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*„Inside borders”\**

Jewish settlement in banned cities: Jewish immigration in Debrecen  
(Hungary) in the periods between 1790-1870

**Introduction**

Most of the free royal cities and all mining cities of Hungary banned Jewish in-settlement by 1840.

Nevertheless, in my research I was first focusing my attention to the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, because in effect the roughly 50 years preceding the settlement permits for the inner areas of the indicated cities saw several waves of Jewish immigration in Hungary. However, it was the first important stage of mutual acculturation of the above-mentioned urban societies and Jewish communities. It was a period of time that is essential for the understanding of urban settlement, the subsequent integration and the controversial processes of assimilation/dissimilation and intra-urban spatial segregation.

The closing date of our study falls on the year of 1870 because my intent was to do an extensive survey of space and society structures relying on the data of the poll taken in that year, or to be more precise on the basis of the analytic sources of the Geoinformatic Social History Database of Debrecen (GISHDD) created by the digital processing of the manuscript maps and the statistical sheets of the age in Debrecen.

My research work also examined the fundamental legal, economic and social contexts of the immigration process and draws a comprehensive picture of the specific chronological segmentation and the various aspects of the settlement process in the environs of cities starting from the 1790's and in the inhabited inner urban areas after 1840.

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As a next step I analyzed the spatial patterns of Jewish settlement in Debrecen according to the following points of views:

- Initial steps of settlement, moving in the settlements in the vicinity of the city (-1840);
- Aspects and waves of settling to the city (1840-1867);
- Housing conditions and residence segregation, neighbourhood relations, rented and owned family homes, family structure and residence patterns of Jewish families (1869/70);
- The spatial layout of the established Jewish ritual and community institutions (1840-1870).
- Comparison of Debrecen Jewish settlement case to the others in Hungarian banned cities (urban in-settlements types in Hungary)

In this presentation due to my limited timeframe I am focusing on the territory of origin and intra-urban segregation.

At the closing part of my paper I am trying to raise questions and reconsider the research methodology issues of integration, acculturation and urban residence segregation on the basis of the study based on the findings and resources of the Geoinformatic Social History Database of Debrecen (GISHDD).

### **Configuration and characteristics of Jewish settlement in Debrecen in the year 1870**

Let me emphasize again, this part of the research project is different from the other research phases both in its approach and methodology. While in the other research steps I examined the process of immigration and settlement in the city between 1790 and 1870, in this one I am presenting a study of the result of the immigration procedure in a chronological section: the reconstruction and analysis of the spatial structure of settlement within the city (intra-urban segregation).

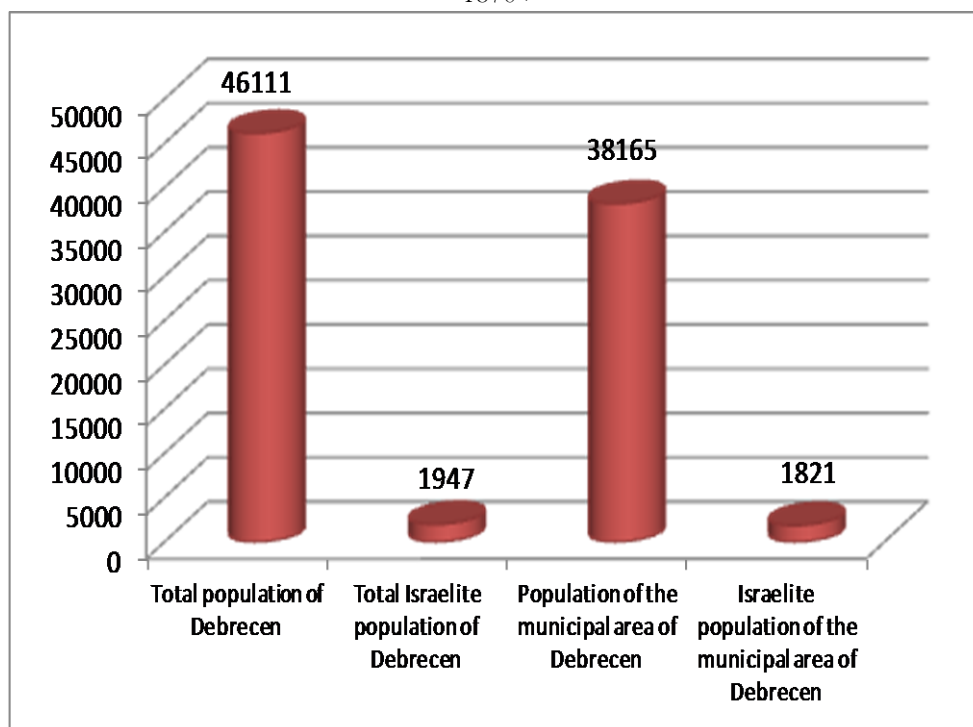
*First question: Whom this analysis is exactly about?*

The census of 1870 contained denominational data; in the course of recording only two categories were used to describe the denomination of the Jewish population (disregarding errors): „Israelite” and „follower of Moses”. Because using these two categories did not show any consistency in terms of any socio-cultural distribution (place of birth, religious background, belonging to a fraction, family size, etc.), we considered the people listed in both of these two census categories to be members of the Jewish denomination / ethnic group.

Many of the original sheets of the census, which contain data about the Jewish (an other) population, have several errors, indecipherable names and blank fields. But, by good fortune, I found two separate volumes in the broader archival material of the

1870 census: a draft of Israelite families in an alphabetical order, and a census of Israelites according to the sequence of street numbers. The two volumes made it possible to correct and piece out the often incomplete data of the original census sheets in many cases. Therefore, from a source evaluation perspective, it is the source material of the Jewish population that is the most complete and accurate within the entirety of the population of Debrecen. This also involved a correction of numbers: according to the official summary of the census the number of the Jewish inhabitants within the whole city was 1919, but according to the revised data this number is 1947, of which 1821 (93.53%) lived within the municipal area of the city, which is included in the digitized maps.

Spatial distribution of the total and the Israelite population of Debrecen in the year 1870+



+ According to the corrected data of the 1870 census, as recorded in the HDSSSD

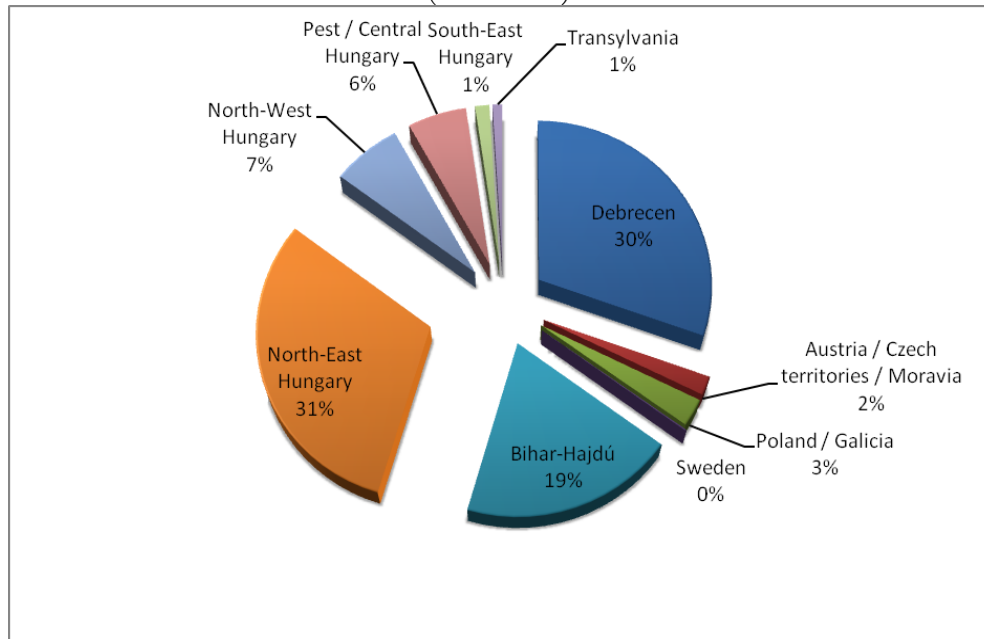
*Second question: Where did they come from? What was the catchment area of the Debrecen-bound Jewish settlement*

The census of 1870 contained a column for recording birth data as well. Birth information that was recorded for each person was an important identifying aspect in determining the originating territories of immigration, however, it did not in itself provide an indication regarding the intermediary points of migration, where the

individual may have resided for a much longer period of time on occasion. This obstacle, however, can be overcome by carrying out a unique study of families after the analysis of individuals. The interim stations of migration to Debrecen – the names of places and the time spent at these locations – can be discovered by examining the birthplaces of the children. Owing to size limitations, from among the aforementioned analyses only the examples considered to be characteristic will be featured.

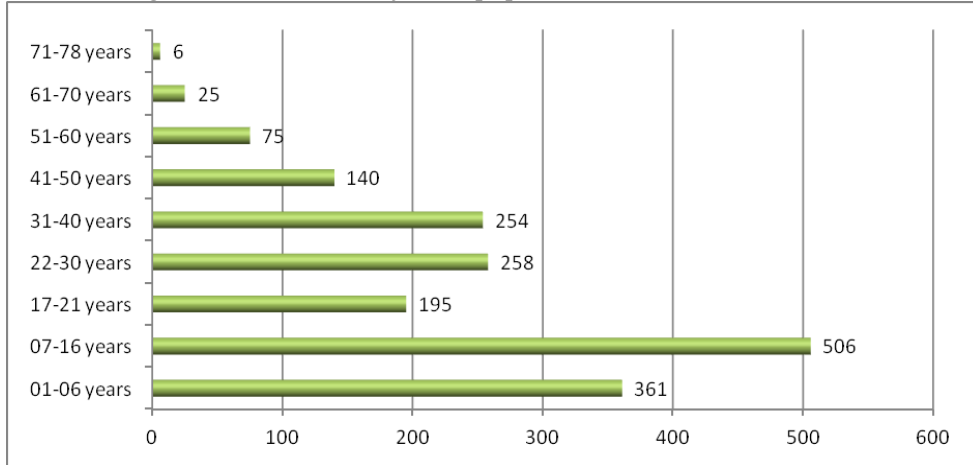
With the help of a bit complicated identification procedures we managed to identify the birthplace of 1808 of the 1821 Israelite inhabitants of the municipal area of Debrecen as per the 1870 census, categorized at least by country / region. The birthplace of only 13 people (0.7%) remained a mystery. In our further calculations within this field of study the 1808 Jewish inhabitants, the birthplaces of whom were identified, will be regarded as 100%.

Distribution of the Jewish population of Debrecen according to birthplace, 1870  
(rounded %)



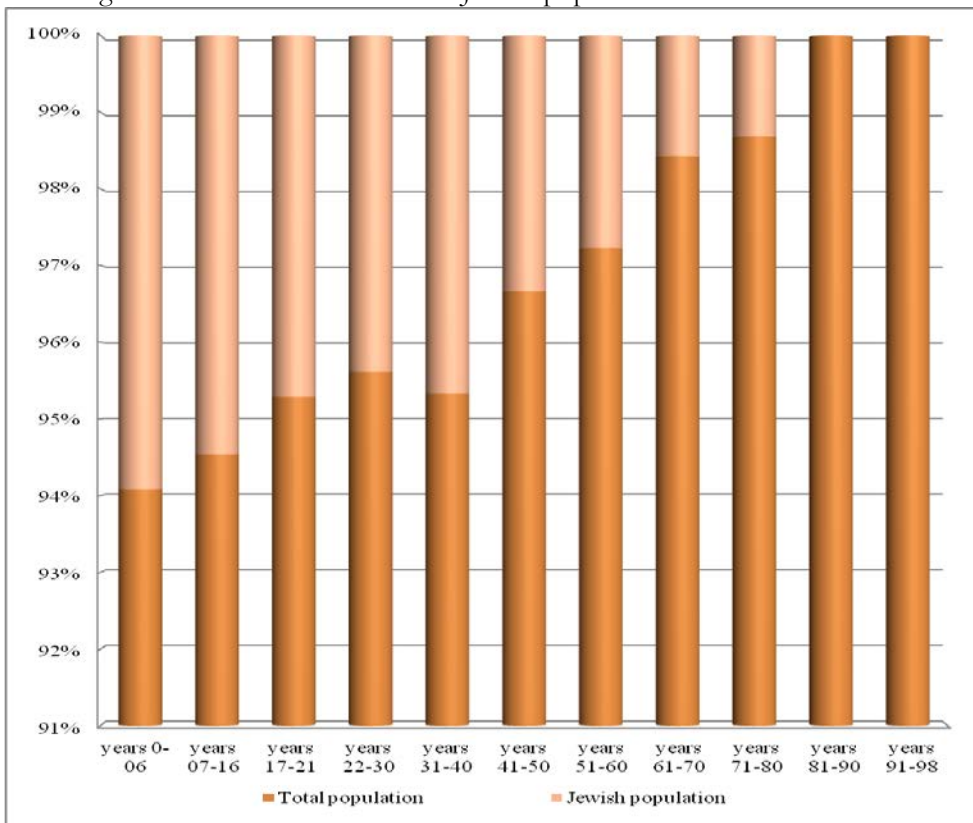
The first salient feature is that three decades after the official authorization of immigration almost one third of the Jewish population of Debrecen (522 people, 30.5%) named Debrecen as their birthplace. This can be mostly attributed to the age distribution of the Jewish population of Debrecen: the average age of the 1821 inhabitants was 8.3 years, and it was the youngest age groups that were the most populous; almost three quarters of the Jewish inhabitants of Debrecen were under 30 years of age (1320 people, 72.5%).

Age distribution of the Jewish population of Debrecen in 1870+



+ Municipal area; the age groups were created in accordance with the requirements of calculations concerning schooling.

Age distribution of the Total and Jewish population of Debrecen in 1870



Another obvious conclusion can be drawn from the birth data, namely, that only an insignificant fraction of the Jews who settled in the city (88 persons, 4.6%) were born abroad: 33 persons came from Austria and the Czech and Moravian territories of the Empire, 48 named Poland (20) or Galicia (28) as their place of birth, and 2 persons came from Sweden. The latter were apprentice cabinet-makers.

The third important finding is that 225 people (12.2%) who settled in Debrecen were born in the western part of the country, "Oberland". Only 42 persons (2.38%) came from Transylvania and South-Eastern Hungary.

Consequently – and this is the fourth conclusion of this analysis – the vast majority (555 persons, 30.7%) of Jews born outside Debrecen came to the city from the counties of North-Eastern Hungary, while 352 people (19.5%) arrived from the of Bihar and Hajdú that surround the city directly. From among the latter the largest group (175 persons, 9.7%) was that of the people from Sámson, an "obliged suburb" with a peculiar immigration policy.

Summarizing this section: The birth data of the Jewish population that settled in the city prove it unequivocally, that together with the following generation that was born in Debrecen, it is the Jewish people originating from the „Unterland” that gave the dominant proportion of the Jewish population of Debrecen. It was also them who played the most important role in determining the traditions and cultural-religious affiliations of the Jewish population of the city. The „Oberland” connection (mostly Pest and Pozsony/Bratislava), which was a determining factor in the commerce of the city at the turn of the 18th-19th century, was still important at the time, but its significance had diminished. It was also verified that the Jewish immigration wave from Poland and Galicia did not arrive at the same time as the first generation. It was also confirmed that the majority of the second generation „Unterland” Jews, who were born in the Northeastern part of Hungary as of the 1820's, settled in Debrecen in the following wave of immigration. The rest of this group settled in the areas surrounding the city first, and moved into Debrecen in a subsequent wave of settlement; they were the next generation of settlers.

(Interpreting and refining the results of a macro structure data analysis, which is based on individuals, but is aggregating at the same time, is only possible with the help of the method of case studies per family. This approach is suitable for revealing the territorial aspects of choosing a spouse in the case of Jewish families, as well as the finer details of the migration routes that lead to the final destination of settlement. The study of the latter is based on the birth date and birthplace of the children. However, owing to the multitude of cases included in the HDSSSD, even a schematic presentation of the results of such an approach would be impossible within the frame of this essay.)

*Intra-urban segregation of the Jewish population of Debrecen*

Our third question: What were the specifics of the spatial distribution and residential segregation (intra-urban segregation) of the Jewish population of Debrecen?

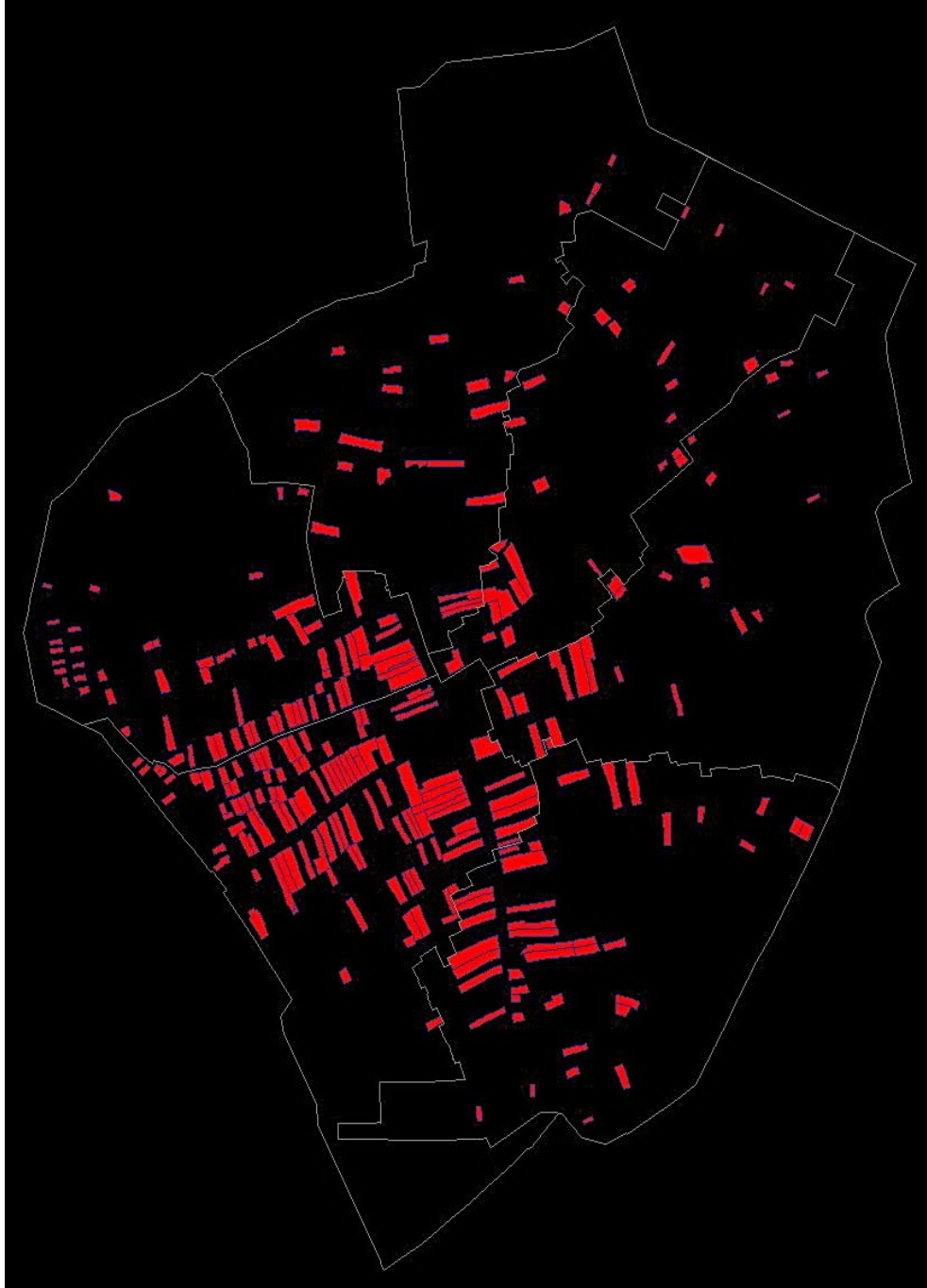
Our objective when retrieving data from the HDSSSD was to verify, disprove, or refine our conclusions derived from the analysis of the discrete data lines of the settlement process, using the analysis of the situation in the year 1870.

Our first research was the pilot run of the GIS system at the same time, a test of its functions, since we hoped for a deeper level approach than the district segregation index, an indicator used most frequently in residential segregation studies. In the course of this first query we asked the question: where, on which parcels of the city did the Jewish families live?

There were two ways of answering that question. The first answer that was given to a list retrieval contained the identification number of parcels and an accurate list of house numbers: the 1821 Jewish inhabitants of Debrecen lived in houses located on 290 parcels within the municipal area of the city, which constituted 7.8% of the 3699 parcels situated within the municipal area of Debrecen. The number of Jewish families / households (in which the head of the family / household, recorded under number 1, belonged to the Israelite denomination) was 340. From among these families / households 29 had female heads, according to the census. To a first approximation, in addition to the 340 Jewish households we could identify 29 more, where the head of the family was not Israelite, but one or more Jewish employees, servants, or perhaps guests worked or lived within the household of the non-Jewish head. But the number of Jewish households where at least one Christian employee worked was more than two dozens as well. An average Jewish household consisted of 5-6 people, but households of 9-11 were not rare either. At the other end of the spectrum, in the course of carrying out the analysis, we found a dozen or so unipersonal Jewish households, or households consisting of only a married couple.

The other result of the query was the spatial information based, 'dgn' format mapping of the territorial distribution of Jewish households broken down to parcels. We got the following city map:

Jewish population per populated parcels (290) in Debrecen in 1870  
(indicating the border of the municipal area and the districts)



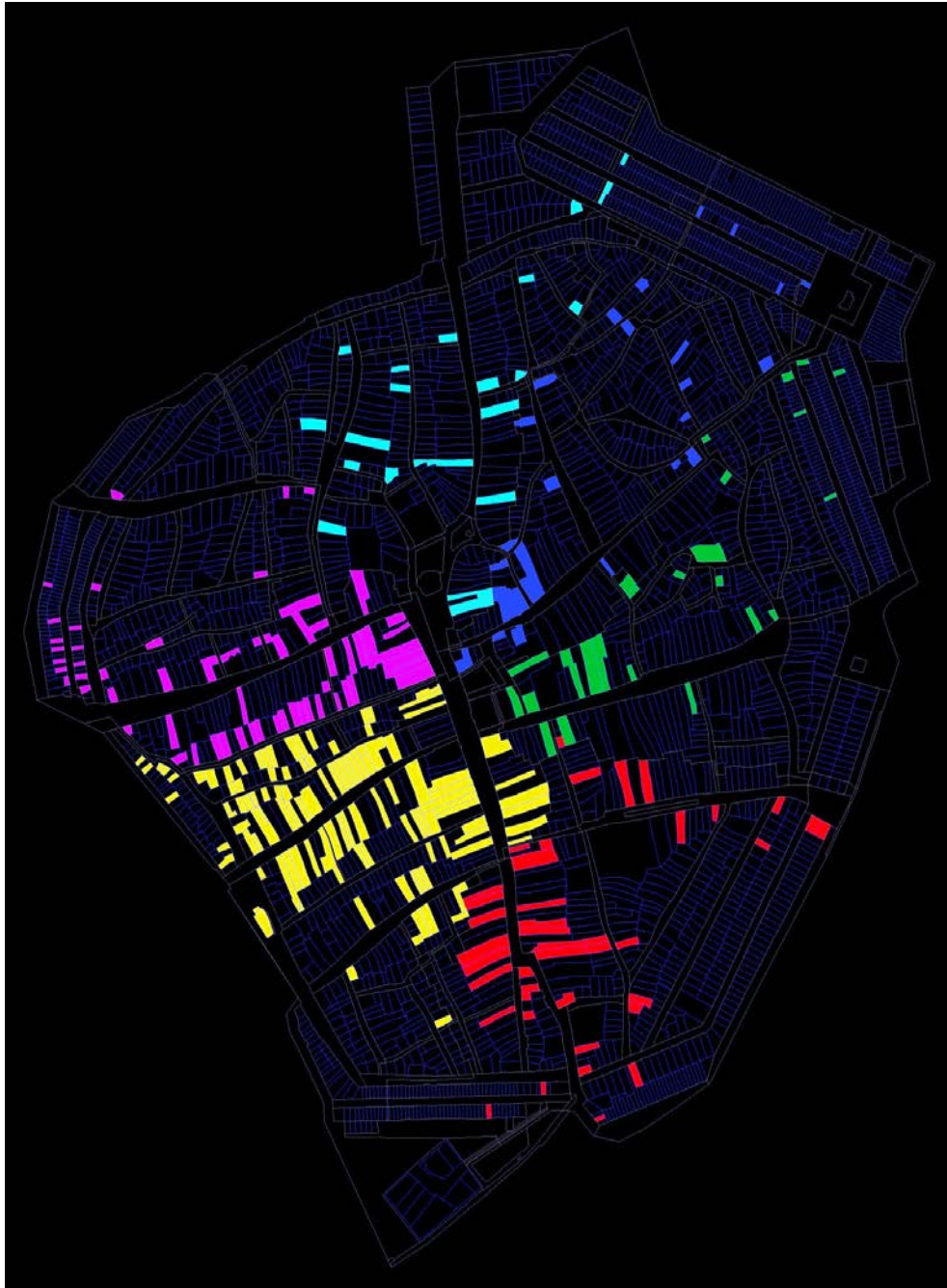
Jewish population per populated parcels (290) in Debrecen in 1870  
(indicating streets and the borders of residential blocks)



Jewish population per populated parcels (290) in Debrecen in 1870  
(indicating streets, as well as the borders of residential blocks and parcels)



Jewish population per populated parcels (290) in Debrecen in 1870  
(indicating streets, as well as the borders of residential blocks and parcels, using  
different colors by district)



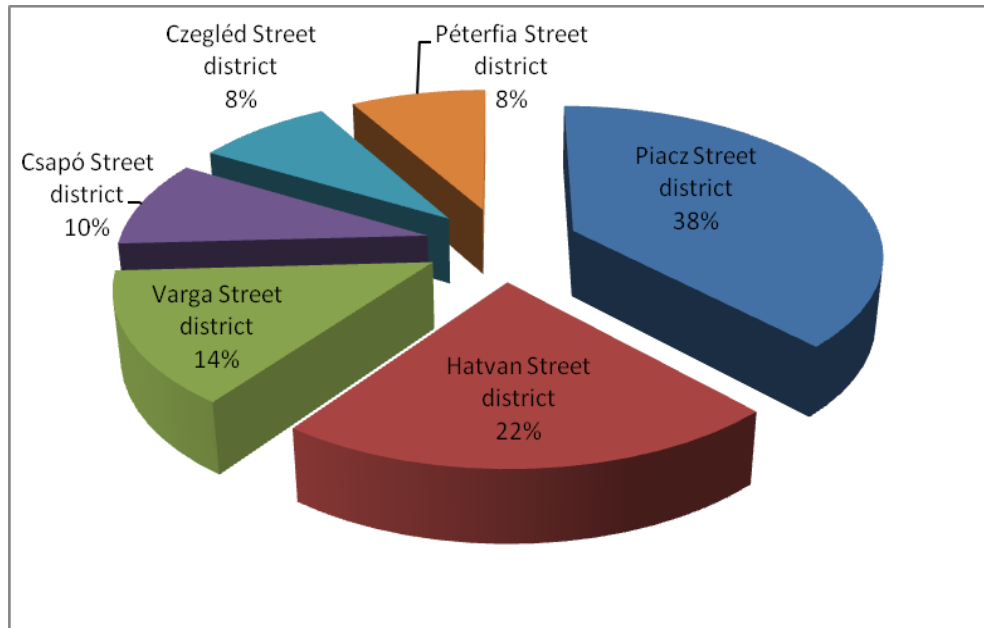
What we could already partially derive from sources associated with certain aspects of the settlement process, became apparent from the primary analysis based on the aforementioned queries:

As there was no such external force, as far as the Jewish community of Debrecen was concerned, selecting the location of a residence did not lead to living together in a closed block; no ghetto-like residential area was formed. The majority of Jews who settled in Debrecen lived in the Piacz and Hatvan Street districts (174 parcels), a relatively large number of properties were located in the Varga Street district (41 parcels), whereas in each of the other three districts there were two dozen properties inhabited by Jewish families.

However, it was obvious, that it did not make sense to carry out further research by districts, because the spatial distribution of Jewish settlement did not follow the logic of the historically formed districts. Therefore, the nuclei of domiciliation within the districts, and the locality of aggregation along the borders of the districts would have been obscured by calculating the district segregation index, rather than revealed and refined. For example, one side of Nagy Új Street, a street preferred by many of the settlers, belonged to the Hatvan Street district, while the other side belonged to the Piacz Street district. And the majority of the parcels inhabited by Jewish settlers, which were located on both sides of Piacz Street (the street, not the district), belonged to three districts. Thus it was more reasonable to continue refining the results via querying by street.

Number and proportion (%) of parcels inhabited by Jewish families in Debrecen, per district, in 1870

Piacz Street district	110
Hatvan Street district	64
Varga Street district	41
Csapó Street district	27
Czegléd Street district	24
Péterfia Street district	24



It was due to the street query that one of the representable nuclei of settlement became apparent: almost 40% of the parcels inhabited by Jews were located in six streets.

Piacz Street, the main street of the city, was outstanding among these streets in every respect. This area was the target of the wealthier Jewish business people in the first wave of settlement in the municipal area of the city after 1840 as well, because the residences of the buildings located in this street had a relatively high comfort level, furthermore, renting workshops and industrial buildings built in the yards, and shops that front the street was attractive, even in spite of the high rental prices, due to the central position of these properties, and the shopping customs of local residents that favored the main street.

The main street remained an important target area for the wealthiest Jewish families, who considered social prestige and local business aspects alike, even in the 1860's. According to the census of 1870, domiciles and business units were rented by Jewish settlers in 27 properties located in Piacz Street.

Another four streets, Kis Street, Nagy Új Street, Hatvan Street and Széchenyi Street had similar characteristics, and also formed a part of the Jewish domiciliation aggregate with 75 parcels in total. Vendég Street and Pesti Row, which belonged to the periphery of the city earlier, but were included in the municipal area after the city hoardings were destroyed in 1862, also became popular among the Jewish settlers for the same reasons.

This residential area, the area between the city center and the former western city gates, was the one that was spatially connected to Külső Vásártér, the venue where the great trade fairs of Debrecen took place. Külső Vásártér played a dominant role in Jewish settlement earlier. It was the property owners of this residential area with whom personal and business relationships were developed in order to ensure goods storage and accommodation for the time of the trade fairs. It can also be ascertained that housing solutions outside the city hoardings, to which Jews resorted at the time when municipal territories were prohibited, had only a limited potential to retain tenants, owing to the low prestige of the „hóstát” (western peripheral) area, the minor role it played in the commerce of the city, as well as the small size of parcels, and the limited number of domiciles, and limited living space. Jewish families considered initial accommodation solutions in the urban periphery to be only a „bridge-head”; those who could afford it would choose a domicile closer to the city center.

Although it was not typical either in the first waves of settlement, or in later periods, that a closed residential block or a kind of ghetto would be formed, a strong tendency for agglomeration manifested itself in certain well-definable parts of the residential area of the above-mentioned four streets as early as in 1870. Not only was it customary to settle in the same streets; it was also a dominant trend to rent dwellings on adjacent parcels when selecting a domicile. It was also partly this area where a few dozen Jewish families purchased properties with houses. This is probably why this part became a characteristic and emblematic Jewish residential area as far as the public opinion in the city was concerned. This view of the place has survived until this day.

In other districts and residential areas of the city Jewish settlement was relatively evenly dispersed. What was also observable regarding the spatial distribution of domicile selection is that at the peripheries of the municipal area, where the slums of the cotters lay, the presence of Jewish population was rather sparse, with the exception of Pesti Row and Vendég Street.

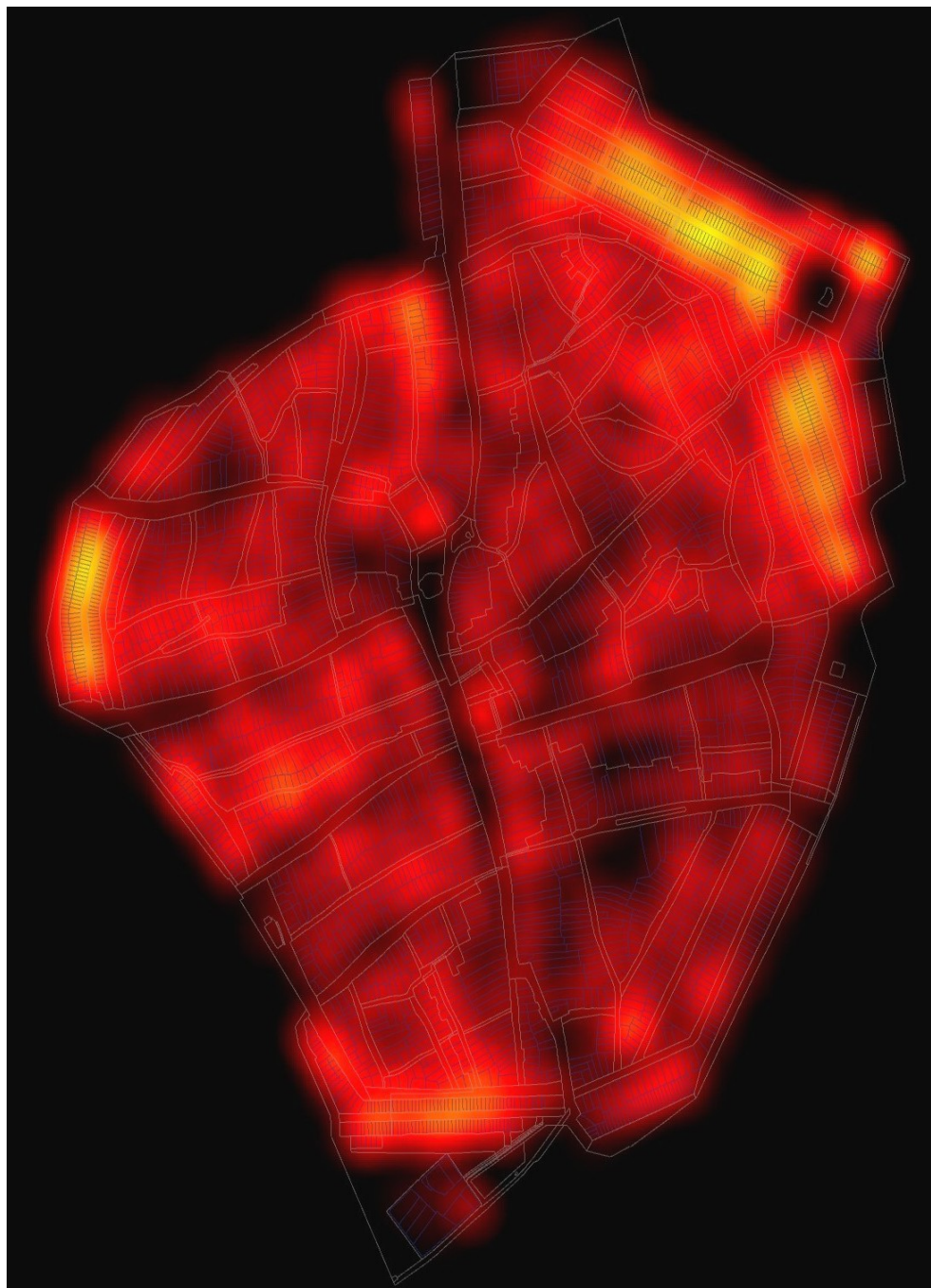
The query, the results of which have been sketchily summarized above, provided answers to the parcel-level spatial localization of the selected domicile. Therefore, in order to be able to answer the remaining question „how many of the given population lived on an identified parcel or a given residential territory”, we implemented a solution in the query function of the GIS based database to measure population density / residential density as well.

Let us display residential density in a graphic 'dgn' format.

Density of the Jewish population in Debrecen, in 1870



Density of the total population within the municipal area of Debrecen, in 1870



The density analysis of the Jewish population of Debrecen confirms the findings of the analysis of inhabited parcels regarding the western residential zone of the city that was adjacent to Külső Vásártér, the city center, and the spatial network characteristics. Beside verifying the earlier diagnoses, it also became apparent that the collective memory of the city recorded the residential area between Széchenyi Street and Hatvan Street as the emblematic block / neighborhood of Jewish settlement accurately. The basis of that ascertainment was probably an empirical perception of residential density. As a new result of the density analysis smaller residential areas, neighborhoods were discovered, for example in the middle section of Kis Új Street, and the section of the street which lies the farthest from the city center. At this level of analysis we did not find any reason for the outstandingly high residential density of these areas. The further individual analysis of Jewish families / households settled in Debrecen may provide an explanation for that.

If we compare the residential density of the Jewish population to the residential density of the whole population, we can further refine our fundamental statements. In the case of the whole population one of the determining characteristics of residential density had arisen from the discharge of the tension caused by living within the confines of the municipal area: with its small parcels the newly apportioned, low prestige residential area clinging to the edge of the municipal area proved to be a kind of urban receptacle. A similar, or perhaps greater number of inhabitants on the small parcels lead to an almost unbearable residential density, as compared to other residential areas. The difference between the residential density of the „hóstát” (western peripheral area) and that of the parcels of the main street, Szent Anna Street and Csapó Street, which had huge backyards and inner parks, was especially outstanding. This polarization, which was present in population density, and at the same time in the quality of life as well, was not even compensated by the fact that after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867 the pace of parcel apportionment increased in the aforementioned areas of the city center as well, and the number of inhabitants on the new residential parcels, that were created from the partitioned yards, grew rapidly.

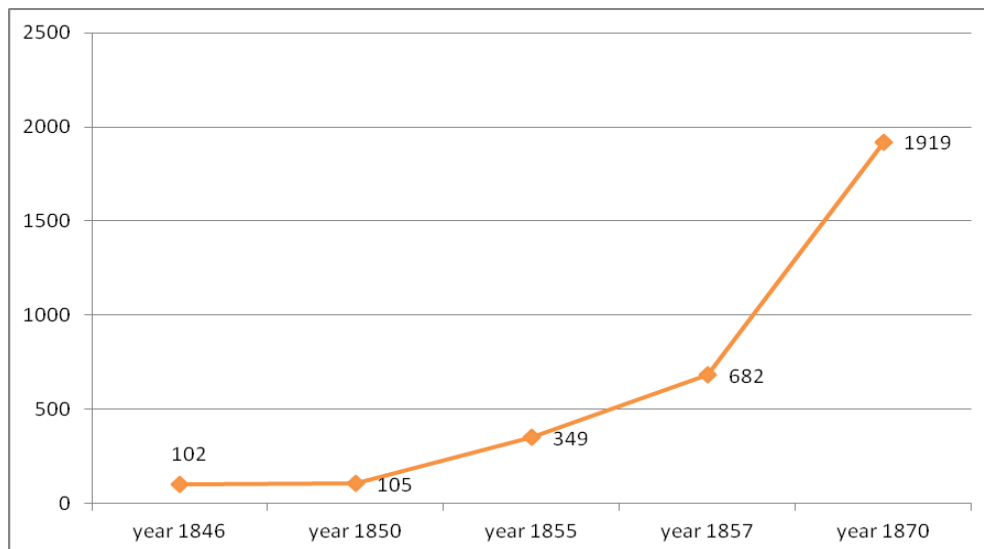
Naturally, the macro structure / city level overview of the spatial distribution of the Jewish population of Debrecen does not in itself provide a sufficient base for the interpretation of the complicated processes of acculturation – assimilation – integration. However, a few conclusions and statements can be based on the knowledge of featured examples of the settlement process that had started in 1790, as well as of the intermediate/*mezzo*, and micro level material:

- In the half century before 1840 the citizens of Debrecen got acquainted with the Jewish people as wholesale traders, market tradesmen, leasers, peddlers and their family members and servants, employed in direct community consumption and regional level trade fairs. While the citizens and the elite leadership of the city were protecting their class privileges, their interests concerning the parcel system, free royal city rights, seigniorage, as well as community interests related to municipal assets, they also experienced co-operation with Jewish merchants, businesspeople, family members and

servants of diverse family, cultural and financial backgrounds through conflicts, and various other ways. The characteristic residential structure containing temporary (in the time of trade fairs) and permanent patterns of Jewish settlement was a result of this process. The residential structure comprised the network of settlements surrounding Debrecen, Hajdúsámson, a village that assumed the special role of suburb, and as an innermost ring, the inns in the peripheral area, as well as peripheral streets in the vicinity of the Vásártér (Marketplace), adjacent to the western side of the city hoardings.

- After Act 29 of 1840 it was not typical of the first wave of Jewish settlement that the Jewish settlers would choose to live in a tight, closed neighborhood either because of any external pressure, fear, or municipal regulations, or because they only got permission to rent domiciles in a low-prestige, marginal part of the municipal area. Therefore, no ghetto was formed. On the contrary, by the end of the decade after 1840 the twenty families that gained permission to settle, and formed the first wave of Jewish settlement, belonged to the wealthiest stratum of society that played an important role in the commerce of the city. The majority of these families rented domiciles in the high-prestige residential areas of the municipal area together with their employees, from property owners who belonged to the elite of „civis” society.
- Because the Act of 1840 allowing Jewish settlement did not make it automatically possible for the Jewish inhabitants to acquire properties, the imperial decree of February 18, 1860, and the provisions of the Palatine Conference of October 1860, which made it possible to purchase real estate regardless of denomination, rendered Jewish settlement more dynamic.

Trend of the Jewish in-settlement 1840-1870, Debrecen



- After 1860 the limited ability of the competitors to purchase properties was no longer an advantage for the „original” citizens of Debrecen; and through property acquisition the doors of the previously closed spheres of the economic and social structure of the city were opened up for the settlers. The tendencies of the period after 1863 were favorable for both the hosts and the settlers: in an atmosphere of political consolidation, the abolishment of market restrictions, equal rights for citizens, and the market boom that escalated into wild-cat operations, competition seemed to be less and less risky, while co-operation promised to be more and more fruitful. In this period of prosperity, up until the recession of 1873, the role of Debrecen as a regional market center made the city appear as the Promised Land. Hence the active presence of Jews in the life of the city seemed to be beneficial even for the more reserved citizens of Debrecen, who were leading a simple life. Not only could they benefit from a wide choice of products and low prices provided by peddlers; but also even the less wealthy property owners could enjoy an ever-increasing income from letting houses. The behavior of the inhabitants of the city was less and less affected by reserve towards foreigners, fear of competition, or different kinds of prejudice.
- The analysis of intra-urban residential choices based on real estate purchases also shows that the Jewish settlers, who became property owners, had the same considerations as the first wave of settlers and real estate buyers: busy areas of the city center, as well as high social prestige were the most important aspects of selecting properties. Furthermore, existing business relationships between the buyers and the sellers, joint transactions, even previous letting of shops, warehouses or high prestige domiciles can be identified in the background of property purchases in most cases.
- The gradually emerging co-operation between the elite of the Jewish settlers and the resident „civis” elite was demonstrated not only by the similar property acquisition patterns in high-prestige residential areas of the city, but also by the fact that the traditionally most influential institutions and societies of Debrecen that owned properties (the Reformed Church, the Reformed College, or the butchers’ guild), and even the most influential families let the homes and business units on their properties to Jewish business people willingly. It cannot be considered a coincidence, that the similarity that was present in residence choices, and the emerging co-operation between the host and settler elite manifested themselves even at the level of local governance, preferential suffrage, mutual business enterprises, or even in the board membership of local sports clubs before long.
- The different ways of intra-urban and district segregation in Debrecen which are present at the level of neighborhood (meaning a larger homogeneous residential area), at the level of neighboring parcels / buildings (meaning adjacent parcels or buildings), and in the cohabitation of settlers and hosts, make it worthwhile to create new terminology. Owing to the specific parcel

system of the city, the vast majority of settlers rented domiciles in one of the properties of local „cívís” owners; henceforth, a parcel or house which the Jewish tenants did not share with a Christian owner and/or other Christian tenants was a rarity. It was also a common case where Jewish and Christian persons lived in the same household (cohabitation) in different ways: Christian employee with a Jewish family, or vice-versa.

Only a few examples can be presented here to demonstrate that numerous patterns and versions of Judeo-Christian cohabitation were formed in Debrecen by 1870:

- At the time of the census the Jewish synagogue employed Mihány Bagoly, a Calvinist cemetery guard, as the caretaker of the Israelite cemetery, which was established in 1840 and was much debated because of its stone walls. Mihány Bagoly and his three family members lived in the janitor house of the Israelite cemetery.
- In one of the apartments (listed under number 1) of the house owned by Miksa Áron, a 36-year old, Debrecen-born Israelite merchant (the son of Ábrahám Áron, one of the wealthiest leasers) the following persons were listed by the census: Miksa Áron, Mátyás Fürts, Israelite business partner and his wife and son, a Jewish servant, a Jewish law student, a distant relative, a Calvinist coachman, a Calvinist maid, and a Roman Catholic cook from Szepes County. The house was situated at 2545 Szent Anna Street, had 9 rooms and additional business premises.
- After several previous attempts, the worship place and school of the local Jewish community was established by Ignác Sichermann, a merchant, in a rented property at 2543 Szent Anna Street. One of the four bedroom apartments of the house (the one listed under number 1) was inhabited by Mór Rott, a parish principal, together with 8 family members, a Calvinist janitor, and a Calvinist cook. Two other persons, a 45-year old woman and her daughter, were also listed in the same apartment as strangers, without any further data. Leopold Silberstein, an Israelite tenant born in Miskolc, requested and was granted the permission to establish a ritual bath at the rear front of the parcel. He lived in the bath building, listed as domicile No 2, with his wife and two children.



From both points of view Jewish settlement seems to be a process of conforming based on mutual learning processes (acculturation), and a mutual quest based on cohabitation among other things, to reach partly known, but mostly unknown goals of industrialization. The mental image, strategies, aspirations for modernization and traditionalism/orthodoxy of either community did not mean that these groups were against progress or were antagonistic towards foreigners; instead, it meant that these communities were in search of a way to modernize without losing community traditions and interests, and retaining / improving their position, as well as a means to co-operate in the hope of success. It was the fears, customs and the ever more frequent cases of understanding or common activities of both communities that were the foundations of a successful urbanization of Debrecen at the turn of the century. (It is not a coincidence that László Gonda, the monographer of the Jewish community of Debrecen, called the next period, which was based on the trends before 1870, the „generation of emancipation”, and the period at the turn of the century and the beginning of the following century the „golden age of the synagogue”.)

If it is possible to interpret the narrative, according to which the 19th century Debrecen can be considered as a kind of ideal for embourgeoisement in Hungary, in my opinion it can be considered an ideal only in a sense of embourgeoisement based on Judeo-Christian coexistence and co-operation. Even if this process was full of friction and disputes even at its tide within the cohabitant communities (orthodox versus neologism versus status quo, conservative versus liberal versus traditionalist).

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