to the prosopographic reconstruction of geographic, social, economic and occupational mobility (models of internal migration, emigration, urbanization); education and religion (Orthodox and Neolog, conversion to Christianity), cultural changes (usage of titles, such as doctoral or traditional honorifics) and acculturation (given names, family name changes, language and nationalism). This analysis will be pursued at a later stage.

V. Ongoing work

The research will now focus on the analysis of the area of geographic, social and occupational mobility. Available data provide a basis to elucidate the processes in the two families in these areas and also the tendencies which might be in line with lines characteristic of Jewish society. Conversely, the data might reveal contrary processes. For example, how dependent the presence of family members in a given location is in trade? Or, to what extent are certain family branches in close contact with each other? What are the impacts in different professions? What is their relation with the non-Jewish society? How do their social relations develop? How do all these dimensions change within single generations?

In addition to the above, the research will focus on collection of material about family members, mostly in the area of economy and culture. These are particularly significant in the light of the fact that several family members fulfilled dominant roles in the life of their communities and in Hungarian economic and cultural life. With special regard to the fact that the roles and activities of family members had significance beyond Hungarian borders, the system of relations within and outside the country might be intriguing. Hence the research work will continue to focus on collections of primary sources in national and local archives in Hungary and also in archives in Israel, in the hope of finding more precise data about family members in order to provide fuller details about their relationships between themselves and their environments.

The analysis of the above mentioned-data will provide a significant resource base in itself for gaining insights into the history of Hungarian Jewry in the period under study and also for a description of the changes in the lives and lifestyles of generations over a number of centuries.

VI. Acknowledgement

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