

Summary

This book is devoted to the analysis of the development of Jewish community in Bratislava, the free royal town during the reign of Wladyslaw II and his son Lewis II of Jagiellon dynasty in the years 1490-1526. The position of Jewish inhabitants in Hungarian Kingdom was anchored in King Bela's IV Privilege of 1251. According to this Privilege the Jews were serfs under royal jurisdiction. The Jews and Christians living in Bratislava, the free royal town from the year 1291, were made equal by the King Adrew III. Mathias Corvinus, the predecessor of Jagiellons, established the institution of Jewish prefect as the top clerk responsible for religious minorities in Hungary. His Privilege – the Golden Bull of the year 1464 appointed Jews with various duties in defending the city, they were also given the right to repeal against the municipal council's decisions to the chancellor. The magistrate and the municipal council were appointed the legal power over the Jews.

800-900 members of Bratislava Jewish community during the reign of Wladyslaw II Jagiellon in the years 1490-1516 were integrated into the social-economic structure of this free royal town. The king was involved in the solution of the problems which occurred among the citizens and the Jews. The main disputes between the Christians and Jewish creditors occurred when Jewish creditors claimed the unpaid loans and interests. The pre-paid loans were very often guaranteed by houses, fields and vineyards.

The Jewish inhabitants were subordinated directly to Hungarian king's jurisdiction. Jakub Mendel, the prefect of Buda members of Mosaic confession, was the highest representative of Jews in Hungarian Empire. He was responsible for keeping Jewish rights, the collection of Jewish taxes (50 golds) was under his control too, and the King authorized him to solve the problems and disputes among the Jews and Bratislava citizens.

We do not know where the then Jewish cemetery was situated. We do not know how the then synagogue and Jewish school in Bratislava looked like, but we know that there were 25-27 Jewish houses. In one house there lived about thirty Jews. We also know the names of some Jewish Bratislava inhabitants who were paying taxes for the community or offered various financial services to the municipal council: Prentl, Nastl, Carrl, Heindl, Lebl, Munschl, and Ysack. Their names were recorded in accountants' books of the municipal council and in some mandates of the King Wladyslaw II. There is an interesting story of Zacharias, the doctor in Bratislava. He was exempted from the obligation to wear a hood when visiting patients. He was well-known for his medical expertise in treating not only the King, but also many representatives of Hungarian Empire.

Jewish inhabitants and their position in Bratislava, the free royal town during the reign of Wladyslaw II, proved the constant decline of royal power

in Hungary and increasing power of magnate oligarchy. This high nobility group included Zápoľský and Perényi families and the counts from Svätý Jur and Pezinok. These noblemen were in distinguished administrative posts, such as: a palatine, a regional judge, a chancellor, a royal chamberlain, Transylvanian duke and Croatian and Slavonian ban. They specified the development of the kingdom because they were aiming at the establishment of the monarchy of the Estates. This can be identified on the position of Jews in the country and namely in Bratislava where the letters addressed directly to municipal representatives from the offices of the above mentioned representatives of the kingdom replaced mandates which would have carried royal decisions.

The reign of Wladyslaw's II son Lewis was influenced by strong regional representatives and therefore limiting the interference of king's authority into frequent disputes among citizens and Jews in Bratislava. Bratislava Jews were given some reductions in tax payments to royal chamber. Ignorance towards Jewish inhabitants could be identified in the municipal council's regulation according to which the Jews had to wear hoods to demonstrate their faith. Lower interests from the loans were a frequent problem among the Bratislava citizens and Jews. Such decisions, written in the mandates published by the king for quick and smooth solution of the problems, illustrated a weak ruler. There was constant rivalry among Ján Zápoľský's supporters and king's supporters Alex Turzo and Štefan Báthory.

Last four years of Lewis's rule, dated between the years he married Mary Habsburg in 1522 and the defeat of royal troops at Mohach in 1526, were influenced by the fact that Bratislava municipal council tried to expel the Jews from the town. The King tried to resist the pressure because it was an offence against his authority over certain group of his serfs. Hungarian and Czech Queen Mary, Ferdinand's I sister, played an important role in the relation among Bratislava citizens and Bratislava Jews. Her escape from Buda [endangered by Turks] to Bratislava by ship up the Danube river made an end to Jewish community within then City walls and today's Nedbalova, Klobučnická, Františkánska and Uršulínska streets. Jewish houses and rates from them were given to Bratislava citizens for the reconstructions of municipal fortifications. The situation of expelled Jews from Bratislava and Soprona [the free royal town] did not changed during the reign of Ferdinand I Habsburg on the Hungarian throne. The Jews had never returned to their former dwellings and Bratislava Jews were neither successful in claiming financial compensations for their lost property from 1526 to 1533. Soprona Jews had a longitudinal dispute with local municipal representatives because they did not respect King Ferdinand's I decisions and regulations. Trnava, the third West Hungarian town, lost its Jewish community by King Ferdinand's mandate from the year 1539.

Jews were living in several other free royal towns in Hungary. We can mention just a few: Budin, Esztergom, Belgrade, and others. In the year 1526 and during the following years of Habsburg dynasty, the Jews were either expelled or they left because of the Osman danger and because the citizens did their best to expel them from the internal parts of towns, i.e. from the inside of the walls.

The majority of the documents used in this book belong to the Archives of Bratislava, the capital. They include royal mandates, one type of diplomatic documents known in the reign of Wladyslaw II and his son Lewis II. Other documents include palatine directions, those of the chancellor and regional judge who acted officially under the King's orders but in fact they were making decisions in their own competences on the Jewish rates and taxes and about the solution of the disputes among the citizens and the Jews in case of loans. The accounts' books of Bratislava municipal council, which document the collection of Jewish taxes during the given period of time, represent the third group of resources. Majority of those documents were published in the edition *Monumenta Hungariae Judaica*.

The author of this book has devoted his expertise and research to Bratislava Jews' fate because he has found them to be part of Bratislava free royal town during the reign of Jagiellon dynasty on the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries. He has not forgotten to investigate Jews's lives with regard to the internal conflicts which disrupted then Hungarian kingdom and he has also illustrated and analysed how the Mohach disaster initiated changes in the structure of the inhabitants after the Jews had left, as well as the subsequent occupation of some Hungarian territories and today's Slovakia by Osman empire.

Translated by Eva Tandlichová