

**Emese GYIMESI: *The Social Spaces of Female Intellectual Careers in the Mid-Nineteenth Century Pest-Buda*. Master thesis, Budapest – Prague – Catania 2016, 122 pp.**

**Report by co-supervisor**

The master thesis by Emese Gyimesi represents an excellent and very innovative contribution to urban social history. The author wished to explore the role of urban/rural environment in female intellectual careers and this task was accomplished perfectly. In a truly interesting way, Emese interlinked the personal life-stories, strategies, and spatial perceptions and imaginations of three female intellectuals (editor, writer, actress) with broad social changes: i.e. the professionalization of literary production and theatre, the growth of Budapest, the rise of Hungarian urban middle class, and the changing role of women in society. The result is a highly informative thesis, based on a clear theoretical perspective, that expands knowledge about the 19th century Budapest, the three major protagonists (E. Kányá, J. Szendrey, K. Prielle), development of the professions, and, most significantly, the links between spatial experiences and personal lives.

The whole thesis is primarily, and quite logically, organized along the three case studies, i.e. the parallel analyses of three careers. Those are further structured by three major questions. The three major parts in a way communicate to each other due to the factual links among the major protagonists. The thesis in fact follows a particular social network of Pest-Buda intellectuals. It is only within these analytical chapters that broader context as well as most of the theoretical ideas appears, which may look a bit nonstandard for a master thesis, but in my view it is skilfully done in this case. There are no boring parts in the thesis; a reader is captured in the story and gets the whole picture easily. Each part is conveniently concluded by a summary, which resumes the main findings.

As regards the quality of the thesis I can say just words of praise. One notable skill of Emese consists of her ability to use theories and concepts in creative, flexible and pragmatic way. This is clearly observable, for instance, on the creative adaptation of K. Lynch's image of the city, or J. Sewell's categorization of spaces. Another aspect to be highly appreciated is very exhaustive and sensible exploitation of sources. Although I could not check the sources due to language barrier, their interpretation seems to me very precise and well-grounded. The argumentation is clear and the conclusions are convincing. The thesis abounds in mind-provoking insights and inspirations.

To conclude, the submitted thesis clearly demonstrates that Emese Gyimesi has mastered the craft of history and became perfectly prepared for a further academic career. Notwithstanding some imperfections in English language, I can hardly find critical points worth pointing at. For all these reasons, I wholeheartedly recommend the thesis by Emese Gyimesi for successful defence and I suggest the best possible grade: 1 in Czech, 5 in Hungarian, 30 in Italian.

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