

## **Life in the seventeenth and eighteenth century Christian and Muslim settings through the Prism of the Jewish Subjects**

### **Abstract**

In this comparative thesis two types of civilizations in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries stand side by side with a special focus on the topic of converts and religious conversion to and from Judaism. The Latin Christian civilization is represented by the Habsburg Empire, while the Islamic civilization is represented by the Ottoman Empire. These two religious, political and cultural settings managed religious minorities differently, but at the same time there were ongoing encounters of various character between them in the studied period. This thesis is based mainly on the Jewish responsa literature, which recorded everyday problems tackled by the Jewish communities. In a complementary way, historical documents of state provenance were taken into account. These were primarily records of ecclesiastical provenance for the Habsburg part and critical editions of court records (sijills) for the Ottoman part. The comparative analysis was carried out in multiple modes against the backdrop of concepts of legal spaces and social figurations as formulated by Norbert Elias. In the first mode, the thesis examines how converts and religious conversion are reflected in the responsa literature. In the other layer the exponents of state power and their attitudes to converts to the official religion help to grasp ways in which they understood and presented their own legal system and the status of particular legal systems. Two main spheres of law serve as parameters of this thesis: inheritance and family law. The work pays special attention to the rupture that conversion to the official religion caused in the framework of the nuclear family. The introductory methodological chapter is followed by the theoretical part explaining various legal aspects of religious conversion to and from Judaism from the Jewish legal perspective. Two other parts of the thesis, further divided geographically into two subdivisions, cope with conversion to and from Judaism in each part. The converts and the problem of religious conversion are viewed as indicators of Early Modern cultural categories which framed the everyday historical experience of the individual. The same theme is presented from the Jewish perspective as an indicator of belonging to the Jewish imagined community and the delineation of its frontiers.