Studia Judaica 19 (2016), nr 1 (37), s. 111–128
doi:10.4467/24500100STJ.16.005.5351

Martina Niedhammer

Gender and Family in Jewish Historiography on the Bohemian Lands: A Critical Survey

Abstract: Dealing with questions of gender and family, this article presents a critical survey of recent historiography on Jews in the Bohemian Lands. It assumes that the historiographical problems discussed in this field can be divided into three thematic groups: time, (gender) roles, and space. While a lot of research has been done on questions of gender roles ranging from the leeway that female and male worlds offered in religious and secular surroundings to ways women and men interacted on a daily basis, aspects of time, and especially space, have been largely neglected. Among the specific problems of Jewish historiography on the Bohemian Lands are its nearly exclusive focus on the capital Prague, the limited time frame covering mostly the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the almost total lack of works dealing with men's history.

Keywords: historiography, gender studies, women's studies, men's studies, history of everyday life (*Alltagsgeschichte*), early modern and modern period, Bohemian Lands.

Topics: Time, Roles, and Space

When, in 1855, Fanny Neuda (1819–1894), the widow of Rabbi Abraham Neuda (1812–1854) of Loštice (Loschitz) in Moravia, published a small German prayer book for Jewish women, no one could have predicted that *Stunden der Andacht* [*Hours of Devotion*] would be published in more than thirty editions.[1] In fact, the prayer collection became so popular

[1] Fanny Neuda, *Stunden der Andacht: Ein Gebet- und Erbauungsbuch für Israels Frauen und Jungfrauen, zur öffentlichen und häuslichen Andacht, so wie für alle Verhältnisse des weiblichen Lebens* (Prague, 1855). With regard to the circumstances that led to the creation of *Stunden der Andacht* and its reception, see Bettina Kratz-Ritter, "'. . . als das Ergebnis eines

among its female readers that it was even translated into English[2] and edited in Judeo-German,[3] that is, German printed in Hebrew characters. Neuda offered her readers a mixture of prayers for holidays, certain religious ceremonies (such as Shabbat candle lighting), and private occasions associated with different stages in life. As a woman, she chose a female perspective and focused on emotional aspects that were close to the daily life of her addressees. Moreover, she broadened the traditional range of topics in prayer books for women, by introducing prayers for situations that reflected gender role differentiation: thus, one finds a prayer not only for the circumcision (*brit milah*) of a new-born son, but also for the naming of a new-born daughter, for the wedding of a son, and for the wedding of a daughter.[4] Last but not least, Neuda promoted a modest education for girls, which took into account inner qualities and the development of religious feeling instead of focusing merely on "ornamental" accomplishments.[5]

What does this success story reveal about gender and family in the Bohemian Lands? At first glance, *Stunden der Andacht* is not only one of the first Jewish women's prayer books to be written by a woman,[6] but

weiblichen Herzens': Beobachtungen zum Frauenbild im religiösen und belletristischen Werk Fanny Neudas, 1819–1894," *Zeitschrift für Religions- und Geistesgeschichte* 47 (1995), 4: 357–363; Susanne Blumesberger, "Fanny Neuda als Botin religiöser Literatur von Frau zu Frau: Theologische Schriften für Frauen und Mädchen aus weiblicher Hand," *Biblos* 52 (2003), 1–2: 7–21; Daniel Polakovič, "Neuda, Fanny Schmiedl," *The YIVO Encyclopedia of Jews in Eastern Europe*, 2010, http://www.yivoencyclopedia.org/article.aspx/Neuda_Fanny_Schmiedl [retrieved: 24 July 2016].

[2] Fanny Neuda, *Hours of Devotion: A Book of Prayers and Meditations for the Use of the Daughters of Israel, during Public Service and at Home, for All Conditions of Woman's Life,* trans. Moritz (Maurice) Mayer (New York, 1866).

[3] Fanni Neyda, *Shtunden der andacht: Eyn gebet- und erboyungsbukh fir Izraels froyen und yungfroyen tsur offentlikhen und heyzlikhen andakht, zo vi fir alle verhaltnisse des veyblikhen lebens* (Prague, 1864).

[4] Fanny Neuda, *Stunden der Andacht: Ein Gebet- und Erbauungsbuch für Israels Frauen und Jungfrauen, zur öffentlichen und häuslichen Andacht, so wie für alle Verhältnisse des weiblichen Lebens*, 2nd edn. (Prague, 1858), 77–78, 82–83. Former prayer books for women contain texts dealing only with male rites of passage (*brit milah, bar mitzvah*). See Meir Letteris, *Taḥanune bat yehudah: Andachtsbuch für israelitische Frauenzimmer zur öffentlichen und häuslichen Erbauung in allen Verhältnissen des Lebens als Jungfrau, Braut, Gattin und Mutter* (Prague, 1846).

[5] Neuda, "Ein Wort an die edlen Mütter und Frauen in Israel," in *Stunden der Andacht*, 2nd edn., 143–152. The epilogue was written only for the second, revised, and enlarged edition of the prayer book.

[6] Fanny Neuda's prayer book can reasonably be seen as continuation of a tradition of women from Prague who were writing religious literature in Yiddish especially for female readers. The first such work was *Eyn gor sheyne tkhine*, published c.1600, and attributed to a group of women. See *The JPS Guide to Jewish Women: 600 B.C.E. to 1900 C.E.*, eds.

also a somehow typical example of trying to combine the increasingly secular way of life of the Jewish middle-class with religious traditions. As E. Paula Hyman has aptly noted, Christian women would have approved a good deal of Neuda's ideas of what a valuable Jewish education was.[7] But there was one distinct exception: unlike their Christian neighbors, Jewish women, as members of a minority, had to secure their children's loyalty to Judaism. Fanny Neuda thus also recommended teaching girls in Hebrew, a language that she considered a "key" to Jewish self-understanding.[8]

When surveying the research done so far on gender and family in Jewish history of the Bohemian Lands, one quickly becomes aware that both of these elements are closely interlinked with the problem of identity. In a certain way, historians seem to pick up the same topics that are already discussed in Neuda's successful prayer book. In the following, it will therefore serve as a reliable guide to the field of gender and family.

The historiographical problems dealt with can usefully be divided into three groups. The first group comprises questions of *time*, the stages and events of human life, as described in Neuda's prayer book, including childbirth, bringing up and educating children, matchmaking, marriage, and divorce. The second group is concerned with questions of *gender roles* which Neuda addresses in her famous concluding appeal, "Ein Wort an die edlen Mütter und Frauen in Israel."[9] These works discuss the leeway that female and male worlds offered both in religious and in secular surroundings, and they ask how the roles of women and men changed in the course of time so that, for example, women during the nineteenth century became keepers of Jewish tradition—a responsibility they alone had previously not held.[10] The third group entails questions related to *space.* It focuses on aspects of gender and family within different social strata, as

Emily Taitz, Sondra Henry, Cheryl Tallan (Philadelphia, 2003), 161–162. For later prayer collections, see Rivkah bat Meir Tiktiner, *Meneket Rivkah: A Manual of Wisdom and Piety for Jewish Women*, ed. Frauke von Rohden (Philadelphia, 2009); *Be'er Sheva by Beer and Bella Perlhefter: An Edition of a Seventeenth Century Yiddish Encyclopaedia*, eds. Nathanael Riemer, Sigrid Senkbeil (Wiesbaden, 2011).

[7] Paula E. Hyman, "Muster der Modernisierung: Jüdische Frauen in Deutschland und Russland," in Kirsten Heinsohn, Stefanie Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte als Geschlechtergeschichte: Studien zum 19. und 20. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2006), 30.

[8] Neuda, "Ein Wort an die edlen Mütter und Frauen in Israel," 147.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Marion A. Kaplan has observed similar tendencies for Germany in the nineteenth century which resulted in a phenomenon she calls "domestic Judaism." See Marion A. Kap-

suggested by Neuda's prayer book, which offers texts for both members of the upper and lower classes, that is, for housewives or ladies of the house and for servants. Historians have, moreover, started to compare these phenomena in different regions of the Bohemian Lands: Bohemia, Moravia, and Austrian/Czech Silesia, and—during the interwar period—Carpathian Ruthenia. The contrast between urban and rural ways of life, that is, between gender and family patterns in Prague and smaller Jewish communities, might therefore be part of the topic of *space*, but also be linked to the topics of time and gender roles.

The three major research trends on gender and family in the Bohemian Lands—time, roles, and space—are by no means equally represented in the literature. To put it simply, only the first and second topics have received some attention from scholars, while the third topic seems to be rather neglected. These major research topics, their results, and questions that still remain unanswered are summarized below. Next, this article discusses problems that seem to be particular to this research area. Lastly, it tries to broaden the perspective by localizing family and gender studies in general Jewish historiography on the Bohemian Lands.

1. Time

When considering gender and family patterns in the Bohemian Lands one cannot overlook a crucial point in the Jewish history of the region: the infamous Familiants Laws (*Familiantengesetze*). Introduced in 1726/27 by the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI, they were intended to limit the number of Jewish families that could legally reside in Bohemia, Moravia, and Silesia. Moreover, only one son, usually the eldest, was allowed to marry and to establish a family of his own. As we know from the works of Hillel J. Kieval[11] and others, this strategy was not completely successful. Bohemian and Moravian Jewry grew despite the laws, mainly because many Jews circumvented the restrictions by dispersing through the countryside and settling in small villages. Jana Vobecká has recently demonstrated that the Jewish population tripled in number at the time of the Familiants Laws, even if one takes into account only the statistics issued by the state

lan, *The Making of the Jewish Middle Class: Women, Family, and Identity in Imperial Germany* (New York–Oxford, 1991), esp. 64–84.

[11] Hillel J. Kieval, *Languages of Community: The Jewish Experience in the Czech Lands* (Berkeley, 2000), 21–23.

authorities.[12] Although we know a good deal about the social aspects of the Familiants Laws regarding change in settlements patterns and the direction of migration flows, we still have much to learn about the emotional aspects of the restrictions on the number of families. How, for instance, were conflicts managed when they arose between members of the Jewish community who all claimed to be the true "heirs" of an deceased head of a family? Which parties were involved in these quarrels and to what extent (relatives, local authorities, the *Landesjudenschaft* in Bohemia)? How did non-Jewish neighbors react when they noticed these conflicts or got wind of so-called *bodenkhazenes*, that is, secret marriages? And, last but not least, how did this legislation affect family ties, such as solidarity, when sons needed to find a wealthy bride in order to pay the taxes linked with the restrictions, or when sisters could not marry because they lacked the finances? Michaela Kral has published a brief article on the topic, which constitutes a first step in this direction.[13] By mainly using petitions sent to the state authorities, together with vital statistics, she was able to carry out microhistorical research on one Jewish family in Pacov (Patzau) in the Vysočina region spanning part of Bohemia and part of Moravia.

Another aspect of the Familiants Laws is related to how the state authorities interpreted and then implemented the regulations on marriage. Although the laws were introduced with the clear aim of diminishing the number of local Jews, their interpretation by state authorities slightly changed over time. At least in the beginning of the nineteenth century the Familiants Laws became also an easily adaptable tool for the state to implement new ideas for the "moral improvement" of the Jews. In contrast to former times, Jews were expected not simply to leave the country, but, instead, to become "useful" and loyal subjects of the Habsburg Monarchy. This is clear from the introduction of a mandatory examination in 1810, during which young couples who wished to marry had to demonstrate their knowledge of the religious-moral textbook *Bne-Zion*.[14] Written by the maskil Herz Homberg, *Bne-Zion* was based not on Jewish theology, but on general ethical principles and thus perfectly fulfilled

[12] Jana Vobecká, *Demographic Avant-Garde: Jews in Bohemia between the Enlightenment and the Shoah* (New York, 2013).

[13] Michaela Kral, "Auswirkungen des Familiantengesetzes auf eine jüdische Familie in der südböhmischen Stadt Patzau zwischen 1726 und 1849: Eine Fallstudie," *Zeitschrift für Ostmitteleuropa-Forschung* 53 (2004), 1: 83–98.

[14] [Herz Homberg], *Bne-Zion: Ein religiös-moralisches Lehrbuch für die Jugend israelitischer Nation* (Vienna, 1812).

the needs of the absolutist state.[15] Though the *Bne-Zion* examination was compulsory throughout the Monarchy, it was especially despised by Bohemian and Moravian Jews, not so much because of the secular nature of *Bne-Zion*, but because it was another obstacle to marriage.[16] Contemporary sources, especially works of *belles-lettres*, widely reflect these inner dynamics,[17] whereas historiography remains rather static about this facet of the Familiants Laws in the first half of the nineteenth century.

This leads to another essential aspect regarding lifetime, gender, and family in the Bohemian Lands. We have plenty of good sources for investigating birth and marriage patterns, rates of divorce, and also the ways families dealt with the memory of their late relations. The official records (*Matriken*) of the Jewish communities—at least in Bohemia— are preserved quite well and are even accessible online.[18] They provide valuable information, concerning not only numbers, but also personal networks linked with establishing a family. They reveal the names and sometimes even the professions of *sandekim*, that is, the godfathers who hold the child during circumcision, and of witnesses who attend the wedding ceremony. Moreover, the records mention the rabbi who performed the wedding ceremony and can therefore themselves give a hint as to the extent of religious feeling in a family. Furthermore, there still exist many Jewish cemeteries in the Bohemian Lands whose gravestones can tell us, among other things, about naming customs, family structures, and ways of mourning and remembering. Thanks to the Jewish Museum in Prague most of them have been photographed, classified, and even partly translated.[19] Last but

[15] Michael L. Miller, *Rabbis and Revolution: The Jews of Moravia in the Age of Emancipation* (Stanford, 2011), 72–73; Dirk Sadowski, *Haskala und Lebenswelt: Herz Homberg und die jüdischen deutschen Schulen in Galizien 1782–1806* (Göttingen, 2010), 16.

[16] By contrast, Orthodox Galician Jews who also strongly rejected *Bne-Zion* did so mainly because of religious reasons, that is, they did not want to get married in a civil ceremony. See the still important study of Majer Balaban, "Herz Homberg in Galizien: Historische Studie," *Jahrbuch für jüdische Geschichte und Literatur* 19 (1916), 1: 189–221.

[17] See [Joseph Seligmann Kohn], *Der staatspapierende Milchjude, oder Leben und Treiben der Vornehmen in Israel: Ein Zeitbild vom Verfasser des jüdischen Gil Blas* (Meißen, 1836); Michael Klapp, "Er und Sie, oder Ein zehnjähriger Brautstand," in id., *Komische Geschichten aus dem jüdischen Volksleben* (Berlin, 1859), 62–73.

[18] The records are preserved at the National Archives in Prague, and can be accessed online: "Matriky židovských náboženských obcí v českých krajích," http://www.badatelna.eu/fond/1073/ [retrieved: 17 Apr. 2015].

[19] The collection has not been published yet, but can be consulted upon request. Moreover, some private initiatives have emerged in the last few years which also document various Jewish cemeteries in Bohemia and Moravia, for example, "kešet," http://www.chewra.com/keshetnew/kweb/kategorie.aspx?kid=2 [retrieved: 17 Apr. 2015].

not least, scholars can also make use of religious artifacts, such as *mapot* and bridal head coverings, which are deposited in the collections of the Jewish Museum in Prague and other, similar institutions. As with gravestones, we have access to these objects not only from the Jewish Community of Prague, but also from smaller towns and villages throughout the Bohemian Lands—a fortunate circumstance that enables research on the history of everyday family and religious life in the countryside, too.

In addition, valuable works have been published which structure and analyze serial data on a macrolevel, especially Jana Vobecká's work on the demography of Bohemian Jewry[20] and Georg Gaugusch's outstanding reference work for the Jewish upper-middle class of the Habsburg Empire, *Wer einmal war*.[21] The latter also helps us to better understand the transnational networks of Jewish families that were established not only by business but also by matchmaking and marriage.

But what historiography about the Jews of the Bohemian Lands lacks is books like ChaeRan Y. Freeze's *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*,[22] that is, works that take into account not only one social class, but also larger parts of society while remaining on a meso- and microlevel. Here, research on east European Jewry—Polish, Ukrainian, and Russian Jews—seems to be far better. Nevertheless, at least aspects about matchmaking and becoming acquainted are discussed in Mirjam Zadoff's *Next Year in Marienbad: The Lost Worlds of Jewish Spa Culture*, in which she analyzes the social functions of summer resorts both for the central European Jewish middle classes and for east European Hasidic circles.[23]

2. (Gender) Roles

Turning to the second aspect of family and gender studies on the Bohemian Lands, (gender) roles, one has to admit that this is perhaps the best investigated field so far. The ways women and men interacted on a daily basis has gained a lot of attention, although much remains to be done, especially with regard to the various nuances of adopting certain role models in distinct situations (which is the reason why the brackets are used here).

[20] See n. 12.

[21] Georg Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war: Das jüdische Großbürgertum Wiens 1800–1938.* Vol. 1: *A–K* (Vienna, 2011).

[22] ChaeRan Y. Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia* (Hanover, 2002).

[23] Mirjam Zadoff, *Next Year in Marienbad: The Lost Worlds of Jewish Spa Culture*, trans. William Templer (Philadelphia, 2012).

When we look at "classic" topics, such as education or charity, several fruitful attempts have been made to explore them within a broader European context. Very often, other parts of western and central Europe, especially Vienna, serve to provide a comparative perspective, whereas eastern Europe tends to be excluded.

Louise Hecht has done a lot of research not only on the relatively unique Jewish educational system of the Bohemian Lands since the Haskalah,[24] but also on how girls and boys were seen by the *maskilim* and later learned to find their roles in religious and family life.[25] While the early non-Jewish Enlightenment called for the continuing education of women, the early *maskilim* were to some extent reluctant to see a more specific education for women, because they considered modern, secular education and scholarship to be part of their vision for the transformation of a "traditional" Jew into a maskil. Only during the rise of the middle classes, when gentile society started to promote the separation of the female domestic and the male public sphere, did the *maskilim* change their attitude towards female education. Women were now considered guardians or keepers of Jewish traditions—as one learns from examples such as Fanny Neuda's prayer book—which made it necessary to prepare them for their new role.[26] Thus the first German-Jewish *Normalschule* for girls in Prague opened only two years after a school for boys had been built in 1782.[27]

To explore gender patterns as part of everyday life, "historians must enter the Jewish home," as Paula E. Hyman emphasized in 1995.[28] And

[24] See Louise Hecht, "'Gib dem Knaben Unterricht nach seiner Weise' (Spr. 22,6): Theorie und Praxis des modernen jüdischen Schulsystems in der Habsburger Monarchie," *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Gesellschaft zur Erforschung des 18. Jahrhunderts* 18–19 (2004): 117–134; ead., "Konzepte und Praxis der jüdischen Erziehung in der Habsburger Monarchie: Von Isaak Euchel bis Peter Beer," in Marion Aptroot, Andreas Kennecke, Christoph Schulte (eds.), *Isaac Euchel: Der Kulturrevolutionär der jüdischen Aufklärung* (Hanover, 2010), 197–214; ead., "Teaching Haskalah – Haskalah and Teaching: Jewish Education in the Czech Lands (a Power Play)," *Jewish Culture and History* 13 (2012), 2–3: 93–107.

[25] Louise Hecht, "'Die Söhne sollt ihr unterrichten und nicht die Töchter' (bT Kidd 59b): Zur Ambivalenz des Frauenbildes in der jüdischen Presse der Aufklärung," in Eleonore Lappin, Michael Nagel (eds.), *Frauen und Frauenbilder in der europäisch-jüdischen Presse von der Aufklärung bis 1945* (Bremen, 2007), 17–34; Louise Hecht, Dieter Hecht, "Jüdische Frauen zwischen Haskalah und Emanzipation," in Sabine Hödl (ed.), *Salondamen und Dienstboten: Jüdisches Bürgertum um 1800 aus weiblicher Sicht* (St. Pölten, 2009), 28–38.

[26] Hecht, "Die Söhne," 32–33.

[27] Hecht, "Teaching Haskalah," 104, n. 15.

[28] Paula E. Hyman, *Gender and Assimilation in Modern Jewish History: The Roles and Representation of Women* (Seattle, 1995), 23.

we did enter it, for example, by investigating special forms of female religious feeling, such as charity, long a favorite subject of women's studies in Jewish historiography. Because of the important role that *tsedakah*, the obligation to be charitable towards the disadvantaged, plays in Jewish religious life and the fact that charity was one of the few areas where women could appear active in public, historians have largely concentrated on the specific characteristics of female philanthropy. Very often it is interpreted as a vehicle for a double emancipation, on the one hand from the male-dominated religious sphere, on the other from social discrimination by the non-Jewish surroundings. Thus Elise Herz, the widow of a wealthy merchant, who lived in Vienna in about 1850, dreamt of founding a multiconfessional kindergarten under Jewish supervision in Palestine, a wish perhaps inspired by her religiously and linguistically diverse hometown, Prague.[29] Other historical works about female donors refer to the process of investing money for the benefit of the poor, and seek to point out the contribution of women to modernization by transforming the old model of *tsedakah* into a philanthropic concept of helping people to help themselves.[30]

Much less attention has been paid to female contributions to the modest liturgical reform that was undertaken in Prague during the 1830s and subsequently spread throughout the Bohemian countryside. This is all the more remarkable because it was a "noble lady of rare generosity" who first appealed for the foundation of a Reform synagogue in Prague, to make it possible to hear sermons in German. Although the author of the newspaper article, which was published in Prague on 1 March 1832,[31] was actually the entrepreneur Ludwig Pollak, it is symptomatic that he chose a female identity in order to publicize his idea of liturgical reform. As Simone Lässig explains in her illuminating work on the making of the

[29] Martina Niedhammer, "'Nach Jerusalem!' Eine böhmisch-österreichische Stiftungsinitiative für Palästina aus der Mitte des 19. Jahrhunderts," *Judaica Bohemiae* 45 (2010), 2: 49–72.

[30] Andreas Ludwig, Kurt Schilde (eds.), *Jüdische Wohlfahrtsstiftungen: Initiativen jüdischer Stifterinnen und Stifter zwischen Wohltätigkeit und sozialer Reform* (Frankfurt am Main, 2010). Although the articles of this volume mostly refer to Germany and Austria (or, more precisely, Vienna), they are to some extent also representative of similar developments in the Bohemian Lands.

[31] Pollak's appeal, made under a pseudonym, is reprinted in Siegmund Maybaum, "Aus dem Leben Leopold Zunz," in *Zwölfter Bericht über die Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums in Berlin* (1894): 1–63, here 34–36. It therefore remains unclear in which Prague newspaper it was originally published.

German-Jewish middle classes in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Reform movement led to a partial "feminization" of synagogue services.[32] By introducing new, primarily aesthetic elements to the synagogue which were generally classified as "female," the reformers almost automatically weakened male religious dominance.[33] Veronika Seidlová's article about the Czech Catholic composer František Škroup, who worked as an organist for the Prague Association for the Improvement of Jewish Worship in the 1830s, deals with music as an indicator of more general cultural transformations, but unfortunately does not take into account the reevaluation of gender roles in this process.[34]

A further important aspect for discussion is the phenomenon of conversions to and from Judaism. It became a crucial question when women held all the responsibility for transmitting Jewish identity in the course of the nineteenth century and were thus often blamed for the rising rates of conversion and intermarriage. As Todd M. Endelman has demonstrated for some parts of central and eastern Europe, women were on the whole less likely to leave the Jewish Community than men were, because in most places they lacked sustained social contact with Christians.[35] A closer look at the Bohemian Lands would probably verify this observation. And it could also explain, for example, the motivation and the self-image of young men such as Johann Haenl, a Catholic from a small west Bohemian village, who converted to Judaism in Prague in 1893, most likely under the influence of his Jewish employer.[36]

Another glimpse into the family might reveal points of intersection between men's and women's duties. At least from nineteenth-century Prague, it is well known that women continued to take over business tasks that neither under civil law[37] nor according to bourgeois social ideals

[32] Simone Lässig, *Jüdische Wege ins Bürgertum: Kulturelles Kapital und sozialer Aufstieg im 19. Jahrhundert* (Göttingen, 2004), 326–361.

[33] Ibid., 328.

[34] Veronika Seidlová, "K působení Františka Škroupa v synagoze v Dušní ulici aneb Vyjenávání pražských Židů s modernitou a jinakosti," in Miloš Havelka et al. (eds.), *Víra, kultura a společnost: Náboženské kultury v českých zemích 19. a 20. století* (Prague, 2012), 439–470.

[35] Todd M. Endelman, "Gender and Conversion Revisited," in Marion A. Kaplan, Deborah Dash Moore (eds.), *Gender and Jewish History* (Bloomington, 2011), 184.

[36] Archiv Židovského muzea v Praze, f. židovská náboženská obec Praha, přestupy na židovskou víru [1860–1917], sign. 172841, Certificate of the Jewish Community Prague, about the halakhic conversion of Johann Haenl, Prague, 18 Oct. 1893.

[37] In Bohemia, only widows were allowed to run a business on their own. See Wenzel Gustav Kopetz, *Allgemeine östreichische Gewerbs-Gesetzkunde, oder systematische Dar-*

they were supposed to do. Although one might be inclined to explain this mainly as the result of the persistence of traditional Jewish gender patterns, where wives would earn money[38] while husbands would study Torah,[39] one should also consider facts outside inner Jewish life, such as the influence of general political trends and interlinked linguistic and national affiliations. Thus, when the Jewish entrepreneur and German-speaking supporter of the Old-Czech movement, Leopold Lämel, publicly announced that he would not talk to women about political or economic matters, his own wife was deeply involved in his banking operations.[40] Was this a result of his middle-class values or his Jewish socialization, or both? And to what extent was it typical of his political affiliation, considering that women played an important role in the Czech national movement?[41]

A related question is what the participation of Jewish women in the labor force and training opportunities looked like, a topic that Elisabeth Malleier picks up in an essay about health care in the Jewish Community of Prague in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[42] By analyzing correspondence and administrative acts of the Jewish Community of Prague, she has been able to trace the day-to-day work of two married couples who took care of the local Jewish hospital. Moreover, Malleier tells the story of Julie Leipen who founded the first Jewish nursing school in the Habsburg Monarchy. It was established in Prague in 1890.

Last but not least, we should pay more attention to a dimension of gender roles which has been largely ignored by historians—namely, the specific experiences of Jewish men in the Bohemian Lands. Whereas a recently published anthology, edited by Benjamin M. Baader, Sharon

stellung der gesetzlichen Verfassung der Manufacturs- und Handelsgewerbe in den deutschen, böhmischen, galizischen, italienischen und ungarischen Provinzen des östreichischen Kaiserstaates. Vol. 1 (Vienna, 1829), § 156.

[38] For the early modern period, see the comparative articles in Martha Keil (ed.), *Besitz, Geschäft und Frauenrechte: Jüdische und christliche Frauen in Dalmatien und Prag 1300–1600* (Kiel, 2011).

[39] Jonathan Boyarin, *Jewish Families* (New Brunswick, 2013), 53–56.

[40] Martina Niedhammer, *Nur eine "Geld-Emancipation"? Loyalitäten und Lebenswelten des Prager jüdischen Großbürgertums 1800–1867* (Göttingen, 2013), 49–50, 158.

[41] See Inge Raab, *Antonie Reis – Bohuslava Rajská-Čelakovská (1817–1852): Ein Frauenleben zur Zeit der tschechischen nationalen Wiedergeburt* (Berlin, 2007); Jana Malínská, *"My byly, jsme a budeme!" České ženské hnutí 1860–1914 a idea českého národa* (Prague, 2013).

[42] Elisabeth Malleier, "Beiträge zur Organisation von Krankenpflege in der jüdischen Gemeinde in Prag im 19. und zu Beginn des 20. Jahrhunderts," *Judaica Bohemiae* 44 (2009), 1: 83–103.

Ill. 1. Max Ungar (back right), Marie Ungar (born Ptaczek, front left), and members of the Ptaczek family, 1896. Family album of Dr. Karl Krejči, picture no. 66. Courtesy of Professor Mark S. Hengerer (Munich).

Gillerman, and Paul Lerner, contains articles investigating male Jewish identities, their performance, and reception in Germany,[43] we have nothing comparable for Bohemian/Czech or Austrian Jewry. Together with her research on everyday life in the Theresienstadt Ghetto, Anna Hájková examined the status and self-perception of young Czech-speaking men who represented a kind of *élite* in ghetto society.[44] One hopes

[43] Benjamin M. Baader, Sharon Gillerman, Paul Lerner (eds.), *Jewish Masculinities: German Jews, Gender, and History* (Bloomington, 2012).

[44] Anna Hájková, "Die fabelhaften Jungs aus Theresienstadt: Junge tschechische Männer als dominante soziale Elite im Theresienstädter Ghetto," in Christoph Dieckmann, Babette Quinkert (eds.), *Im Ghetto 1939–1945: Neue Forschungen zu Alltag und Umfeld* (Göttingen, 2009), 116–135. Hájková also published an essay about female experiences in Theresienstadt: ead., "'Řekla jsem si, že se prostě musím nějak přizpůsobit': Mladé české ženy v ghettu Terezín," *Soudobé dějiny* 18 (2011), 4: 603–628.

that this small case study, connected with the darkest chapter of the Jewish experience in the Bohemian Lands, will promote further research on the region in the neglected field of men's studies.

Ill. 2. Karel, 1916/17. Family album of Dr. Karl Krejči, picture no. 141. Courtesy of Professor Mark S. Hengerer (Munich).

3. Space

Admittedly, almost all examples I have given in this article refer to Prague. Indeed, space as a topic of Jewish historiography on family and gender patterns in the Bohemian Lands has not been properly considered yet. It is therefore hard to find serious works that look more closely at regions of the Bohemian Lands other than the capital, Prague. Though important works do exist, for example, on the Jews of Moravia, like Michael Miller's *Rabbis and Revolution*, occasionally touching upon this topic, they mainly focus on other interesting questions, and there is still a need for other case studies about family and gender.[45]

One potential field of research is the various migration paths Jews from the Bohemian and the Moravian countryside chose in order to settle in other regions of the Habsburg Monarchy, whether big cities such as Prague and Vienna or provinces like Galicia or, beginning in 1850, Lower Austria.[46]

[45] One example of a short but unsatisfying Moravian case study about what village life was like for female Jews is provided by Dorothea McEwan, "Das Stetl in Mähren: Die Frauen der Familie Fischer in Lomnitz," *Österreichische Osthefte* 35 (1993), 1: 99–116.

[46] For the history of Jewish migration from Bohemia and Moravia to Lower Austria, see Christoph Lind, *Kleine jüdische Kolonien: Juden in Niederösterreich 1782–1914* (Vienna, 2013).

Ill. 3. Anni in Grimmenstein (Lower Austria), 1916. Family album of Dr. Karl Krejči, picture no. 137. Courtesy of Professor Mark S. Hengerer (Munich).

Moreover, editions of "ego-documents," for example, the memoirs of the mathematician Max Ungar,[47] are valuable sources and may initiate new projects. Ungar was born into an Orthodox family in Boskovice (Boskowitz) and grew up in the Moravian countryside. Throughout his life he attempted to cross various borders: when he married a local gentile who converted to Judaism, and when he left his rural home to study at the University of Vienna and gain a professorship, an aspiration that remained unfulfilled due to his Jewish origin. While Ungar's memoirs reflect his oscillation between two worlds—Orthodoxy and Reform Judaism, Jewish and non-Jewish spaces, urban and rural areas—a family album of one of his relatives illustrates changes in the way of life from the early 1890s to the early 1930s.[48] The ways women and men presented themselves changed

[47] Mark Hengerer (ed.), *Tradition und Entfremdung: Die Lebenserinnerungen des jüdischen Privatdozenten Max Ungar (1850–1930)* (Innsbruck, 2011).

[48] Archiv města Brna, f. T 78 (family archive Ungar), family album of Dr. Karl Krejči. The album covers the period from 1865 to 1934. Courtesy of Professor Mark S. Hengerer (Munich). A few pictures date from the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s.

Ill. 4. Masquerade. Olga, Anni, Hermi, [c. 1917/18]. Family album of Dr. Karl Krejči, picture no. 125. Courtesy of Professor Mark S. Hengerer (Munich).

considerably during the First World War, as a result of wartime experiences, and then shifts in traditional role models; it affected not only dress and hairstyles, but also habitus and facial expressions [see Ill. 1–4].

Problems: Prague-Centrism, a Limited Time Frame, and Gender Models

Of the problems of Jewish historiography on family and gender patterns in the Bohemian Lands, *Prague-centrism* is an obvious one. There are different reasons for this phenomenon, some historical, some practical. Prague has for centuries not only been one of the most prestigious Jewish communities in Europe, but it was also home to about a third of the total Jewish population of the Bohemian Lands.[49] Consequently, the community's rich cultural life, which changed from being a cradle of traditional

[49] Kieval, *Languages of Community*, 41.

Jewish scholarship to a central European Jewish literary center where different models of Jewish self-perception were experimented with,[50] has fascinated many scholars from various academic disciplines, including historians. Moreover, the rise of urban studies to a major subject of European historiography during the last two decades has helped to promote the continuing focus on the capital of Bohemia.

Other explanations for the overemphasis on Prague can be found in the difficulties in tracing the stories of rural Jews, who lived in tiny communities across the country. Furthermore, scholars may encounter linguistic problems when researching the Jews outside the classic framework of the Bohemian Lands, that is, Slovakia and especially Carpathian Ruthenia which were part of the interwar republic. A sound knowledge of Yiddish and Hungarian is indispensable here.

But even in research on Prague one can easily identify blind spots. So far, few works have dealt with the Middle Ages, and especially the early modern period, from a family or a gender viewpoint.[51] Similar trends can be detected when looking at the research on the Jews of Czechoslovakia during the First and the Second Republic. Questions about the national orientation of Czechoslovak Jewry and its self-positioning as an ethnic or religious minority or both dominate over analyses of its family and gender patterns—even though they might have been diverse, depending on local traditions and denominational affiliations.[52] Consequently, the *time frame* of historiography on family and gender is *limited*, ranging mainly from the nineteenth to the early twentieth century.

A similar *disproportion* exists in the research on *gender models* themselves. Most of the works discussed here refer to the field of women's history,[53] whereas works that are explicitly based on the methods of family

[50] See Ines Koeltzsch, *Geteilte Kulturen: Eine Geschichte der tschechisch-jüdisch-deutschen Beziehungen in Prag (1918–1938)* (Munich, 2012), and Dimitry Shumsky, *Zweisprachigkeit und binationale Idee: Der Prager Zionismus 1900–1930*, trans. Dafna Mach (Göttingen, 2013).

[51] For the early modern period, see Marie Buňatová, "Die Handelsaktivitäten jüdischer Frauen in Prag und ihre soziale und rechtliche Stellung an der Wende des 16. zum 17. Jahrhundert," in Keil (ed.), *Besitz, Geschäft und Frauenrechte*, 157–185; Rachel L. Greenblatt, *To Tell Their Children: Jewish Communal Memory in Early Modern Prague* (Stanford, 2014).

[52] This assumption is supported by Vobecká's data about Jewish fertility in the First Czechoslovak Republic, which differed widely across Bohemia, Moravia, Slovakia, and Carpathian Ruthenia. Vobecká, *Demographic Avant-Garde*, 90–91.

[53] Another "classic" study about female Jewish Prague is Wilma A. Iggers, *Women of Prague: Ethnic Diversity and Social Change from the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Providence–Oxford, 1995).

and men's studies are rare. This may, however, reflect the development of historical subdisciplines. To use Deborah Hertz's words, the history of masculinities is that of "a child of gender history and a grandchild of women's history."[54] Nevertheless, it is astonishing that families, which sociologists have long considered intermediate entities between individuals and society,[55] have received such little attention in the historiography of the Jews of the Bohemian Lands. Not only can they reflect the social order on a miniature scale, but they also enable historians to combine women's and men's history, that is, gender history, in a balanced way.

Further Considerations

Taking all this into account, we might ask what is so special about gender and family in the historiography of the Jews of the Bohemian Lands. First and foremost, the fact that quite good archival records have survived, providing an excellent database for further research, seems to be particularly significant. Secondly, one can find specific conditions for the development of Jewish family and gender patterns since the early modern period, which certainly had a strong impact on how Bohemian and Moravian Jews structured their daily life—namely, the Familiants Laws and the educational system introduced during the Enlightenment and represented by the German-Jewish *Normalschule*. This system, based on the separation of religious and non-religious education, was very successful in the Bohemian Lands and lasted until the 1870s; consequently, a great difference exists in this respect between the Bohemian Lands and other parts of the Habsburg Empire, for example Galicia, where the *Normalschulen* were soon abolished. Thirdly, one might notice important gaps in research. Some of them are related to rather new research trends, such as works on masculinity, but the most striking is the almost total lack of research on the Bohemian Lands outside Prague.

In sum, the importance of family and gender studies for a general historiography of the Jews of the Bohemian Lands stems from several

[54] Deborah Hertz, "Männlichkeit und Melancholie im Berlin der Biedermeierzeit," in Heinsohn, Schüler-Springorum (eds.), *Deutsch-jüdische Geschichte*, 291, quoted in Paul Lerner, Benjamin Maria Baader, Sharon Gillerman, "Introduction: German Jews, Gender, and History," in Baader, Gillerman, Lerner (eds.), *Jewish Masculinities*, 4.

[55] See Heinrich Ebel, Rolf Eickelpasch, Eckehard Kühne, *Familie in der Gesellschaft: Gestalt, Standort, Funktion* (Leverkusen, 1983), 211.

aspects. A focus on family and gender patterns helps us to gain insight into the daily life of Jews. This approach may be accompanied by historical revisionism, a tendency that leads us back to Fanny Neuda. When confronted with the fact that no single woman had so far published a religious text book, she justified herself by declaring that only women could understand the true needs of female readers.[56] Furthermore, the analysis of Jewish family and gender patterns provides rich material for a comparative history, not only in a geographical but also in a confessional sense. What differences existed between Jewish and non-Jewish *Lebenswelten* (female and male), especially shortly before emancipation in 1867 and afterwards? Last but not least, Jewish gender and family patterns in the Bohemian Lands can help us in questioning the position of Bohemian Jewry itself. Does it belong to the "West" or the "East," or is it in-between? Some aspects of gender history, for example, the professional/occupational and religious leeway already available to women in the nineteenth century, tend towards the latter view, and thus support similar observations for the Bohemian Haskalah.[57]

Martina Niedhammer
Collegium Carolinum
martina.niedhammer@collegium-carolinum.de

[56] Neuda, "Vorwort," in *Stunden der Andacht*, 2nd edn., ix–x, here x. The first edition lacks a preface.

[57] Louise Hecht, *Ein jüdischer Aufklärer in Böhmen: Der Pädagoge und Reformer Peter Beer (1758–1838)* (Cologne–Vienna, 2008).