Let $\theta$ be an involution of the finite dimensional reductive Lie algebra $\mathfrak{g}$ and $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{k} \oplus \mathfrak{p}$ be the associated Cartan decomposition. Denote by $K \subset G$ the connected subgroup having $\mathfrak{k}$ as Lie algebra. The $K$-module $\mathfrak{p}$ is the union of the subsets $\mathfrak{p}^\ell := \{ x \mid \dim K.x = \ell \}$, $\ell \in \mathbb{N}$, and the $K$-sheets of $(\mathfrak{g}, \theta)$ are the irreducible components of the $\mathfrak{p}^m$. The sheets can be, in turn, written as a union of so-called Jordan $K$-classes. We introduce conditions in order to describe the sheets and Jordan classes in terms of Slodowy slices. When $\mathfrak{g}$ is of classical type, the $K$-sheets are shown to be smooth; if $\mathfrak{g} = \mathfrak{gl}_N$ a complete description of sheets and Jordan classes is then obtained.

**Keywords:** Semisimple Lie algebra, symmetric Lie algebra, sheet, Jordan class, Slodowy slice, nilpotent orbit, root system.

**MSC:** 14L30, 17B20, 22E46