

Lidia A. Zyblikiewicz, *Kobieta w Krakowie w 1880 r. w świetle ankiet powszechnego spisu ludności. Studium demograficzne (Woman in Cracow in 1880 in the Light of the Census. A Demographic Study)*, Kraków 1999, Towarzystwo Wydawnicze Historia Jagellonica, 245 pp.

In the 1990s Polish historians showed an increased interest in the life of the family and women in the past. In addition to many partial studies, interesting monographs and studies were brought out (by, among others, M. Bogucka, A. Karpiński, C. Kukło, A. Wyrobisz and A. Żarnowska), drawing attention to the socio-economic evolution of the family in the past, its inner structure and the function and role played by its individual members, including wives and mothers. But we still know far less about the demographic conditions of the family and women living in Polish towns and villages in the modern era¹. As regards the end of the 19th century, this gap has been successfully filled by a young Cracow historian whose book is a revised version of her doctoral thesis.

Zyblikiewicz has analysed the female population of Cracow, one of Poland's largest cities (over 60,000 inhabitants in 1880) on the basis of the general census. What is more, she has also taken into account the religious structure of this group, which numbered more than 30,000 persons at that time. It is worth stressing that the author has rejected the sounding method, frequently used in the case of such numerous groups, and, making use of computer techniques, has assembled a huge amount of data, which will allow her to conduct further detailed research into the whole society of Little Poland's capital.

Without the conclusion and a short summary in English, the book consists of six chapters, an annex, bibliography and three lists of various addenda. It also contains as many as 63 tables, 23 diagrams and 8 maps. The construction of the book is clear and logical. After discussing the principles of her study, the author, in *Chapter II*, presents a detailed characterisation of the sources on which her study is based. She recalls the history of the Austrian censuses, among them the first conscriptive census of 1754, the establishment of the first statistical office in 1829, and the modern nominal censuses held from the end of the 1850s on. In the author's opinion the 1880 census on which her study is based, was, on the whole, carried out correctly as regards basic data, but she points out that the households of Cracow Jews presented many problems because of legally complex family relations. The people filling in the census forms found it sometimes difficult to name the language used by them and to say whether their stay in the towns was permanent or temporary.

In *Chapter III* the author recalls the demographic characteristics of Cracow in 1880 as a starting point for further reflections. At that time the town had nearly 56,900 permanent inhabitants, with a clear majority of women (121 females per 100 males) and 3,780 temporary inhabitants, a group in which men predominated (72 women for every 100 men). More than 65 per cent of the population consisted of Catholics; Jews accounted for 33 per cent. The author adds that 40 per cent of women and only 32 per cent of men were illiterate. Nearly 85 per cent of the inhabitants used the Polish language and 14 per cent German. More than a half

¹The demographic structures of modern families have been discussed in only a few large studies; see: C. Kukło, *Rodzina w osiemnastowiecznej Warszawie (The Family in 18th Century Warsaw)*, Białystok 1991; idem, *Kobieta samotna w społeczeństwie miejskim u schyłku Rzeczypospolitej szlacheckiej. Studium demograficzno-społeczne (Single Woman in Urban Society at the End of the Noblemen's Commonwealth. A Socio-Demographic Study)*, Białystok 1998; K. Makowski, *Rodzina poznańska w I połowie XIX wieku (The Poznań Family in the First Half of the 19th Century)*, Poznań 1992; M. Kopyński, *Studia nad rodziną chłopską w Koronie w XVII-XVIII wieku (Studies on the Peasant Family in Poland in the 17th and 18th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1998; M. Siennicka, *Rodzina burżuazji warszawskiej i jej obyczaj. Druga połowa XIX i początek XX wieku (The Warsaw Bourgeois Family and Its Customs. Late 19th and Early 20th Centuries)*, Warszawa 1998, pp. 34-80.

of Cracow's population did not work and was maintained by some working persons: this was the largest social group in the city. The second largest was the group of domestic servants. Unmarried women and bachelors accounted for 61 per cent of the population, married people for 31 per cent and widowed persons for 7 per cent (the proportion for men was only 2 per cent, for women as high as 11 per cent).

The author then examines the religion of the female Cracow population. Every third female in Cracow professed Judaism, the remaining women were nearly all Catholics (66 per cent). Only one woman in a hundred professed another religion. The proportion of unmarried women was similar in both religious groups, amounting to 60 per cent, but married women predominated among the Jewesses, amounting to 33 per cent (27.5 per cent among Catholic women). There were more widows among Catholic women, 12 per cent, compared with 7.5 per cent in the group of Jewish women. It is worth pointing out that the percentage of women aged 0–25 was higher among Jewish women; the author rightly attributes this not so much to the higher fertility of Jewish women as to the lower death rate of children and young people in that group. Among the Catholic women there was a marked predominance of women over 40; they moved into Cracow to live their final years on interest on capital.

Jewish women showed little inclination for migration, as is shown by the fact that 82.2 per cent of them were born in Cracow. This contrasts sharply with the attitude of Catholic women, every second of whom came from outside Cracow.

In my opinion, the most interesting and valuable are the last two chapters of the book, that is, *Chapter V* which presents women's rank in the household and the size and structure of female households, and *Chapter VI* which concerns the socio-vocational structure of Cracow's female population.

The author divides Cracow's female population into six groups: heads of households, wives, daughters, relatives, tenants and servants. Catholic women were less strongly linked with their family than their Jewish counterparts. Only the youngest of them (up to the age of 10) lived with their parents or guardians; the older ones usually left home in search of domestic service. The number of women who set up a family and became wives increased before the age of 30. Only women 20–25 years older became heads of household or lost their important position to the younger generation, living under the care of their children or more distant relatives. It is characteristic that more than a half of Cracow's elderly Catholic women did not live with their relatives.

The situation of elderly Jewish women was different. They rarely lived with strangers in their old age and few Jewish girls lived in the household of their employer. 75 to 90 per cent of Jewish women in all age brackets lived with their family. The author is therefore right in saying that family ties were stronger among the Jews.

The household headed by women accounted for just over 16 per cent of all households in Cracow in 1880. These households were decidedly less numerous (1–4 members) than the households headed by men (5–8 members). In examining the households of Cracow women Zyblikiewicz has not used P. Laslett's typology, largely applied in literature, which unfortunately will make comparative studies difficult. She proposes her own classification, reduced to three types: basic families (52.4 per cent), expanded families (42.1 per cent) and persons living without relatives but not necessarily alone (5.5 per cent)? (p. 95). It is a pity however that there is no table showing the categories of Cracow households according to the gender and religion of the household head.

As much as 62.8 per cent of Cracow women declared in the census that they were maintained by other people and were not gainfully employed. It is interesting that this applies to only 53.5 per cent of Catholic women and 81 per cent of the female followers of the Mosaic faith. The majority of the gainfully employed women worked as domestic servants (55 per cent), many worked in industry and

handicrafts (20.5 per cent). A much smaller group derived income from work in the administration or professions (9.2 per cent).

The proportion of Jewish women was small in nearly all vocational groups. The only exception was trade where Jewish women accounted for 63.2 per cent of all employed women. The percentage of Jewesses in the group of women employed in handicrafts and industry was also considerable (26.7 per cent).

The author has raised an interesting question, namely the role of women as employers (pp. 110–114), for the Austrian laws gave women some freedom in this respect. Among the women earning their living only 5.8 per cent were self-employed. Most of them, over 73 per cent, ran one-person shops, had market stalls or were engaged in the peddling of goods. Owners of artisan and industrial workshops accounted for 13.7 per cent of self-employed women, and professional women for 9 per cent.

Women of the Judaic faith usually ran their household without the help of servants; they often worked in the shop or workshop of their husband or father without being formally employed or receiving a fixed payment for their work.

Every second self-employed woman was of the Judaic faith, which may mean that representatives of this religious group were more independent and enterprising, though self-employed women accounted for only 3 per cent of the Jewish female group. The corresponding index for Catholic women was only 1.7 per cent.

The author makes interesting remarks about the social stratification of the female population, pointing out that it was much greater among Catholic women. On the one hand, Catholic women could more often afford to employ servants and were less often forced to earn their living, but on the other hand, Catholic women constituted the largest percentage of servants and wage-earners. These were mostly immigrants, a group in which Catholic women accounted for nearly 86 per cent.

Notwithstanding all the merits of Zyblikiewicz's study, it can be said that she has paid insufficient attention to the material side of Cracow women's life (their diet, health, etc.) which exerted an influence on their situation. The restriction of the source to the census has made the book rather hermetic. Another drawback, in my opinion, is that the author has not compared the results of her research with what is known about other urban communities, e.g. Warsaw, at that time².

In concluding these remarks let me say that Zyblikiewicz's book, a fruit of hard work, is first and foremost a meticulous analysis of the demographic and sometimes also social situation of women in a large Polish city at the end of the 19th century. The book is useful not only to persons interested in the history of women. Therefore it deserves close attention and should be popularised.

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²Cf. M. Należycka, *Przemiany aktywności zawodowej kobiet. Warszawa na przełomie XIX i XX wieku (Changes in Women's Vocational Activity. Warsaw at the Turn of the 19th Century)*, in: *Kobieta i społeczeństwo na ziemiach polskich w XIX w.*, Zbiór studiów pod red. A. Żarnowskiej i A. Szwarca, Warszawa 1990, pp. 139–160.