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Stepfamilies across Ethnicities

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INTRODUCTION

Differences between Western and East Central European Patterns of Remarriage and Their Consequences for Children Living in Stepfamilies

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In the preindustrial period, children were significantly more likely to lose a parent before they reached adulthood for a number of reasons, including disease, childbed mortality, famines and wars. To secure the upbringing of surviving children (or even simply the birth of children) and to ensure economic survival, many widowed parents sought to rebuild broken families by remarrying. As a result, it was not uncommon for people to live as members of stepfamilies, either as stepchildren with halfsiblings and/or stepsiblings or as stepparents. Until divorce became largely a civil institution in the so-called West and, in the twentieth century, began to become more economically feasible and socially acceptable, stepfamilies came into being primarily because of death and not divorce. Thus, it follows that stepfamily experiences before these changes differed for children in some key aspects, while there were also important similarities on the basis of which meaningful comparisons can be made. Two articles in this thematic issue deal, however, with the history of the institution of divorce and the blended families which came up in the wake of the breakup of a marriage, since divorce in East Central Europe was, if not common, certainly not an exceptional practice, neither in Jewish nor in Protestant communities.

Burgeoning historical interest in stepfamilies began among scholars in the United States,¹ where the ratio of children and adults living in stepfamilies to children and adults living in traditional families is the highest in the modern West,² and the growing sociological and psychological secondary literature has been attempting to address this phenomenon. *Stepfamilies in Europe 1400–1800*,

1 Lisa Wilson, *Stepfamilies in early America* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

2 Rose Kreider, Daphne Lofquist, “Adopted Children and Stepchildren: 2010. Population Characteristics,” *US Census Bureau* (2014) April, 20–572. <https://www.census.gov/library/publications/2014/demo/p20-572.html>.

a collection of essays edited by Lyndan Warner, was perhaps the first major step in the comparative study of premodern stepfamilies.³ One of the strengths of the collection is that it reconsiders some of the findings of the extensive studies concerning remarriage patterns and examines the frequency and structures of stepfamilies which came into existence as a consequence of remarriage (such as the higher presence of stepmothers compared to stepfathers). Moreover, by analyzing a wide range of written and visual sources with a sharp eye on stepfamilies, it also constructs a cultural-historical narrative of relationships within the stepfamily, thus shedding light, for example, on the supportive and caring roles played by stepparents and step-kin and encouraging us to discard the fairytale figure and plot woven around the image of the wicked stepmother.

Our research group, which has enjoyed the funding and support of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences,⁴ aims to follow both lines of this research agenda, shifting the emphasis, however, from northwestern Europe and the Mediterranean, the main focus of Warner's volume, to East Central Europe (Hungary, Romania, Russia, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Croatia, and Poland). Moreover, as we rely on quantitative approaches, we offer more insight into the stepfamily dynamics of non-elite groups, and the ethnic and religious diversity of the region allows us to draw meaningful distinctions and comparisons within the region. Our fundamental intention in this thematic issue is to provide a clear overview of this work in progress, presenting demographic, legal, and social-historical approaches to the study of the history of the stepfamily in a variety of social, ethnic, and religious settings. The introduction below, however, focuses on the preliminary findings of our research concerning one theme, the gendered patterns of remarriage in East Central Europe and some of the consequences of these patterns for the caregiving and rearing of children in stepfamilies.

A fair amount of knowledge has been accumulated with regard to the remarriage patterns in northwestern and southern Europe (the “West”) and Asia (the “East”).⁵ One finding which had become common knowledge in the

3 Lyndan Warner, ed., *Stepfamilies in Europe, 1400–1800* (Abingdon and New York: Routledge, 2018).

4 The project entitled *Integrating Families: Stepfamilies and Children in the Past*, carried out by HAS Momentum Family History Research Group. <http://www.families.hu/en/>

5 On the extensive historiography of remarriage pattern in pre-modern Europe, see Warner, *Stepfamilies*, 266–67. On Japan: Satomi Kurosu, “Remarriage in a Stem Family System in Early Modern Japan,” *Continuity and Change* 22, no. 3 (2007): 429–58. Comparatively: Satomi Kurosu, Christer Lundh, and Marco Breschi, “Remarriage, Gender, and Rural Households: A Comparative Analysis of Widows and Widowers in Europe and Asia,” in *Similarity in Difference: Marriage in Europe and Asia, 1700–1900*, edited by Lundh Christer and Kurosu Satomi (Cambridge, Massachusetts, London: The MIT Press, 2014), 169–208.

secondary literature is simply that, between 1500 and 1900, men remarried more frequently as well as more rapidly than women after the loss of a spouse, both in the West and the East. Even when they were already middle-aged or older, they often sought and found new wives, and the likelihood that they would remarry declined less over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries than it did among women.⁶ Our preliminary findings concerning East Central Europe, however, only partly correspond to this pattern of remarriage. Some divergences from the familiar model seem to have emerged. Analyses of a variety of cases and data sets done according to divergent methodologies seem to suggest that both widowers and widows, but especially widows, were more likely to remarry (less content with staying alone) than in the West.⁷ How can we account for this difference? What factors made it more likely that a widow would find a new spouse?

In order to answer this question, it may well help to take into consideration the fact that the intention to remarry was very much influenced by the number and ages of children a widow or widower had.⁸ Widowed fathers often remarried within a matter of weeks or months if they had infants who were still suckling,⁹ and the community itself seems, for this reason, to have been less concerned with whether or not they waited for the usual year of mourning to pass. Thus, parents with small children constituted a significant share of the people who remarried (alongside widows and widowers who had not had any children from their first marriages and thus still sought an heir or heirs). For a widowed parent

6 Antoinette Fauve-Chamoux, "Revisiting the decline in remarriage in early modern Europe: the case of Rheims in France," *The History of the Family* 15 (2010): 283–97.

7 On the rural context (Székely Land, today in Romania), see Sándor Lakatos, "Házasságkötés, megözvegyülés és újraházasodás a Homoródok vidékén 1830–1939 között," forthcoming in *Özvegystratégiák és árvasorsok Magyarországon, 1550–1940*, edited by Gabriella Erdélyi, Budapest 2020. Lakatos examined 2,600 marriages. In comparison with averages in the West of 10–15 percent, 21 percent of marriages involved a widow (18,3 percent) or/and a widower (16,2 percent) or a divorced man or woman. For similar results see Levente Pakot, "Megözvegyülés és újraházasodás székelyföldi rurális közösségekben, 1840–1930," *Demográfia* 52 (2009): 55–88, 62–63. On urban communities, see Árpád Tóth, "Mostohasors? Mozaiksaládokban felnőtt gyermekek érvényesülési lehetőségei a pozsonyi evangélikus közösségben, 1740–1850," forthcoming *ibid.* Edina Tünde Gál, "A kolera szegényei: Árvák és özvegyek az 1873-as kolozsvári kolerajárvány után," *Ibid.* Cf. Swedish remarriage patterns: Martin Dribe, Christer Lundh, "Social Norms and Human Agency: Marriage in Nineteenth Century Sweden," in *Similarity in Difference*, 233.

8 Gál, "A kolera szegényei."

9 It would be worth studying the demographics of remarriage from the perspective of breastfeeding customs. Alice Velková and Petr Tureček have taken a step in this direction: Alice Velková, Petr Tureček, "Influence of parental death on child mortality and the phenomenon of the stepfamily in western Bohemia in 1708–1834." Forthcoming in *Journal of Family History*, thematic issue on stepfamilies.

with small children, remarriage served as an attempt to replace the lost parent, something children who had already reached adulthood would have needed much less. This was a salient pattern both in the East and the West (including East Central Europe), and it merits noting that in both parts of the world, widowed men with small children had less difficulty finding a new spouse (and stepmother for their children) than women with small children.¹⁰

We also identified at least one other significant difference between the patterns prevailing in the West and the patterns in East Central Europe: new marriages which were “uneven” from the perspective of age were less common than they were in the West, and this was true in areas with very different economic and social circumstances. It was the case, for instance, among the German-speaking burghers of Buda and Óbuda in the eighteenth century and in the Transylvanian city of Kolozsvár (today Cluj) and Transylvanian Székely villages in the nineteenth century.¹¹ A widower in East Central Europe was more likely than a widower in the West to marry a widow instead of a maiden (in the West, only 20 percent of widowers who remarried married a widow, while this figure was 45.3 percent in Transylvania).¹² In other words, beyond the familiar scenarios of a childless widower taking a second wife who was significantly younger and of a significantly lower social status in the hope of having an heir or a younger apprentice marrying a master’s widow in part to gain a claim to her workshop and guild membership, such uneven marriages were not a customary practice. How might one explain this difference? Given the higher mortality rates, were there simply more widows and widowers on the marriage market? Was there greater communal anxiety about single men and women? Was living in a marriage a more important factor from the perspective of social prestige and male/female honor?

10 Lundh, Kurosu, Breschi, “Remarriage, Gender,” 205. Tóth however in the same article “Mostohasors” has found that in Pressburg (Slovakia) widowed women with children remarried more often than men.

11 Eleonóra Géra, “Városi és kamarai árvák a 18. századi Budán,” forthcoming in *Özvegystratégiák*, Katalin Simon, “Remarriage Patterns and Stepfamily Formation in a German-speaking Market-Town in Eighteenth-Century Hungary,” in present issue of the *Hungarian Historical Review*; Lakatos, “Házasságkötés,” 62; Gál, “A kolera szegényei.”

12 Pakot, “Megözvegyülés,” 62. Michel Oris, Emiko Ochiai, “Family Crisis in the Context of Different Family Systems: Frameworks and Evidence,” in R. Derosas, M. Oris, eds., *When Dad Died: individuals and families coping with distress in past societies* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2002), 17–80. In Sweden in the nineteenth century, marriages between widows and widowers accounted for only 10 percent of the total number of remarriages. Dribe, Lundh, “Social Norms,” 235.

The above differences, including the significantly greater frequency of marriages among widows and widowers in comparison to the situation in the West, suggests that a widow in East Central Europe had more value on the marriage market and was more interested in remarrying. One explanation for this difference may well lie in the different marital property regimes and the inheritance practices in the two parts of Europe. Clearly, one element which would have left a widow more eager to remarry is the simple fact that, in East Central Europe, she did not lose control over her properties. The mixed property regime which applied to most marriages in Hungary (there were both shared properties and individually owned properties) gave a widow more independence and more rights than regimes under which a husband acquired full control of his wife's properties and, indeed, was the only legal entity in a marriage (one extreme but illuminating example of this was the legal doctrine of coverture, which remained part of common law in England throughout most of the nineteenth century).¹³ Furthermore, both in rural peasant communities and in urban communities, girls' and women's claims to inheritance were equal to those of men.¹⁴ It was therefore not uncommon for a widow to inherit her husband's estates (meaning in this case plots of land worked by serfs) and to continue to manage these estates. Widows who belonged to the urban burgher class inherited half of any properties or wealth that they acquired with their husbands, and again, it was not uncommon for a widow to continue to manage these properties (including shops and businesses), at least for a time. Together with a woman's individual properties (meaning what she had inherited from her mother and father), this wealth acquired in the course of a marriage meant that a widow seeking to remarry was often considerably wealthier than unmarried women who were seeking spouses and therefore had at least this advantage on the marriage market. In places where women were unable, legally, to inherit properties from their husbands (for instance Italy and England) and were given back only what

13 Sándor Nagy, *Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet: Válás Budapesten, 1850–1914* (Budapest, 2018), 320. On the Russian marital property regime, which was very similar to the Hungarian regime, see Barbara Alpern Engel, *Breaking the Ties That Bound: The Politics of Marital Strife in Late Imperial Russia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2011); Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London–New York: Routledge, 1993).

14 The inheritance model among the nobility, in contrast, was patrilineal. Girls were entitled to one-fourth of the patrimony, which they usually received in personal assets and money as a dowry when they married. It became theirs again if their husbands died, and this complemented the dowry which they received from their husbands' estates.

they had brought to the marriage in dowry,¹⁵ they did not have the advantage of a financially favorable situation in the competition with unmarried women for spouses on the marriage market. This may well explain, at least partly, why a widower in these regions was more likely than a widower in East Central Europe to choose an unmarried woman as his bride. Thus, in Hungary, whether they belonged to the peasantry or the urban burgher community, widows were both more appealing as potential mates than widows in the West and they were also more likely to consider remarrying, as remarriage did not threaten their financial independence.

Furthermore, over the course of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, married women in the West lost rights to own properties independently, a tendency which the ethos of motherhood and the home may have been used to conceal. In contrast, no similar trends have been identified in Hungary.¹⁶ As a consequence, at least in part, of these factors, widows were less likely to remain single, including widows with young children.

How did these differences between the remarriage patterns in the West and patterns in East Central Europe affect the experiences of children? What influence did the stronger inclination among widowed parents in East Central Europe to remarry have on their lives, or the fact that many of the stepmothers in these new marriages were not young women who had been unmarried before they came into the broken families, but rather were themselves mothers with small children from an earlier marriage? Demographers tend to examine how deaths and remarriages of mothers and fathers affect their children's likelihood of surviving, marrying, and moving out of the parental home.¹⁷ While they tend to agree that a mother's death posed the single greatest threat to her children's changes of survival,¹⁸ this simple picture becomes more complex when one takes into consideration the effects of the arrival into a family of a

15 Jutta Sperling, "The Economics and Politics of Marriage," in *Ashgate Research Companion to Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Couchmann Jane, Poska Allyson (Routledge, 2016), 214–30, 214.

16 Cavallo-Warner, "Introduction," in Sandra Cavallo, Lyndan Warner, eds., *Widowhood in Medieval and Early Modern Europe*, (Harlow: Routledge, 1999), 13. Nagy, "Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet," 317–30.

17 See for example on the timing of marriage of stepchildren: Levente Pakot, "Nemek és nemzedékek: Demográfiai reprodukció a 19–20. századi Székelyföldön," in *Központi Statisztikai Hivatal Népszégtudományi Intézetének Kutatási Jelentései* 95 (Budapest, 2013), 83.

18 E. Beekink, F. van Poppel, A. C. Liefbroer, "Surviving the Loss of the Parent in a Nineteenth-century Dutch Provincial Town," *Journal of Social History*, 32 (1999): 641–69; R. Sear, R. Mace, "Who keeps children alive? A review of the effects of kin on child survival," *Evolution and Human Behavior* 29 (2008):1–18.

stepmother.¹⁹ The beneficial influence of a stepmother on the mortality rates of children in Sweden and China in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, for instance, are clear, though in some regions, such as Quebec (within New France), mortality rates among children living with a stepmother were the same as mortality rates among children whose fathers did not remarry. Indeed, in the case of one German community in the eighteenth century, the arrival of a stepmother actually increased mortality among children from the previous marriage, especially girls.²⁰ However, Péter Óri's analysis of child mortality in the market town of Zsámbék (in Hungary, near Budapest), which had a Catholic and German-speaking peasant and craftsmen population, pinpoints instead primarily boys on whom their father's remarriage to a widowed woman had negative effects, especially if she brought her own children to the household.²¹

The question of the effects of stepfathers on stepchildren has not been given as much attention in the secondary literature. In the course of our comparative study of the questions of remarriage and stepfamilies in East Central Europe, we came across particularly interesting findings in eighteenth-century Western Bohemia. The authors Velková and Tureček narrowed the focus of their study to the fates of children five years old or younger, and they discovered that the death of the father was a particularly grave threat to the children because, when the mother was compelled to play the father's role, this meant that she was less able to play the traditional role of a mother as caregiver. When children were between the ages of two and five, stepmothers and stepfathers essentially could replace biological parents. In other words, what was important was not a biological ("blood") relationship, but rather the fulfillment of the role of parent as caregiver and provider.²² The articles in this thematic issue offer considerable evidence in support of this conclusion in a variety of situations.

19 S. Åckerman, U. Högberg, T. Andersson, "Survival of orphans in 19th century Sweden: The importance of remarriages." *Acta Paediatrica* 85 (1996): 981–85; C. Campbell, J. Z. Lee, "When husbands and parents die: Widowhood and orphanhood in late Imperial Liaoning, 1789–1909," in R. Derosas, M. Oris, *When Dad died*, 301–22.

20 Kai P. Willführ, Alain Gagnon, "Are Stepparents Always Evil? Parental Death, Remarriage, and Child Survival in Demographically Saturated Krummhörn (1720–1859) and Expanding Québec (1670–1750)," *Biodemography and Social Biology* 59, no. 2 (2013): 191–211.

21 Péter Óri, "Life courses in 18–19th century Hungary: the impact of the parents' widowhood and remarriage on their children's survival, Zsámbék, 1720–1850." Forthcoming in *Journal of Family History*, thematic issue on stepfamilies.

22 Velková, Tureček, "Influence of parental death."

An examination of remarriage patterns in the Romanian principalities (Moldavia and Wallachia) in the eighteenth century also calls attention to the figure of the stepfather. In practice, it was uncommon, both among the lower classes and among the social elites (the boyars) to take guardianship of children away from their mothers or to take children out from under their mothers' care. Almost without exception, children remained with their mothers, both in cases of divorce and in cases of widowhood and even if the mother remarried. As a result, instead of the high frequency of stepmothers, as was the case in the West, stepfathers became more typical figures of family life. This practice (children remaining with their mothers instead of becoming parts of their fathers' households, even when their mothers remarried and in spite of the fact that the society was patrilineal, both in its attitudes towards lineage and in its inheritance customs) was utterly extraordinary and contrasted starkly with practices in other parts of Europe, where the children of mothers who remarried had varying fates, but very often did not remain in their mothers' households.²³ The relationship between mother and child seems to have been particularly tight and strong, even if the control of the father's family over children grew in parallel with the children's inheritance. Is it possible that one factor which played a significant role in this difference was that divorce was not simply possible in the Orthodox Church, but was a relatively common practice?

And in contrast with a widow, who could reclaim her dowry and was entitled to a dower, a divorced woman often lost even her dowry and was under more economic pressure to remarry. Was this too perhaps a factor? A reading of the Church litigation records reveals cases in which the difference between law, according to which a remarried mother could not be the guardian of the children from her earlier marriage, and common practice was stark (in other words, remarried women often remained the guardians of their children in practice). Or was the bond between mother and children influenced by the distinctive aspects of female property rights and their devolution in the Romanian principalities? Was it also a factor that, in the Romanian principalities, a woman's dowry, which she received as part of her paternal patrimony, formed part of her children's

23 See for example Sylvie Perrier, "Stepfamily relationships in multigenerational households: The case of Toulouse, France in the eighteenth century," in *Stepfamilies in Europe 1400–1800*, ed. by Lyndan Warner (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), 187–203. On the gender asymmetry of parent-child relations after remarriage (in other words, in stepfamilies) and the possibilities of inclusive stepfamilies (i.e. remarried mothers living together with their children from their first marriages even though they could not be their guardians), see also Warner's conclusions in the same volume, 248–52.

inheritance, and thus the dowry was not given back to her family of birth even if she remarried? Remarriage, thus, did not pose any threat to the financial interests and wellbeing of the children, unlike (for instance) in the case of the Florentine aristocracy, where a woman who remarried reclaimed ownership of her dowry (more precisely, it became the property of her father and brothers) and for this reason was labeled a cruel mother by her children.²⁴

To return to the perspective of demographers: why did children in the aforementioned eighteenth-century German community whose widowed fathers remarried end up at a disadvantage when compared to children whose widowed fathers did not remarry? Was this a consequence of neglect, abuse, undernourishment, or competition with halfsiblings and/or stepsiblings? Willführ and Gagnon, who adopted an evolutionary approach to their interpretation of the sources, suggest that in all likelihood the explanation lies not in the abuse or neglect suffered by children because of a stepmother's indifference or hostility, but rather in the father's and stepmother's lack of parenting skills.²⁵ This is an interesting hypothesis, and it is particularly thought-provoking if one takes into consideration the distinctive feature of remarriage patterns in Hungary, namely that a marriage between a widow and a widower was much more common as in the West. Given their experiences in their first marriages, widowed mothers who remarried may well have had better skills in caregiving and childrearing than new wives who had not been married or raised children before. It is not immediately obvious, of course, that fathers who were seeking to remarry necessarily took into consideration a prospective wife's talents or experience as a caregiver for children. It is also worth considering the extent to which the relationships between husband and wife, which as noted earlier were more balanced from the perspective of age than in the West, affected relationships between stepparents and stepchildren. In our search for insights into the individual considerations of parents and experiences of children in these situations, we are compelled to rely on ego-documents. A text left by an anonymous Jewish memoirist from seventeenth-century Bohemia offers an example of one such ego-document. The author remembers his stepmother as having been very young and thus having lacked parenting skills. His stepmother, he writes, was "still a young child who did not know how to bring us up in cleanliness, as is necessary with little

24 Giulia Calvi, "'Cruel' and 'nurturing' mothers: The construction of motherhood in Tuscany (1500–1800)," *L'Homme* 17, no. 1 (2013): 75–92.

25 Kai Willführ, Alain Gagnon, "Are Stepmothers Evil or Simply Unskilled? Infant Death Clustering in Remcomposed Families," *Biodemography and Social Biology* 58, no. 2 (2012): 149–61.

boys, nor could she properly care for us when we were sick.”²⁶ The stepmother, according to her stepson, was not evil or abusive, but simply ignorant and unskilled, as she was young and lacked experience as a parent.

The research by Péter Óri, another member of our research group, throws some light on the other side of the coin. His study of child mortality suggests that widows with children of their own from a previous marriage tended to favor their children over the children brought to a second (or later) marriage by their new husbands. The arrival of a stepmother who brought older stepchildren into the household and the new family put the sons of her new husband at risk first and foremost. In the competition for resources and care, the father’s children, and in particular his sons, were at a disadvantage.²⁷

In the period between adolescence and marriage, when childrearing became for the most part the responsibility of the father, the situation of children changed, or at least so the findings of our research group suggest. We used quantitative analyses of data from Church records of births, marriages, and deaths to identify patterns in family formation (family reconstitution) and study the fates of stepchildren. In a manner which, to my knowledge, is pioneering in the secondary literature, they examined the question of whether, in the communities on which they focused, sons and daughters from a previous marriage were at a disadvantage (as one would expect on the basis of collective fears, the law, and stereotypes) in comparison with children of a new marriage when it came to their chances for success in adulthood (including career, marriage, and social status).

On the basis of data concerning stepchildren belonging to the community of German-speaking Lutherans in the city of Pressburg (Pozsony in Hungary, today Bratislava, Slovakia), a community numbering roughly 5,000 people, it was unusual to draw distinctions between the stepchildren and children of remarried parents in the division of family wealth and resources. Boys were given instruction and taught a trade before they married, and stepdaughters were just as likely as daughters of the new marriage to find husbands whose social status matched theirs. Children inherited the social status of their biological parents, which meant that there could be differences in status between halfsiblings, and there were significant differences between the opportunities afforded to sons and the opportunities afforded to daughters, but this was the case among siblings as

26 Tali Berner, “Constructions of Childhood in Early Modern Jewish Ego-Documents,” *Journal of Family History* 39 (2014): 101–13, 107.

27 Óri, “Life courses.”

well, not just stepsiblings. In other words, these differences in opportunity were determined by gender, not by whether a given child was from a first or second marriage.²⁸

The study of another community also suggested that the figure of the neglected or abused stepchild was an exception more than a rule (fairytales notwithstanding). In the 50 stepfamilies in a Transdanubian market town (Csetnek, *Štítník* in Slovakia today) in the middle of the eighteenth century, halvesiblings (stepchildren and children) had the same life expectancy and the same chances of marrying.²⁹ These findings may seem to contradict the image one has from the writings of stepchildren memoirists, who seem to have feared that when their widowed parent remarried, this would lead to their marginalization in the family.³⁰ Should we perhaps consider the image of the stepmother as the embodiment of cruelty at least in part (perhaps in large part) a figure woven of the fears of children from first marriages? Further research is needed in order to determine the chances halvesiblings in other communities had (beyond the Slovak-speaking Catholic peasants and German-speaking Lutheran burghers), including life expectancy, career, marriage, etc.

It is worth summarizing here the initial findings of our work, which this thematic issue presents in greater detail in the individual articles. In East Central Europe, widowed spouses seem to have been somewhat more inclined (even in later periods of life) to remarry than in the West.³¹ Thus, single-parent families, especially with small children, were rarer in comparison with reconstituted families. Children in these stepfamilies may have been given better care and thus had better chances of survival presumably in no small part because in a marriage between a widow and a widower, which was more common than in the West, both parents were likely already to have had experience raising and providing care for children. Whatever disadvantages may have been caused by rivalries between the children brought into the new unions and their younger halvesiblings, they were offset by an attitude towards parenting according to which the parents were

28 Tóth, “Mostohasors?”

29 Baros-Gyimóthy Eszter, “Édesek és mostohák: Gyermezsorsok a csetneki katolikus egyházközség csonka- és mozaikcsaládjában, 1735–1807,” in forthcoming *Özvegystratégiák*.

30 Stephen Collins, “British Stepfamily Relationships, 1500–1800,” *Journal of Family History* 16, no. 4 (1991): 331–44.

31 On this point and only on this point, our findings correspond to Hajnal’s model of first marriages in Eastern Europe. In Eastern Europe, marriage was simply far more common. In the West, there were more people who remained unmarried. See Kurosu, Lundh, “Remarriage,” 204. Kurosu and Lundh see no correlation between marriage patterns as defined by John Hajnal and remarriage patterns.

as responsible for raising and providing for stepchildren as they were for rearing their biological children. One of the goals of the research our group continues to pursue is to arrive at a more nuanced understanding of stepfamily formation and relationships within stepfamilies within a regionally and socially comparative framework, taking into consideration such aspects as marital property regimes, inheritance practices, kinship structures, and the cultural and religious meanings and values of kinship ties.



ARTICLES

Dynasty as a Patchwork House, or the (Evil) Stepmother: The Example of Zofia Jagiellonka

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The significant age difference between Princess Zofia Jagiellonka and her husband had as one advantage for the princess that she had no competitors within her age group (e.g. a stepmother). Moreover, her stepdaughters were approximately the same age and, after her husband's death, she found herself in similar circumstances to the as a widow. Zofia Jagiellonka eventually resolved the long-standing relationship between her husband and his mistress, knowing in this regard how to defend her social position. She consciously took up the role of mediator among the relatives, and she had a mitigating effect on the tensions between father and son. Her social consciousness included providing for the welfare of the new family by meeting the expectations placed on her with regards to her stepchildren. Her life was not that of the stereotypical “evil stepmother.” Rather, she was someone from whom her stepchildren and others repeatedly sought counsel. Through her royal birth, she was (with regard to her social status) superior to her Guelph relatives, and she had the king—her brother—as her protector. In terms of her relationship to her stepchildren, it was perhaps a great advantage that she herself bore no children, and thus there was no competitive milieu at the court in Wolfenbüttel.

Keywords: aristocratic stepfamily, stepmother, stepchildren, widowhood, court in Wolfenbüttel

Already in Virgil's his third eclogue we find mention of *iniusta noverca*.¹ In fairy tales such as Snow White, Cinderella, or Little Sister and Little Brother, the evil stepmother appears in a central role, albeit predominantly since the nineteenth century. Today, words conjoined with “step” carry a pejorative connotation, and not just in German; for example, Polish and Italian both talk of dealing with someone/something in a “stepmotherly” way (*traktować kogoś/coś po macoszemu*, *trattare qualcosa/qualcuno da matrigna*). This shows that the middle-class family—comprised of father, mother, and children—was seen as the norm. And whereas

1 “P. Vergili Maronis Ecloga Tertia,” last accessed October 3, 2019, <http://www.thelatinlibrary.com/vergil/ec3.shtml>. For help with the English version I would like to thank Philip Jacobs.

an aunt or a sister-in-law could serve as a “second mother” for the care and rearing of children, a stepmother was always perceived as a stranger.²

Blended families, as it turns out, were quite common in the early modern period, a simple result of the fact that people did not live long lives and women were not legally competent to act on their own, that is why the widows soon got married again.³ While an untold number of men fell in battle, for women the rigours of childbirth were critical moments in life, moments which many did not survive. One can observe the *famiglia* as a dynamic process in which different constellations of individuals, bringing their respective circles with them, came together and then once again dispersed.⁴ With this, the relative ages of the members fluctuated and generations could overlap, making that the nuclear family was the exception. This was also true in the case of dynasties: the continued existence of the ruling house was dependent on a rightful heir, whose appearance or non-appearance led to either the idealization or diminution of the wife/mother. It was at this point that economic and political factors came into play: marriage was subject to strict regulations and prohibitions, both secular and religious.

The Jagiellonians, originally from Lithuania, began their rule in Poland toward the end of the fourteenth century.⁵ Władysław II Jagiello’s first marriage ended suddenly due to the childbirth-related death of his wife Jadwiga, who was heiress to the throne. His second wife Anna left behind a daughter, also named Jadwiga (1408–1431). His third spouse, Elżbieta, whom he married in 1417 and became the stepmother of Jadwiga, brought with her children and stepchildren from her previous marriages;⁶ she soon became ill and bore no further children. The royal stepfather took care to arrange marriages for the two youngest stepdaughters. Finally, Jagiello’s fourth marriage—at around seventy years of age—produced three sons. The stepmother, Zofia, was said to have poisoned the sole remaining biological child from the previous marriages of her husband, the daughter Jadwiga.⁷ So, the dynasty of the Jagiellonians in Poland-

2 Lanzinger, *Verwaltete Verwandtschaft*, 261.

3 Warner, *Stepfamilies in Europe*.

4 Hareven, “The Family as Process,” 322–29.

5 Bues, *Die Jagiellonen*.

6 The oldest Otton died in 1420, so Jan (d. 1476) inherited Pilica and Łańcut, and was voivode of Cracow (1459–1472). In 1404 Jadwiga married Jan Rupelny, the heir of Tocholów. Elżbieta (d. 1452) wed to Bolko V, Duke of Opole, in 1418 and in 1423 Eufemia (d. 1424) married to Jan z Jičina. Niemczyk, “Kilka uwag,” 138–51.

7 Wdowiszewski, *Genealogia Jagiellonów*, 48; Czwojdrak, *Zofia Holszańska*.

Lithuania began with a truly “patchwork family”; as for what its daily life was like, however, we know very little. The next generation of monarchs in Poland would ultimately prove quite healthy and the familial situation was uncluttered: Kazimierz Jagiellończyk had thirteen children with his Habsburg wife, with only two of the girls dying at a young age.⁸

In this paper I will follow the fate of a Jagiellonian princess of the following generation who married an elderly Duke of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel. I will examine how she matched the challenges in the new family and how she got along with her stepchildren, especially how she reacted to the illegitimate “step-family” and how she acted as mediator in the conflict between her husband and the hereditary prince.

The Royal Family in Poland

In the sixteenth century, things became more complicated. Zygmunt I, as prince, had a steady relationship with a mistress, who bore him three children. Prior to his marrying at the proper social level for a royal, his mistress Katarzyna Telniczanka was married off to the Grand Treasurer of the Crown Andrzej Kościelecki, thereby staying within the royal orbit. Zygmunt’s illegitimate son Jan (1499–1538), vested with a papal dispensation for having been born outside of wedlock and raised to a noble rank, was later made Bishop of Vilnius and Posen and involved himself in political matters. Their first daughter Regina’s birth (1500/01–1526) was never legitimized; on October 20, 1518, she married the royal secretary Hieronim Szafraniec, with whom she had earlier attended the royal wedding in April that year. Finally, their second daughter Katarzyna (1503–1548) grew up at the royal court in Buda; in 1515 she attended the Jagiellonian Double Wedding in Vienna and in 1522 she became Countess Montfort.⁹ Rumours suggest that the fourth child of the now-officially married Katarzyna Telniczanka was also begotten by King Zygmunt, but in any case the girl, Beata Kościelecka, grew up at the court of Queen Bona Sforza.¹⁰ The illegitimate children were not in competition with the legitimate offspring and they were never kept away from court. Suitable partners were sought for the girls, and for

8 Interestingly, it seems as if the intention was simply to replace the child who had died, given that the next-born daughter received the same name. Consequently, there were three Elizabeths (one after the other).

9 So, Katarzyna attended (along with her cousin Anna of Bohemia and Hungary) the meeting in Vienna in 1515. For the wedding, see Burmeister, “Graf Georg III. von Montfort-Bregenz-Pfannberg,” 16–19.

10 Pawiński, *Młode lata Zygmunta Starego*, 56–61.

the boys a career in the church was possible. One might even suppose that this committed relationship to his mistress protected the king from the fate of his brothers, who died young of venereal disease.

The relationship of a stepmother to the children from the first marriage could be more difficult, since here there might well be competition among them. When Zygmunt I married for the second time in 1518, the daughters from his first marriage, Jadwiga (1513–1573) and Anna (1515–1520), were present at the wedding celebration, as noted by the chroniclers. After the early death of their mother, Barbara Szapolyai, in 1515, Jadwiga—for whom a husband was sought forthwith, but without success until 1535—and her sister were put under the charge of the Head of the Household, Mikołaj Piotrowski, and the female family members of the Great Chancellor of the Crown, Krzysztof Szydłowiecki. They lived in the princess house at the Wawel.¹¹

Bona Sforza did not have much contact with her underage stepdaughters, but she developed an especially close relationship with her first-born daughter Izabela (1519–1559).¹² After the heir to the throne, Zygmunt August (1520–1572) was born, he was followed by three sisters: Zofia (1522–1575), Anna (1523–1596), and Katarzyna (1526–1583). Queen Bona ensured that her daughters would have a good humanistic education. The princesses profited from the animated intellectual climate both at the court and in Cracow; they were living in the heyday of the Polish renaissance. In a period of religious tensions, the children were raised with an emphasis on tolerance, and all three inherited from their mother an enthusiasm for the arts. It was not easy for the three youngest daughters (who remained unmarried during their father's lifetime) to live for so long with such a domineering mother, initially at the Wawel and then in the Ujazdów castle near Warsaw. Princesses at their home court had no tasks other than to perform official duties, making marriage proved to be a good option.

A man twice the age of the thirty-three-year-old Zofia, Duke Heinrich II von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel, sought her hand;¹³ after some brief negotiations the marriage by proxy took place in Warsaw at the end of January 1556, marking the last family gathering of the Jagiellonians. Duke Heinrich had been widowed fifteen years earlier and had not contemplated marrying again. In total, twenty-

11 Fischinger and Fabiański, *The Renaissance Wawel*, 189f.

12 Izabela spent her childhood with her parents and was always taken along on trips; she remained closely tied to her mother throughout her life.

13 Duke Heinrich's mother, Katharina von Pommern, was a sister-in-law of Zofia Jagiellonka's aunt, Duchess Anna von Pommern.

one children—of whom eleven were legitimate—had seemed to secure the continuation of the dynasty. However, the duke had lived for decades with his concubine Eva von Trott zu Solz (1506–1567), even during his first marriage.¹⁴ In 1532, after his paramour’s third pregnancy, the affair could no longer be kept secret. The duke sought to resolve the problem with a ruse: the sham burial of his lover as a plague victim.¹⁵ Even after that, an additional seven children were born in secret at the Stauffenburg and Liebenburg.

But the hereditary configuration changed dramatically in 1553 for the Wolfenbüttel branch of the Guelph dynasty: by then, four of the boys from the legitimate relationship had died at a young age, and in the battle of Sievershausen both the hereditary prince and his brother died. The continuation of the dynasty now hung solely on a single prince, Julius, who was eligible to inherit the crown, but with whom Heinrich absolutely did not get along. Heinrich’s sole purpose for entering into the marriage with the Jagiellonian princess in 1556 was perfectly clear: the birth of a son.

The New Relatives

After marriage, an educated and cosmopolitan princess could, at least superficially, find her way relatively quickly within the early modern class structure of her new court. Of course, there were often local idiosyncrasies to accommodate and language barriers or religious differences to overcome. How quickly she achieved a position of respect within the new court structure depended on her flexibility and perseverance. Support from her husband, her mother-in-law or other female relatives by marriage could help. What also proved useful was strong backing from her family of origin. Corresponding with cognate relatives, advisors, scholars, and artists allowed the princess to take part in public affairs, and being well-informed helped her to make the right decisions. This network of correspondents could turn out to be a sort of “life insurance.”

On February 22, 1556, after travelling for three weeks, Zofia Jagiellonka reached Wolfenbüttel, one of the many small towns in the Holy Roman Empire that hosted a ducal residence. Imposingly decorated as it was, her entrance into the town made quite an impression. Her spouse embraced the old knighthood

14 Kwan, “Gefangene der Liebe,” 23–35.

15 Having a mistress in the sixteenth century was not unusual, nor morally reprehensible. Rather what incensed Duke Heinrich’s contemporaries was the phony burial. His mistress was afterwards kept in castles (not unlike a prisoner), where the Duke could visit her undisturbed.

and the Catholic faith and was one of the last princes of this kind in the north of the empire. Princess Zofia was superior to him not only in social rank, but also intellectually. However, in Wolfenbüttel she was not surrounded by a flowering renaissance; the duchy had recently been ravaged by war and was devastated.¹⁶ Zofia was also in a difficult situation at court: her stepchildren were older than her, or only slightly younger; she had to tolerate the duke's well-known affair with a lady-in-waiting at the court, and consequently, his frequent absences; she sought as well to mediate the persistent and fierce confrontations between the duke and his only son. In addition, the hoped-for offspring (the sole reason for the marriage) never came to be.

The Wolfenbüttel branch of the Guelph dynasty was in fact quarrelling with other branches of the house, as well as with surrounding cities. Yet, her husband's age did bring advantages: the woman who would have been her mother-in-law had been dead for thirty years, and all of his siblings in the clerical state would live only a few more years.¹⁷ The brother-in-law, Christoph (1487–1558), archbishop of Bremen and bishop of Verden, not only had to do battle with the Lutherans, but also with his brother, who claimed the dioceses for his son.¹⁸ The next brother-in-law, Georg (1494–1566), after his nephew resigned as hereditary prince, became bishop of Minden in 1554, then in 1558 his brother's successor in Bremen and Verden, and led a cultured life while holding several sinecures. Her brother-in-law Wilhelm (1514–1557), who had been held prisoner by Duke Heinrich for years, was able (thanks to Mecklenburg's protection) to live out his life as a commander in Mirow.¹⁹ Sister-in-law Elisabeth was the abbess of Steterburg from approximately 1515 until 1560/63.²⁰ Duke Heinrich was involved in a lengthy dispute with his nephew, Franz I of Sachsen-Lauenburg, over the dowry of his sister Katharina, the widowed duchess of Sachsen-Lauenburg.²¹

16 From 1542 until 1547, the Duke himself had been held captive outside of his duchy. Bepler, *Kleine Wolfenbütteler*, 61–66, 74–77.

17 “Die Muetter soll der Tochter gesagt haben, den alten man zu nehmen nit scheuhn, dan sy hette Iren Vater auch altn genomen,” so was reported by Sigismund von Herberstein to King Ferdinand, Wien 10 I 1556: HHStA, StAbt Polen I 8 1556, fol. 1.

18 Reimann, “Christoph, Herzog von Braunschweig-Lüneburg-Wolfenbüttel,” 100–3.

19 Wilhelm von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel submitted a complaint against his brother; for example, in 1549 to the *Reichsbofrat*: HHStA RHR Judicialia APA 6–34; Lisch, “Neuere Geschichte der Johanniter-Comthurei Mirow;” 97–110.

20 Ruhlender, *Die Damen vom Stift Steterburg*.

21 NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 3.

The Illegitimate “Step-family”

All the problems in the highly complex social structure of the court quite quickly became apparent to Zofia Jagiellonka: namely, her husband’s mistress and the contact with the stepchildren. At that time the unmarried Hereditary Prince Julius and the youngest stepdaughter Clara lived in Wolfenbüttel, and the illegitimate Eitel Heinrich served at court. Naturally, Heinrich of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel did not immediately end the relationship with his long-time lover.²² In April 1556, Hereditary Prince Julius complained to his maternal relatives about rides “to the whorehouse” to Eva von Trott at Löwenburg.²³ During hunting trips, the duke would stay for a while with her; in the beginning, his new wife could not take any pleasure in such hunting outings. Evidently something changed later, for in 1563 we hear that Heinrich went on a hunt with his wife.²⁴ Whether the two women ever had direct contact with one another is not clear. The ducal court provided for the maintenance of a lavish court for the concubine and her daughters; the Wolfenbüttel court accounts show that they were afforded valuable fabrics and furs, silver objects and pearls, as well as history books.²⁵

Of the ennobled children (von Kirchberg), five of them would survive Eva von Trott and Zofia Jagiellonka.²⁶ The girls were well looked after by their father and given in marriage to distinguished officials at court. The widowed daughter, Bransifora, entered a second marriage on March 9, 1556, two weeks after the wedding of her father.²⁷ Sidonia von Kirchberg was married in 1560 to a councillor and captain from Schöningen, Christof von Weferling, and upon his death she received as dowager the Watzum estate.²⁸ The educated Eva von

22 Röhrig, *Mätressen und Favoriten*, 412f; Watanabe-O’Kelly, “Consort and mistress,” 90–99.

23 “So dann sei er, hertzog Julius, hiebevör offtermals mit dem vatter zu der Lowenburg zu der Trottin geritten, und aber alls er uff die letst solches nit mer tun wollen, sonder gesagt, dieweile er ime sonst niendert gebrauchen thete, so wollte er auch nit in das huren haus reitten...” Report of the Württemberg envoys to Wolfenbüttel, s.l. [20] IV 1566. HStAS, A 71 Bü 404.

24 Duke Heinrich to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 9 VIII 1563: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 23, fol. 11.

25 NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 56. See Sack, “Weitere Aufschlüsse über Eva von Trott,” 97–107.

26 Strombeck, “Eva von Trott,” 11–57.

27 Her husband, Christian von Janitz, a captain from Liebenburg, also fell in the battle of Sievershausen. She then married Georg von Beugetin, a captain from Schöningen, who later became the director of mines in Zillerfeld before his death in 1564. For the wedding, he had received an extensive fief; the court continued to pay for maintenance as well as any debts. See NLA WO 1 Alt 26 no. 208/ 77.

28 Duke Heinrich, Wolfenbüttel 10 IX 1565: NLA WO 1 Alt 27 no. 1082. Printed in Kratz, “Documentarische Nachrichten,” 79–327, suppl. no. 6, 316f., and Duke Heinrich, Wolfenbüttel 23 V 1566: *ibid.* no. 7, 318. She died around 1599.

Kirchberg remained unmarried; in the 1590s she is mentioned as a companion to the widowed Duchess Hedwig (1540–1602), daughter-in-law of Duke Heinrich.²⁹ The Kirchberg inheritance fell in 1606 to Eva's five nieces.³⁰

The two oldest sons, to the delight of their father, showed some military talent. Heinrich Theuerdanck (1524–1592) had been raised together with his half-brother who was of the same age. After Duke Heinrich's return to his duchy—he had been held prisoner in Hesse from 1542 until 1547—he put his house in order and on February 27, 1547, he enfeoffed the oldest son and his brothers with the fiefdom of Kirchberg, which they held for the rest of their lives and whose name they bore.³¹ In 1549 and again in 1570 (after the death of their father) the sons received writs of protection issued by the emperor.³² Even in the Guelph family, Heinrich made sure that his oldest sons would guarantee the perquisites for the illegitimate siblings.³³ Eight days after the battle of Sievershausen in 1553 and the deaths of the two sons, Hereditary Prince Julius had to commit himself to the following: upon his father's death, he would neither reduce nor suspend for Heinrich Theuerdank von Kirchberg, his mother, and his siblings the bequests assigned to them from the income and holdings of the Stauffenburg. These consisted of 12,000 gold gulden for him and his brothers and 4,000 *Joachimsthalers* for the sisters Sidonia and Eva. Furthermore, he had to leave unchanged, as well as protect, the rights of all those named.³⁴

Eitel Heinrich von Kirchberg (1537/40–1597), who lived in a house in Wolfenbüttel, served as master of the stables and councillor at the ducal court;³⁵ his twelve horses were kept at the court and his servants were fed from the court kitchen. He fought as a colonel in the 1570s in the Netherlands, shortly after which he was given diplomatic missions. In 1585 he supported Hereditary Prince Heinrich Julius (who lodged with him) in welcoming his bride.³⁶ Duke Heinrich had intended to legitimize his quite capable illegitimate son to be his successor, but the young man had declined the honour. Nevertheless the

29 The testament of Eva von Kirchberg from 1598: Stadtarchiv Hildesheim Best. 100–160 no. 291a.

30 NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 164.

31 Kratz, "Nachrichten," suppl. no. 1, 304–8.

32 Wien 21 I 1549 and 27 IX 1570: HHStA RHR Schutzbriefe 8-2-31; NLA WO 71 Urk no. 30.

33 Prince Karl Viktor and Prince Philipp Magnus, Wolfenbüttel, 26 IX 1551: NLA WO 2 Urk 1 no. 86a.

34 Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 17 VII 1553: NLA WO 2 Urk 1 no. 90a.

35 NLA WO 4 Alt 19 no. 962. Samse, *Die Zentralverwaltung*, 192.

36 NLA WO 1 Alt 6 no. 9; NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 141.

duke insisted that his legitimate son should have good relations with his half-brother.³⁷

As the youngest, Heinrich Karl von Kirchberg (ca. 1548–1591) was destined for the clerical state; in 1558 the priories of St. Crucis and St. Mauritius in Hildesheim were vested to him. He lived a princely life, to such an extent that complaints were frequently lodged that he did not carry out his duties as provost of the collegiate church,³⁸ and these complaints even made their way to the Imperial Chamber Court (*Reichskammergericht*).³⁹ Duke Julius protected his younger half-brother more than once and also paid his debts.⁴⁰ He died following a fall in the residence of his paternal nephew, Julius Heinrich, in Gröningen.

How eminently the von Kirchberg brothers were viewed in the duchy is shown by their positions in the funeral procession for Duke Julius in 1589. Eitel Heinrich led the seventh and final horse, right before the funeral horse that preceded the funeral carriage. “The whole Braunschweig coat of arms, carved and adorned with colours and gold,” was carried by Heinrich Karl following the carriage, and Heinrich Theuerdank carried a helmet “covered with black velvet and a band.”⁴¹ One can assume that the brothers had also been included in the funeral procession of their father; Duchess Zofia must have met them even if there is nothing to be found in the archival sources. The younger generation met among themselves, and while not as equals, their relations were nevertheless gracious. There was remarkably little potential for conflict in these relationships.⁴²

The Year of Transition: 1558

Zofia Jagiellonka was clever enough to accept her fate without complaint. As quickly as possible, she took advantage of the limited possibilities to cautiously effect what changes she could. Initially twenty-seven Polish men and women were in her household; three of her ladies-in-waiting married Wolfenbüttel

37 “Volgentz wolle der vatter, das er der Tröttin son, dem bastard, als einem bruder zuspreche...” Report of the Württemberg envoys to Wolfenbüttel, s.l. [20] IV 1566. HStAS A 71 Bü 404.

38 NLA WO 2 Alt no. 2227.

39 For example, see NLA HA, Hann. 27 Hildesheim no. 97, no. 939, and no. 2143.

40 NLA WO 1 Alt 10 no. 45.

41 “Das ganze Braunschweigische Wapen, geschnitzet und mit Farben und Golde staffirt ... mit schwarzem Sammit und einer Binden überzogen.” NLA HA Celle Br. 44 no. 1539; Bünting and Letzner, *Braunschweig-Lüneburgische Chronica*, 1077f.

42 See Schulz, *Von Bastarden und natürlichen Kindern*, 98–111.

court officials, remaining in Zofia's service until her death.⁴³ However, most of those who came with her left to return to their homeland within six to twenty-four months, so from an early stage her court household would have included German staff as part of it. In short order, the duchess learned German so as to communicate with her husband and staff.⁴⁴ She did not have her own office; in addition to her husband's correspondence, she fostered contact with the family members in an effort to preserve the dynasty.

Zofia Jagiellonka learned in the first two years how to make her way within the realm of Wolfenbüttel court relationships. The year 1558 brought many innovations, and she had a considerable part in this: one can even talk about this year being a *caesura* at the Wolfenbüttel court. Two years after the wedding, the dowry had been paid in full by Poland-Lithuania. From a family law perspective, the marriage was now a completed transaction, and Zofia was no longer a member of the Jagiellonian family: at her wedding she had renounced her rights to any inheritance.⁴⁵ At that point, the duchess had finally "arrived" in her new home. Fourteen days later, Zofia composed her will, in which she designated her husband as sole inheritor.⁴⁶ She made bequests to her unmarried sisters and stepdaughters, as well as to the women in her entourage. Also in 1558, Duke Heinrich surveyed Zofia's widow's seat, as that year's inventory of the manor house in Schöningen shows.⁴⁷ There was always a need for money in Wolfenbüttel, so in 1558 a battle began that lasted for many years regarding Zofia's maternal inheritance in Naples. Bona Sforza had bequeathed 50,000 ducats to each of her daughters.⁴⁸

There must have been some earnest discussions between Zofia and her husband. Settling the estates of his brothers Wilhelm and Christoph, as well as a protracted severe cold, reminded the sixty-nine-year-old duke of the fragility of life.⁴⁹ In this same year, Duke Heinrich dealt with his relationship to Eva

43 Urszula Czarnecka married the councillor Heinrich Grote, Zofia Czerwińska wed Wolf von Marwitz, and the secretary Agnieszka married Georg von der Lippe.

44 "Hetten nit geglaup't, das E[wer] L[iebden] so gar guett hochdeutsch mit Latteinischen buchstaben schreiben konnen." Duke Heinrich to Duchess Zofia, Greve 2 XI 1561: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 4, fol. 34.

45 Receipt for the reception of the third and final installment of the dowry, Wolfenbüttel 13 V 1558: AGAD perg. 5487, and Duchess Zofia's renunciation of the inheritance, Wolfenbüttel 23 II 1556: AGAD perg. 5480. Printed in Bues, *Zofia Jagiellonka*, no. I 6d, 91f., and no. I 5b, 71–73.

46 NLA WO 3 Urk 1 no. 9. Printed in Bues, *Zofia Jagiellonka*, no. II 1, 98–101.

47 NLA WO 8 Alt Schön no. 488.

48 In particular, NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 40, no. 41, and no. 42.

49 The letters at that time make frequent mention of Duke Heinrich's poor health: for example, "zubesorgen ist, ir f[ürstliche] g[naden] werde es nicht lange treiben." Prince Julius to Duke Christoph von Württemberg, Küstrin 10 IX 1558: HStAS A 71 Bü 412.

von Trott; he had a house built for her in Hildesheim, where she would live until her death in 1567. How Zofia Jagiellonka achieved this, and whether the royal relatives exerted any pressure, remains unclear.⁵⁰ We only know that Duke Heinrich spent almost all of August 1558 at Liebenburg. A letter he wrote from there to Duchess Zofia stated that the construction had been completely finished, the Bishop of Minden had not yet visited, but he wanted to take care of what she had requested.⁵¹ This can only relate to the planned transfer of his mistress to Hildesheim, because in the spring Heinrich had asked his brother—the provost from St. Crucis in Hildesheim—to ensure that Eva von Trott would be allowed to live in the associated court for the rest of her life,⁵² while the priory was promised to her son, Karl Heinrich.

A peculiarity in the marital contract of Duchess Zofia from November 30, 1555, lays out the *ius succedendi* for the expected sons of this union; after the wedding ceremony, on February 25, 1556, Duke Heinrich issued a *cautio de successione* in Wolfenbüttel.⁵³ However, things did not work out as he intended. After a couple of years, the ducal pair gave up hope of producing any children. The question of succession consequently remained acute: without a solution, the duchy would revert to the widely-branched Guelph dynasty. Therefore, the relationship to the legitimate hereditary prince, Julius, from Duke Heinrich's first marriage (and with whom he was estranged) somehow had to be resolved.⁵⁴

The Conflict between Husband and Son

Since Zofia quickly gained a position of respect, one can infer that it was not only family members who repeatedly pleaded with her to intercede with Duke Heinrich. The duke's fourth son from his first marriage, Julius (1528–1589), was not suitable for military service because of an injured foot, and so was put on the path of an ecclesiastical career. He pursued his studies, and as a young man

50 The royal relatives had been in correspondence with the Guelphs since the summer of 1556, with much of their communication between the mother Bona and the sisters Izabela, Anna, and Katarzyna, albeit limited to fixed pleasantries. See NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 2, fols. 51–68.

51 Duke Heinrich to Duchess Zofia, Holzen 16 VIII 1558: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 4, fol. 3, fol. 14.

52 Duke Heinrich to Duke Georg, Wolfenbüttel 28 III 1558: Kratz, "Nachrichten," suppl. no. 4, 312–14.

53 AGAD perg. 5476; NLA WO 3 Urk 1 no. 5, and AGAD perg. 5482. Printed in Bues, *Zofia Jagiellonka*, no. I 3, 50–59, and no. I 5c, 73f.

54 Duchess Zofia to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 1558: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 23, fol. 64. Mohrmann, "Vater-Sohn-Konflikt und Staatsnotwendigkeit," 63–100.

spent two years in France.⁵⁵ His father was not at all pleased when, after the death of his two older brothers in 1553, Julius became hereditary prince: this provided the motivating factor for Heinrich to wed the Jagiellonian princess. The tensions between father and son led to repeated conflicts. Immediately after his father's marriage in June 1556, Julius contacted King Zygmunt August, his "step-uncle."⁵⁶ In 1557, the hereditary prince was arrested, at which point his maternal relatives in Württemberg and his brother-in-law Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin attempted to mediate in the row. The situation at the Wolfenbüttel court was also discussed at the Frankfurt meeting of the Prince-Electors in March 1558. The newly elected emperor, Ferdinand, in fact asked the father to permit Prince Julius to join the imperial court for a time.⁵⁷ In the spring of 1558, a new fierce quarrel resulted in Julius fleeing to the court of his married sister in Küstrin.⁵⁸

Hereditary Prince Julius now turned in confidence to Zofia Jagiellonka who understood the character of her husband and who believed in the innocence of her stepson. "God willing that matters may proceed as we hope, so that such conflict and such discord not last long," she wrote; she promised "to do what we can to turn matters to the best outcome, and we are always benevolently disposed toward you."⁵⁹ That autumn she sought to encourage him: she and Julius' sisters had expressed support for him to Duke Heinrich and they were confident that reconciliation would be possible. In December 1558 she promised "to help so that all conflict and all discord may reach a peaceful conclusion and unity"; he just needed to be patient, since given her husband's poor health, she could not upset him.⁶⁰

55 Wagnitz, "Der Lebensweg von Herzog Julius von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel," 77–105.

56 "Was wihr auch derselben landen und leutten zum besten mit unserm vermugen dienen und wilfaren können, ihn dem solt uns E[wer] K[önigliche] W[ir]den zw yederzeytt gewilliget und geneygt spuren und befinden." Prince Julius to King Zygmunt August, Wolfenbüttel 11 VI 1556: HStAS A 71 Bü 404.

57 "Sollte bey unns allerlay sehen und lernen, daß deiner I[ie]bden] als dem vatter und auch ime selbst zu allen ehern und gutten gelangen möchte." Emperor Ferdinand to Duke Heinrich, Wien 25 V 1558: HStAS A 71 Bü 415.

58 "...und [hat] sein I[ie]b]d] dermassen bedreuet, das der gutte junge herr aus furcht allerlej vermutlichen unglugs entwuscht und unsers abwesens in unserm hoflager zu Custrin ankommen." Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin to Duke Christoph von Württemberg, Warmbrunn/Cieplice 1 V 1558: HStAS A 71 Bü 416. NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 22.

59 "Wolt got, das es nach unserm wonschen mochte gen, so wolde solcher zwiespalt und uneinicheit nicht lange weren ... was wir zu der sachen kunnen zum besten wenden, seint wir alzeit gutwillich." Duchess Zofia to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 28 VIII 1558: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 23, fol. 68.

60 "Dar zu vorhelffen, das alle zwiespalt und undeinigkeit muchte zu frieden und einigkeit gereichen." Duchess Zofia to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 4 XII 1558: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 23, fol. 64.

Zofia proceeded quite diplomatically. She discretely explored different possibilities and skilfully used her dynastic connections not only in Saxony, Brandenburg, Pomerania, and in the region of Bohemia, but also those of her husband in Württemberg and Hesse. With relatives in neighbouring Brandenburg, where her half-sister Jadwiga had been electress since 1535, she arranged for a marriage between her stepson Julius and her niece Hedwig, and in the autumn of 1559 they worked on the marriage contract. At the end of that year, Duke Christoph von Württemberg approved an advance of 4,000 thalers for the upcoming wedding.⁶¹ The knights in the duchy of Wolfenbüttel mentioned in correspondence that twelve or thirteen princes had died in recent years and no others had been born for almost thirty years, so they gladly approved of the planned marriage.⁶² In the end, Duke Heinrich also gave his approval, and in the course of this a successful reconciliation between both the Guelphs was worked out.

Hereditary Prince Julius confirms Duchess Zofia's active role:

And so our kindly beloved mother responded to his proposal not just with encouragement and assistance, but also sought ways and means for how it might be had from our kindly beloved father, so that we may hope, with the help of the Almighty, His Highness will allow himself to be moved, and kindly and paternally approve of such a marriage.⁶³

On February 25, 1560, the wedding took place in Cöln on the Spree, however Zofia Jagiellonka could not participate in it since her husband did not attend.⁶⁴ Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin reminded Duchess Zofia that the marriage did not yet resolve the question of succession. He stressed the importance “that His Highness not forget to insert his son, Duke Julius, in his testament as the legitimate heir, for without that, one might fear that

61 The marriage contract, Wolfenbüttel 11 X 1559: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fols. 160–69; Treasurer to Duke Christoph von Württemberg, Stuttgart 6 XII 1559: HStAS A 71 Bü 1565.

62 The knighthood to Duchess Zofia, s. l. 11 IX 1559: 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fols. 197–200.

63 “So tut in anregung desselben unser freuntliche geliebte fraw mutter nicht allein herinnen furschub forderungk, sondern sucht mittl und wege wie es bey unserm freundlichen geliebten hern und vater zuerhalten sein möge. Das wir nun höfften mitt hulf des Almechtigen ire liebden werden sich bewegen lassen und uns solche verheiratung freuntlich und vatterlich gestatten.” Prince Julius to Margrave Johann Georg von Brandenburg-Küstrin, Wolfenbüttel X [1559]: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fols. 116f.

64 Duchess Zofia to Margravine Hedwig von Brandenburg, Wolfenbüttel [XI 1559]: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fol. 150.

otherwise such a testament might justifiably be overturned.”⁶⁵ She must have been successful in this. In the summer, the young couple returned home to Wolfenbüttel with the dowry and presents, at which time Hereditary Prince Julius showed his Württemberg relatives the splendid wedding gifts from his stepmother.⁶⁶

The close proximity and tight living space in the small residence town did not lend themselves to harmonious family life; in the spring of 1561 there was persistent argument between father and son, both of whom had wildly different temperaments. The situation worsened during the course of the year. Duchess Zofia had plenty to do, seeking to have a balancing influence on both sides. Her astuteness was confirmed by her spouse: “because we however judge that to us Your Highness is much too erudite, we do not want to engage in any further disputation with her.”⁶⁷ The solution to the father-son conflict came in the autumn of 1562 with the young couple setting up their own court in Hessen—in the meantime a daughter (and Zofia’s godchild), Sophie Hedwig, had been born.⁶⁸ The birth of an heir to the throne, Julius Heinrich, in 1564 was what ultimately led to a true reconciliation between the now proud grandfather and his own son. Duchess Zofia’s exemplary behaviour during these years was also highlighted as one of her virtues in the sermon at her funeral in 1575: “And since indignation and strife occurred between His Grace, the Prince, and His father of praiseworthy memory, Her Princely Grace of holy memory was the unifying peacemaker, helping to avert much damage that could have been consequent to such discord.”⁶⁹

65 “Das seine liebden derselben shon herzog iulius in irem thestamentd sein legitima zuvorordenen nicht vorgessen mochte, dan one das zu besorgen, das sonsten solch thestamentd zurecht mochte umbgestossen werden.” Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin to Duchess Zofia, Küstrin 2 II 1560: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fols. 104f.

66 “So ist auch von der hochgebornen fürstin, unserer gnedigen und freuntlichen lieben frawen mutter, frawen Sophien ... hiezu mher mutterliche gaben und beilage verehret worden dann von unserm freuntlichen lieben hern und vatern selbst.” Prince Julius to Duke Christoph von Württemberg, Küstrin 16 IV 1560: HStAS A 71 Bü 423. “Vortzeichnus Frawen Hedwigs geborner Marggräfin zu Brandenburg Herzogin zu Braunschweig und Lüneburg etc. abfertigung,” Cöln/Spree 24 VI 1560: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 126, fols. 3–16.

67 “Weyll wir aber darinnen befinden, das uns euer liebden viel zu gelert ist, wollen wir uns mit derselben ferner in keine disputierung einlassen.” Duke Heinrich to Duchess Zofia, Holzminden 13 XI 1561: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 4, fol. 38.

68 NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 26.

69 “Und do unwillen und zwietracht zwischen seiner fürstlichen gnaden her vater loblicher gedechtnis furgefallen, ist ihre fürstliche gnaden seliger gedechtnis die einige friedmacherin gewesen, die ... viel unraht, der aus solchem unfried hette erfolgen können, verhindert.” Lazarus Arnoldi, “Eine kurz Vermanung

Duke Julius and his wife called Duchess Zofia simply “mother”; she had assured him that “we do not want to be a stepmother to both.”⁷⁰ She had been able to nurture a good relationship with her stepson: first of all, because she had no children of her own; secondly, because the wife she thought of for her stepson, her daughter-in-law was a close relative; and thirdly, because the personality types of her stepson and herself were similar. Julius appreciated her cosmopolitan attitude and tolerance, her subtlety and good taste, her numerous artistic interests and her good management of the household. He adopted her as his model in many things, but being only six years older than him Duchess Zofia never played a mother role for him.⁷¹ The renovations and enlargement of the palace at Wolfenbüttel came, for the most part, from Zofia Jagiellonka’s ideas: the remodelling of the interior, and the laying out of the pleasure garden, along with spice and herb gardens, where in 1563 one found, for example, cypresses and rosemary bushes.⁷² The duchess also refined daily life; the inventories at the time of Duke Heinrich’s death distinguish between the old and new silver cutlery.⁷³ Zofia, accustomed to the artistic sense of her homeland, had a central role in all the projects, through which she sought to create a well-functioning court that was in keeping with their social position. It was now once again worthwhile to stop for a visit in Wolfenbüttel.

Contact with the Stepdaughters

Upon her marriage, Duchess Zofia immediately came into contact with ladies of the Guelph dynasty; two unmarried stepdaughters still lived in Wolfenbüttel, even though efforts had been made (unsuccessfully) between 1549 and 1555 to find partners for them.⁷⁴ The extent to which Zofia involved herself in seeking marriages for these stepdaughters is not known. In her testament written in 1558, she remembered both Guelph stepdaughters (at the time still unmarried) with

aus dem fünfzigsten Capitel des Ersten buchs Mosis gethan zu Wulfenbüttel in der Schloscapell für den Altar als die fürstliche Leich von Schöninggen abgeholt undt mit Christlichen Ceremonien in die fürstliche Schloscapel ist gebracht worden den 25 Junii [1575]”: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 64, fols. 65–92, here 78v.

70 “Das wir nicht wollen der beiden also ein stiffrawe mutter [sein].” Duchess Zofia to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel, 4 XII 1558: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 23, fol. 64.

71 Prince Julius’ mother Maria had died when he was twelve.

72 Duke Heinrich to Prince Julius, Wolfenbüttel 28 V 1563: NLA WO 1 Alt 22 no. 22, fol. 38.

73 Silverware inventory, Wolfenbüttel [16 VII 1568]: NLA HA Cal. Br. 21 no. 501, fols. 2f.

74 See NLA WO 1 Alt 8 no. 246. For a general overview of the web of relationships among the relatives, see Nolte, *Familie, Hof und Herrschaft*, 67–72.

a valuable piece of jewellery *ad beneplacitum ipsius coniugis nostri*.⁷⁵ The youngest, Clara (1532–1595), who had initially been intended as abbess of Gandersheim, married her cousin Philipp II von Braunschweig-Grubenhagen (1533–1596) in Wolfenbüttel in the summer of 1560,⁷⁶ subsequently living with him at the Katlenburg, which was expanded into a renaissance palace. A year later, the oldest stepdaughter, Margarete (1516–1580), was married to Duke Johann von Münsterberg-Oels, a marriage that was troubled from the very beginning.⁷⁷ In addition, there was as well Katharina (1518–1574), who since 1537 had been married to Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin, and through that marriage was a brother-in-law's wife of Zofia's half-sister Jadwiga in Cöln on the Spree. Zofia corresponded now and then with her and her spouse, who was meant to support her in the event of the death of Duke Heinrich.

By 1561 (that is five years after her own marriage), all the children now had a spouse. But that was not the end of the stepchildren's role in her life. There were discussions of economic matters, they exchanged pleasantries and family news, or they stopped by to visit. As long as Duke Heinrich was alive, his daughter Margarete was surely the source of the greatest concern. While Margarete initially only corresponded with her father, in the autumn of 1562 she began to exchange letters with her stepmother Zofia as well; there were not just money worries, but also significant marital problems.⁷⁸ All the relatives and Duchess Zofia were called upon to try and influence Duke Heinrich: "I beseech Your Grace by the will of God, that Your Grace would seek the best for me and to intercede for me kindly to my Lord and Father to consider how one might help poor me."⁷⁹ While in 1563 it ostensibly came to an official settlement, even the death of Duke Johann at the beginning of 1565 did not resolve all the problems. Duchess Margarete (and her relatives) struggled with her stepson, Karl Christoph, over her jointure. After the

75 Wolfenbüttel 28 V 1558: NLA WO 3 Urk 1 no. 9. Printed in Bues, *Zofia Jagiellonka*, no. II 1, 98–101, here 99.

76 NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 8.

77 NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 14, and no. 15.

78 Duchess Zofia to Duchess Margarete and Duke Johann, Wolfenbüttel 7 XII 1562: NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 16, fols. 56–59.

79 "Ich bitte Euer Gnaden durch Gottes willen Euer Gnaden will zu meinem besten sein und meiner kegen meinen heren und vatter zum besten gedencken und ... aus dencken, wie mich armen menschen doch mocht geholfen werden." Duchess Margarete to Duchess Zofia, Oels 7 IX 1563: NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 18, fol. 15. The stepdaughter Katharina also informed Zofia how bad things were for her sister, that she had *ein ganz böses wesen* and she asked Zofia to express vigorous support to her father: *ibid.*, fol. 25.

latter's death in 1569, she left the duchy of Münsterberg and lived until her death at Stauffenburg, which her brother had granted her.⁸⁰

In the new family Duchess Zofia took the place expected of a motherly figure. She always had an open ear for the personal needs and problems of her stepchildren; she advised them in all circumstances and intervened with her husband for them. In summary, she led the household skilfully and effectively.

The Period of Widowhood

Seldom did this turning point in the life of a princess proceed without problems. The widow had to fight for the promised jointure, which had often been granted to her years earlier. Her finances then determined her other possibilities, presuming she ran the household well. Now she had only herself to rely on as she held her ground in both a totally new living environment in what were mostly rural areas, and where she now had to be the ruler in a new smaller-scale setting. Key to adapting well were good social contacts with both the female members of the family that she had married into, and the nobility living in the area, which were fostered through mutual visits to one another. What likewise showed itself to be advantageous was when the princess had earlier developed an extensive circle of people with whom she corresponded, and who now supported her with both counsel and active help.⁸¹

On June 11, 1568, after the death of Duke Heinrich II, Zofia Jagiellonka entered this new phase of her life at the age of forty-six. By the end of July she was already corresponding from Schöningen with her stepson, Duke Julius, about her jointure.⁸² As for her inner emotional state, we know very little. Those who corresponded with her wished her luck and offered support.⁸³ The widowed duchess tussled with her stepson for more than three years over her jointure: the correspondence from this period is marked by mutual mistrust. The conflict also involved her brother, the Polish king, and Emperor Maximilian II. In the end, her settlement and various inheritances left her financially so well off that she could maintain a larger court than she had been able to afford earlier in

80 NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 21.

81 For a general overview see Schattkowsky, *Witwenschaft in der Frühen Neuzeit*.

82 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 21 VII 1568: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 31, fol. 2.

83 Electress Jadwiga von Brandenburg to Duchess Zofia, Cöln/Spree 21 IX 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 20, fols. 20f.; Electress Anna von Sachsen to Duchess Zofia, Nassau 16 VIII 1568: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 24, fols. 24f.

Wolfenbüttel.⁸⁴ After the issue of her jointure was clarified, Zofia's relationship with her stepson improved, as they found that they shared common interests. Duke Julius, an admirer of art, oriented himself according to her good tastes, and in many ways took her as his role model.

As duchess, Zofia retained her elegant and confident tastes from her home life in Cracow. She was taken to be (in a modern sense) a style icon among the Guelph family.⁸⁵ It was not just in questions of etiquette that Zofia's advice was so appreciated.⁸⁶ Her fashionable headdresses amazed; her niece Elisabeth Magdalena inquired about the beautiful style of her bonnet,⁸⁷ and Julius asked his stepmother for drawings of it since he wanted to have one made for his wife on the occasion of his accession at Braunschweig.⁸⁸ He also requested to have copies made of the tapestry series "The Nine Heroes." After the resolution of the jointure in 1573, Zofia generously bequeathed this series to her stepson, which from then on would decorate the Knights' Hall in the Wolfenbüttel palace.⁸⁹

Whenever Duke Julius wanted to impress his guests at official receptions, he borrowed Duchess Zofia's silver tableware that she had brought with her from Poland.⁹⁰ Duke Julius also had sketches made of the two large silver candlesticks (from her dowry) that were in her court chapel, as he wanted similar pieces for the Wolfenbüttel palace chapel.⁹¹ In the sixteenth-century Lutheran church, altar candles were not essential liturgical elements, yet this zealous proponent of the reformation gladly adopted the decorations of his Catholic relatives for religious services.

Immediately after the death of Duke Heinrich in the summer of 1568, Duke Julius introduced Lutheranism into the duchy.⁹² In these early years of her widowhood, Duchess Zofia had contact with Jakob Andreae and other theologians.⁹³ Zofia, who was responsible for church governance in her

84 Bues, "Frictions in the life of Polish princesses and queens consort," 108–12.

85 Bues, "Art Collections as Dynastic Tool," 21–26.

86 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 9 IX 1574: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 16, fol. 93.

87 Duchess Elisabeth Magdalena to Duchess Zofia, Cöln/Spree 13 XI 1570: NLA HA Cal.Br. 21 no. 935, fol. 3.

88 Duke Julius to Duchess Zofia, Wolfenbüttel 11 VIII 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 7, fol. 62.

89 Duke Julius's receipt of the "Tapezereien," Wolfenbüttel 1573: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 15, fols. 6–13.

90 For the child's baptism in 1574. "Vorzeichnus des uberschickten Silbergeschiers," s. l. VI 1574: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 16, fol. 60. The dowager duchess often had to urge the return of the borrowed silver. For example, Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 19 XII 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 8, fol. 54.

91 Duke Julius to Duchess Zofia, Wolfenbüttel 8 I 1573: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 48, fols. 50–55.

92 In general, Graefe, *Staatsklugheit und Frömmigkeit*.

93 Z. B. Jakob Andreae to Duchess Zofia, Stuttgart 22 II 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 6, fols. 42–43.

jurisdictions of Schöningen and Jerxheim, soon converted to Lutheranism; however, for political reasons this was not made public.⁹⁴ On the ideas of the reformation, she was in accord with her stepson, and she likewise supported his plans to found a university in Helmstedt. The two had shared interests that reached beyond merely economic matters. Both had come to appreciate one another, and Zofia was a most welcome guest in Wolfenbüttel, especially for a merry St. Martin's Eve, Shrove Tuesday events, or the baptism of a child. Social contact with the ruling family, however, primarily ran through Duchess Hedwig.

Her daughter-in-law and niece, Hedwig, advised Zofia after the death of her husband “that grieving would not assuage the loss, but instead only weigh down the heart,” and she sought to console her mother-in-law by sending her artichokes, wild cherries, fresh salmon, and other delicacies.⁹⁵ For spiritual reflection, she sent her a newly published *Corpus Doctrinae* and later a Church Ordinance (*Kirchenordnung*).⁹⁶ Duchess Zofia kept in close contact with her daughter-in-law/niece and grandchildren, writing and visiting them, as well as sending presents. Zofia was godmother to the firstborn daughter, Sophie Hedwig (1561–1631), and donated a valuable family Bible from Poland to her grandson and heir to the throne, Heinrich Julius (1564–1613). Hedwig's sister Elisabeth Magdalena (1537–1595), dowager duchess from Braunschweig-Celle, regularly came to Schöningen.⁹⁷ Despite being a widow, it was not insignificant that Zofia was totally financially independent, something of which all the relatives were aware: as one remarked, “I was recently informed that Your Highness has brought together a handsome sum of money.”⁹⁸

Widowhood also strengthened her connection with her stepdaughters. The Dowager Duchess Margarete, six years older than her step-mother, immediately after the death of her father, established contact with the Dowager Duchess Zofia.⁹⁹ A similar common destiny—widowhood—intensified the relationship. In 1569 Margarete returned to the duchy and lived at Stauffenburg, so it was easy

94 Pirożyński, “Das Verhältnis der Herzogin Sophie von Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel,” 263–98.

95 “Dass durch trauren kein milderung des anligens geschepft sondern vil mehr das hertz beschwert.” Duchess Hedwig to Duchess Zofia, Hessen VII 1568: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 127, fol. 2.

96 Duchess Hedwig to Duchess Zofia, Wolfenbüttel 12 XII 1568: *ibid.*, fol. 13.

97 So, in November 1569 or July 1573: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 8, fol. 36; NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 14, fol. 64.

98 “Nun bin ich unlengst berichtet, das Euer Liebden eine statliche Summa gelts beieinander haben.” Countess Margarete von Mansfeld to Duchess Zofia, Eisleben 31 X 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 27, fols. 51–52.

99 Duchess Margarete to Duchess Zofia, Oels 29 VI 1568: NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 41, fol. 92.

for her to see and visit Zofia, exchange news with her and seek her advice.¹⁰⁰ As 1569 turned to 1570, Zofia, together with her stepdaughters Margarete and Clara, went on a journey to Berlin.¹⁰¹ Her stepdaughter Katharina had not only invited them to a bear hunt, but also to attend the wedding festivities of her step-granddaughter Katharina with step-grandson Joachim Friedrich (of the Electress Jadwiga von Brandenburg), a major family event.¹⁰² As part of Zofia's ensuing journey to Bad Ems the following spring, a visit with Margarete at Stauffenburg lay on the way, and when returning, the dowager duchess took the opportunity to pass through Katlenburg to visit Duchess Clara.¹⁰³ The journey to the court in Kassel in 1574 led Duchess Zofia once again via Stauffenburg, at which point she simply took her depressed stepdaughter with her to Kassel and then back to Wolfenbüttel and Schöningen as well.¹⁰⁴ This shows the good relationship between Zofia Jagiellonka and her stepdaughter, who was five years older than her.

The relationship with her stepdaughter Clara (who was ten years younger than her) and her husband was not quite as close. Zofia did correspond with the ducal couple of Braunschweig-Grubenhagen, exchanging inquiries about their health, recommendations for physicians, complaints about staff, and also sending small gifts.¹⁰⁵ When returning from another treatment to Bad Ems in 1571, the Dowager Duchess Zofia again stopped by to visit her stepdaughter.¹⁰⁶

Two family members who had a special relationship with Zofia Jagiellonka were her stepdaughter Katharina and husband Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin (the latter's sister-in-law being Electress Jadwiga von Brandenburg, who was Zofia's half-sister, producing a double family connection). Duchess Zofia was the contact point for letters from their residence,¹⁰⁷ and she also sent her

100 She shared that she had *nach Euer Gnaden rath gedan* and had written to the margrave. Duchess Margarete to Duchess Zofia, Stauffenburg 21 IV 1575: NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 41, fol. 111.

101 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Berlin 4 I 1570: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 9, fol. 2–3.

102 Margrave Johann von Brandenburg-Küstrin to Duchess Zofia, Küstrin 24 XI 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 22, fols. 69–71; Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Berlin 4 I 1570: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 9, fols. 1–2.

103 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 6 IV 1570: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 9, fol. 16; Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Katlenburg 29 VI 1570: *ibid.*, fol. 38.

104 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Fürstenberg 11 VIII 1574 and Stauffenburg 28 VIII 1574: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 16, fols. 69–77.

105 NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 9 until no. 11.

106 Duchess Clara to Duchess Zofia, Katlenburg 7 VII 1571: NLA WO 1 Alt 24 no. 10, fol. 22.

107 She promised her stepson that she would forward the correspondence from Küstrin to his travelling court in Gandersheim. Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 3 II 1571: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 10, fol. 30.

staff to Poland by way of Küstrin.¹⁰⁸ Together they had both been engaged in the family's father-son conflict and were involved in the wedding of Julius and Hedwig. The relatives would have been pleased to see the Wolfenbüttel ducal couple at that wedding, but it was not to be.¹⁰⁹ Once widowed, Zofia was able to attend Katharina's wedding in Küstrin a year later, and then on the same trip visit her half-sister in the Margraviate,¹¹⁰ returning to Brandenburg in the spring of 1571.¹¹¹ After the death of the margrave at the beginning of 1571, contact between the two women became even closer; Dowager Duchess Zofia lent money to Katharina.¹¹² They sent each other prescriptions for medicines and ordered foodstuffs, especially fish.¹¹³ In November 1572, Katharina visited Zofia in Schöningen, at which time they planned a springtime journey together to Karlsbad / Karlovy Vary.¹¹⁴ Katharina died in 1574, prior to Duchess Zofia.

Her good relationships with the family of her husband also included his extended family. Dowager Duchess Zofia corresponded with her husband's niece, Dowager Duchess Clara von Sachsen-Lauenburg (1518–1576); they exchanged letters about family matters (widowhood and remarriage of her daughter, also named Clara), invitations, gifts as well as some discussions of business matters and an exchange of doctors.¹¹⁵

Similarly, Zofia Jagiellonka supported Duchess Sidonia (1518–1575), a sister of August, Elector of Saxony, in her difficult living situation. The marriage between Sidonia and Duke Erich II von Braunschweig-Calenberg (ten years her junior) had been tumultuous for a long time: childlessness, separation and mistresses, debts, house arrest, confessional differences, and accusations of poisoning all demonstrate how dysfunctional this marriage was. During the witch trials, Sidonia repeatedly visited Duchess Zofia and asked for her advice.¹¹⁶ In a coordinated

108 Margravine Katharina to Duchess Zofia, Küstrin 11 IX 1573: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 22, fol. 44.

109 "Bitten wir Euer Liebden schwesterlichen und freuntlichen, Euer Liebden wollen bei hochgedachtem derselben gemhall helffen anhalten und befördern, das Euer Liebden beide nicht aussenbleiben." Princess Hedwig to Duchess Zofia, Cöln/Spree 13 XI 1559: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 123, fols. 148–149.

110 Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 19 XII 1569: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 8, fol. 52.

111 Duchess Zofia to her knights, Schöningen 1 III 1571: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 35, fol. 151.

112 Margravine Katharina to Duchess Zofia, Küstrin 12 X 1570: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 21, fol. 71.

113 Margravine Katharina to Duchess Zofia, Küstrin 28 VII 1570 and 1 X 1571: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 21, fol. 64, and fol. 95.

114 Duchess Zofia to Margravine Katharina, Schöningen 1 II 1572: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 22, fols. 32–33.

115 NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 119.

116 Repeated thanks were expressed for her good will with regard to the disputes involving Sidonia. Electress Anna von Sachsen to Duchess Zofia, Nassau 16 VIII 1568: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 24, fols. 24–25; and Elector August von Sachsen to Duchess Zofia, Dresden 29 V 1572: *ibid.*, fols. 14–15.

effort, Zofia, stepdaughter Margarete, and daughter-in-law Hedwig wrote a letter petitioning Duke Erich II to release Sidonia's lady-in-waiting Katharina Dux, (*née* von Dassel), wife of the head bailiff in Wolfenbüttel, against whom a trial was underway in which she was charged with participating in a conspiracy to poison Duke Erich.¹¹⁷ Ultimately Sidonia fled by way of Schöningen, where she stayed from July 20 to August 7, 1572, after which she reached her home territory, Saxony, where she died at the beginning of 1575. Upon news of her death, Duke Julius and Duke Wilhelm von Braunschweig-Lüneburg immediately consulted with Zofia Jagiellonka on how best to proceed.¹¹⁸ Her foresight and her levelheaded judgments were both welcomed and sought-after. Here too, then, one sees Zofia Jagiellonka's remarkable position within the web of relatives in the Guelph dynasty.

Conclusion

In summary, one can conclude that Zofia Jagiellonka got her bearings with remarkable skill and ingenuity at her new court, reacting with prudence and intelligence. The significant age difference between herself and her husband brought an advantage with it, namely, that she had no competitors within her age group. Moreover, her stepdaughters were approximately the same age and, after her husband's death, in similar circumstances to her as widows, and they gladly socialized with her. Zofia eventually resolved the long-standing relationship between her husband and his mistress, knowing in this regard how to defend her social position and not to be content with merely providing him an "alibi." She consciously took up the role of mediator among the relatives, and had a mitigating effect on the tensions between father and son. She was always active in traditional princess' pursuits: namely, finding appropriate marriage partners for the next generation. Her social consciousness included providing for the welfare of the new family in fulfilling the motherly responsibilities for her stepchildren. She tried to strengthen the connectedness of the family members corresponding with all of them and giving her appreciated advice. One does not see in her a "stepmother's life"; rather Zofia's counsel was repeatedly sought. It was to

117 Merkel, "Die Irrungen zwischen Herzog Erich II," 41; das Protokoll des Verfahrens, Neustadt 21 IV 1572: NLA HA Cal. Or. 3 no. 105.

118 "Das von uns nicht zuvil noch zu wenig geschehe und wir den glimpf zu allen seiten behalten..." Duke Julius to Duchess Zofia, Wolfenbüttel 17 I 1575: NLA WO 1 Alt 23 no. 17, fol. 2, and Duchess Zofia to Duke Julius, Schöningen 23 I 1575: *ibid.*, fol. 6.

this Jagiellonian's benefit that she had grown up in a tolerant, humanistically-oriented and multiethnic kingdom. Through her royal birth she was (with regard to her social status) superior to her Guelph relatives and she had the king—her brother—in reserve, as her protector. In terms of her relationship to the stepchildren it has been a great advantage that she herself bore no children, ensuring there would be no competitive milieu at the court in Wolfenbüttel. Zofia Jagiellonka, highly educated, and good at languages, had many different interests, letting many people gladly engage her in correspondence and discussions. From her mother Bona Sforza she had inherited the talent to run a good household, and through several inheritances she was financially independent even as a widow which strengthened her position and acceptance within the family.

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Noble Lineage as Stepfamily Network: An Eighteenth-Century Noble Autobiography from the Principality of Transylvania¹

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In this essay, I examine how an eighteenth-century Transylvanian nobleman constructed the meanings of kinship and family relations. The investigation primarily draws on the autobiographical work of László Székely (1716–1772), an educated and sensitive Transylvanian nobleman, who recorded the brief history of his family and himself. Being orphaned at a young age the author made his way out in life without the help of his biological parents, with the advice and support of his extended family: guardians, blood relatives, brothers-in-law; and other personal connections, such as servants, former colleagues, and friends. Due to the detailed description of his lineage and his constant preoccupation to record the major family events the present article offers an exhaustive study of the emotional bonds and kinship ties between some of the most important noble families from Transylvania.

Keywords: kinship networks, stepfamily, orphanhood, egodocuments, eighteenth-century Transylvania

Introduction: Egodocuments and Family History

The present inquiry is based on a recently edited Transylvanian autobiography written by Count László Székely (1716–1772).² Initially his autobiography raised the interest of some historians, but due to the little importance this Count played in the political history of Transylvania, and due to the lack of political information from his narratives, the full edition of his egodocuments was delayed. Some parts, consider red probably of greater interest, such as his journey

1 This paper was supported by the MTA BTK Lendület Családtörténeti Kutatócsoport [Lendület Integrating Families Research Group] and is a revised version of the introduction of *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*. Fehér, “Család és élettörténetek.”

2 *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*. The complete title of the manuscript: “Description of his life, origins, birth, upbringing, youth, and the vicissitudes he faced during this time.” The author began to copy his personal narratives into a book in 1763 and continued this work until his death in 1772. Therefore some parts were written earlier than the 60^s, as the integrated diary from his journey to Vienna (1743–44) and his autobiographical poem written between 1745–54.

to Vienna, or his autobiographical poem were previously published.³ The new, recent edition contains all the narratives included in the initial manuscript, not just all Székely's personal retrospective writings but also the continuation of his autobiography by his second wife, Zsuzsánna Toroczkai (1730–1788),⁴ and then a last narrative written by a family-servant, Zsigmond Kis,⁵ the administrator of Toroczkai.⁶

László Székely began to arrange his personal narratives at the age of 47, without a living heir, almost convinced that with him, since his brother Ádám (1724–1789) did not want to marry, the Székely family will disappear. The family's countship, which his father Ádám Székely (1679–1730) had acquired a few years before he was born, and in particular the disdain of Transylvanian society for the “homines novi,” as his grandfather László Székely the Elder (1644–1692) was considered, exerted a decisive influence on him. His autobiography aims to justify not only one, but three life-stories: that of his grandfather and father too, contributing in this way to the construction of the family memory as well.⁷ Székely was constantly frustrated by the socially low descent of his lineage, therefore a great part of the autobiography is concerned with his ancestors, and family alliances, since the kinships gained through marriage were very important for the author. The present inquiry suggests that these relationships were complicated, and there is no place for generalizations. Families belonging to the same cultural and social group exhibit signs of different emotional behavior from case to case, blood bonds being frequently overwritten by friendships based on sympathy. Family and kinship ties were determining factors, but it seems that in the Székely family, beyond the network of biological or step relatives the alliances of friendship were just as important.⁸

Orphaned at a very fragile age, Székely was trying to find his place in society with the help of his blood-relatives, distant kin and friends. Therefore

3 *Bécsi utazásomról; Bécsi utazások*, 105–200; *Székely László verses önéletírása*.

4 *Toroczkai Zsuzsánna feljegyzései*, 441–50.

5 *Kis Zsigmond feljegyzései*, 452–72.

6 Personal narratives in the eighteenth century were barely intimate, wives continue sometimes the narratives of their late husbands, and occasionally some of the family records were ended and preserved by members from the household. Probably the most interesting case is that of Péter Bod and her patron Katalin Bethlen, since the autobiography of Bethlen was published, organized in chapters by Bod. András Markos, “Bod Péter és Árva Bethlen Kata,” 341–5. One might even talk in this particular situation about a “shared authorship.” Erdélyi, “Confessional identity,” 478.

7 Erdélyi, “Stepfamily relationships,” 161.

8 Laslett, *The World We Have Lost*, 93.

the autobiography offers an exceptional and detailed insight into 18th century family-life, into the construction of kinship-networks and family-relationships. From these one could easily examine the supportive networks which stood at the disposal of a noble orphan.

“Complaints about the Bad Fate of the Origin” – The Paternal Lineage

Since a mandatory structural part of modern personal narratives is the one concerning lineage, it is not difficult to reconstruct the kinship network of this family that had only survived for three generations in Transylvania. Székely touches with unmatched detail upon the kinship acquired both on the mother’s and the father’s side.

The history of a family begins with marriage. Transylvanian narrative sources keep emphasizing the importance of harmonious coexistence between partners, and it seems that the authors themselves sought successful marriages. While reading the memoir literature of the time, one may even get the feeling that with the exception of some memoir writers, everyone lived in a happy marriage, and married according to their individual wishes, for by this time love had already been interlocked with marriage for a while.⁹ The reality is, of course, far more nuanced. These memoirs report on tragedies, divorces, and, in the language of the time, on so-called forced marriages arranged by relatives. It is true, memoir writers mostly disapproved of these unions considered favorable by parents and relatives.¹⁰

The marriages within the Székely family are amongst those that are a result of individual choice rather than of family decision or coercion.¹¹ The best example for this is the marriage of László Székely the Elder, who managed to obtain the hand of Sára Bulcsesdi (b.1656–1708), raised in a very influential family – a pursuit where suitors belonging to more well-to-do families with more important lineages had failed.

László Székely, the Elder, due to his role played in the history of the principality, is an active, –and not a particularly beloved– character of Transylvanian memoirs. Miklós Bethlen (1642–1716) had written the following about him: “László Székely was a poor, two-horse nobleman from Jenő, and was such a favorite of the Prince [Mihály Apaffi, 1632–1690] in the role of Postmaster

9 Fehér, *Sensibilitate și identitate*, 165–66.

10 Fehér, *Sensibilitate și identitate*, 165–72; Péter, *Házasság a régi Magyarországon*, 123–38.

11 Fehér, “From Courtship till the Morning After,” 787–90.

that his wife and all his relations and counsellors did not do as much in his view as László Székely,”¹² and this is somewhat completed by György Rettegi (1718–1786): “together with Mihály Teleki (1634–1690) they have sold the country and emerged at the same time.”¹³ The quotations point rather to the low origin and unscrupulous character than the actual lineage. The present autobiography does not reveal much more about the “great” László Székely either: all we find out is that he was the son of János Székely; the author does not record anything of importance about the sisters of his grandfather who remained in Hungary—it seems that their fate was not being monitored attentively. But the modest origins of his grandfather bothered the autobiographer, since he constantly feels the need to justify the actions of his ancestor.¹⁴

Unlike in the case of the grandfather, quite a lot is known about the grandmother, Sára Bulcsesdi.¹⁵ Luckily for him, László Székely, was not familiar with the contents of Romanian chronicles, because otherwise he would have had to justify this lineage as well. The reason is that Sára’s grandfather, Diicu Buicescu (ca.1610–1659), just like László Székely—according to public opinion—exhibited serious shortcomings in his character, defects that could not be erased from the chronicles, not even through him founding numerous monasteries. The careerist nephew of Matei Basarab (1588–1654), ruler of Wallachia, was also infamous for his intrigues, as well as his negative influence on the ruler.¹⁶ Diicu’s son, Preda (†1656), became a victim of the family’s pursuit for titles and wealth, being sacrificed on the altar of politics and forced to marry Anna Szalánczi.¹⁷ Death, however, had ended the marriage quite early on, but not before the birth of the common child, Sára, who inherited many Wallachian properties through her father.

Following the death of her husband, Anna Szalánczi married “old” István Jósika, from whom she gave birth to four children: Imre, István, Dániel and Mária. Sára Bulcsesdi had thus four half siblings, one of them, the bachelor Dániel later taking under his guardianship the orphaned memoir writer, László Székely, and his brothers, Ádám and József (1726–1736). It seems that Dániel

12 Bethlen, *The Autobiography*, 257.

13 Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok*, 269.

14 The introduction of the autobiography deals constantly with the worries of the author regarding his origins. He even argues on the pages of his life-narrative with other Transylvanian memoir-writers, whose texts he previously read and who discredited his grandfather. Fehér, “Székely László Önéletírása,” 68–69.

15 Tüdős, “O doamnă pentru vremuri noi,” 241–68.

16 Ibid., 243–44.

17 Jakó, “A Szalánczyak,” 209.

Jósika was closest to his elder half-sister Sára, because in his youth, according to the autobiography, he was raised in her court, and spent a lot of time in the company of the young married couple. Otherwise it was not unusual for sisters to take care of their bachelor brothers, not to mention that the time spent together influenced also the emotional relations between siblings. It is presumed that the bond between siblings was always stronger for those who lived a long time together or near each other.¹⁸

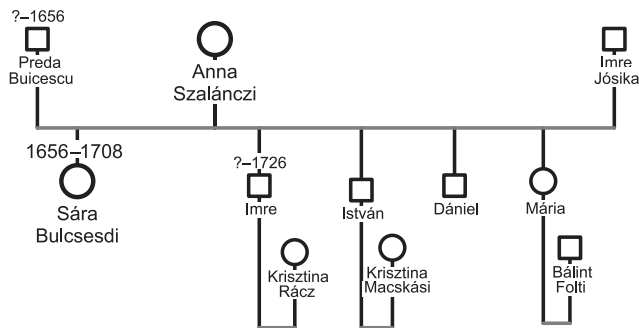


Table 1. The siblings and half-siblings of Sára Bulcsesdi

The Transylvanian Early-Modern Marriage Market: The Székely–Bulcsesdi Marriage

Luckily, many interesting antecedents of the Székely–Bulcsesdi marriage are known to us, which sheds light on the fact that the early modern marriage market did not always develop according to the expectations, and that the calculations of relatives could often be overwritten by the young girl’s feelings. Namely, Sára Bulcsesdi had several suitors who were all above her later husband in terms of lineage.¹⁹ Her first suitor and fiancée was a member of the Bethlen family. The family’s marital intentions were conveyed by the memoir writer Miklós Bethlen, who proposed to Sára on behalf of his brother Pál (1648–1686). But the engagement was broken off to the consternation of Transylvanian society due to the objections of Klára Fekete, stepmother of the Bethlen brothers. According to Bethlen’s autobiography, Klára Fekete had a great influence on her husband and interfered “too often” in the private life of her same-aged stepchildren, especially when she hindered the engagement of Pál Bethlen. The stepmother managed

18 O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 74, 89.

19 Fehér, “From Courtship till the Morning After,” 787–88.

to ruin the emotional balance of the family, turning the father against his sons, and probably as a result of these tensions the engagement was eventually broken. Following the “unsuccessful engagement” of his brother, Miklós Bethlen visited Sára Bulcsesdi once again with similar intents, this time on behalf of his friend Boldizsár Macskási (ca. 1650–ca. 1700). His argumentation conveys the views of traditionalist Transylvanian nobility: “I found the opportunity of saying, among other things, to István Jósika, her stepfather that I would rather give my daughter to a true-blue nobleman of ancient lineage than to a postmaster.” To what extent could Jósika influence his stepdaughter is unknown, but Bethlen’s quote suggests that whatever the stepfather personal opinion was, Sára preferred “the beardless and somewhat younger man of her choice rather than the widowed beard,”²⁰ thus the suitor did not succeed. We may also suppose that a promising political career, and a fortune acquired in short time have overwritten social rigidity and seclusion,²¹ even though Transylvanian society tended to be still suspicious of *homo novus*-es.

The betrothal and the celebration confirming it were looked at with repulsion by contemporaries; the grandchild, however, proudly mentions that his grandfather “managed to marry in such a way that even today is rare to find, not only back in the days; in short: he married into a rich family.”²²

The marriage was rich not only in financial terms, but also considering the number of offspring. The pair gave birth to eight common children, only two of them reaching adulthood: the father of the memoir writer, Ádám, and his younger brother Mózes (1685–1712), who died a brutal death in 1712, i.e. before the birth of the author. Sára Bulcsesdi gave birth to eight children in ten years, at the time of her husband’s death in 1692 the youngest of them being only four, the eldest fourteen years old. She decided to remarry after five years of widowhood.

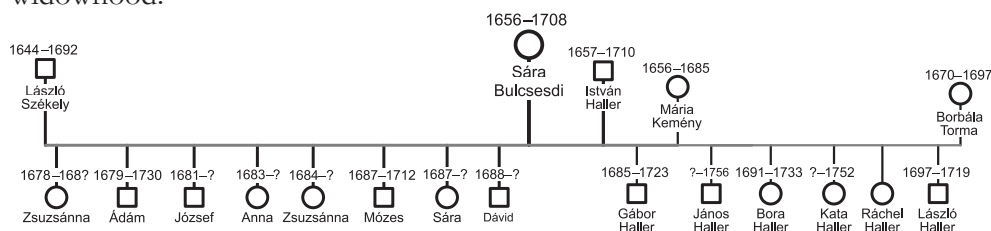


Table 2. The biological children and stepchildren of Sára Bulcsesdi

20 Bethlen, *The Autobiography*, 283–84.

21 Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French Nobility*, 123–25.

22 *Gróf Székely László önéletírása*, 66.

Between Biological Kin and Step-family Relations: The Bulcsesdi–Haller Marriage

In his memoir, Székely relates the second marriage of his grandmother as well, although it did not bring about blood bonds, not to mention that he does not consider this marriage of Sára Bulcsesdi a successful one. The author's objections were on one hand of religious nature, since the up until then zealously charitable woman of the Reformed Church married a Catholic lord to the contemporaries' great surprise, on the other hand by economic reasons: "There is no doubt, that my grandmother's second marriage differed a lot from her first one, which can be easily tracked down in the testament she left behind, and which I have read. I don't say anything about the family, since that is a fine old noble one, but taking others in consideration, and I am not going to discuss it further. What good it is for me to mention how much we lost? It was God's will, so had to be."²³

What motivated Sára Bulcsesdi to marry the twice widowed István Haller (ca.1657–1710) would be hard to explain in the absence of her personal narratives. At the time, she was not in need of a man's support, her children were not endangered, her husband's family could not claim them or their inheritance since their existence was unknown to them. Usually women in Transylvania remarried, including not only those of the lower nobility but also the aristocracy,²⁴ even more often than in Hungary,²⁵ especially if they had small children.²⁶ But this was not Sára's case. Her reasons were presumably financial, or power-related, because it was easier for a woman to face everyday problems with the support of a man.²⁷ Not to mention that she had still two young males in her household,

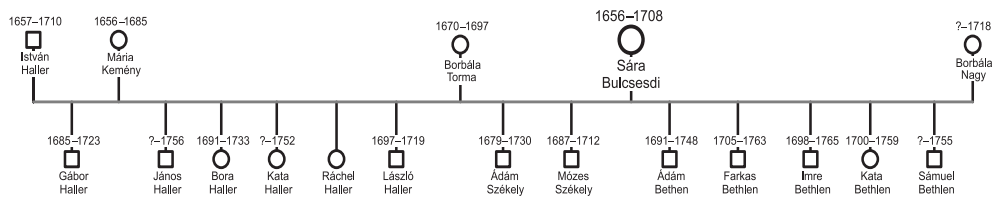


Table 3. The blended family of István Haller

23 *Gróf Székely László önéletírása*, 68–69.

24 According to recent studies women from middle classes remarried more often than aristocrats or the poor. Warner, "Introduction," 13–14.

25 Horn, "Orphans of Noble Birth," 138–40.

26 Hanawalt, "Remarriage as an Option," 141–44, 150–51.

27 This seemed to be the general opinion regarding this matter: Lundh, "Remarriages in Sweden," 428.

who had to be married at some point, therefore a strong alliance with one of the most influential families of the time was desirable.

Moreover, István Haller did not come into this marriage on his own, bringing six small children with him. His son Gábor (1685–1723), born from his first wife, Mária Kemény (ca.1656–1685), had not even turned one when he became an orphan. Finding a caring woman for the infant was an urgent matter, thus came into the family as second wife Borbála Torma (1670–1697), who later gave birth to three girls and two boys. But they, too, lost their mother soon: László (1697–1719), the youngest one, was just a baby when his mother died thus leaving István Haller to a second widowhood. This is when the third wife, the 41-year-old Sára Bulcsesdi arrived into the family. Her adolescent sons probably did not play a lot with the Haller children, from which the oldest was 12 and the youngest one-year-old. We don't know how much time Ádám and Mózes Székely (18 and nine years old) spent in the company of their stepfather and stepsiblings, but since the Haller-Bulcsesdi marriage lasted ten years, there was enough time to develop emotional attachments. During these years Ádám got twice married, and we know that Haller actively promoted the making of an advantageous second marriage for his stepson.²⁸

The relationship between Sára Bulcsesdi's sons and their stepfather was interrupted however by the mother's death. Tensions arose when Haller refused to give Sára Bulcsesdi's corpse over to her sons and to take her beside her first husband to the church on Farkas Street in Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca); not to mention that Haller refused to pay for the funeral services. The conflict is recounted in detail by Ádám Székely's former brother-in-law, the diarist István Wesselényi (1673–1734).²⁹ Wesselényi does not only write about the tensions, but about the funeral ceremony of Sára Bulcsesdi as well. Fulfilling the role of the main ceremony master (*főgazda*), he recorded every detail regarding organization, from expenses to listing the persons with functions during the funeral. Through him we find out that Sára Bulcsesdi was eventually buried in Szeben (Sibiu), the funeral masters (*temetési gazdák*) and wailers being members of the extended family; amongst mourners were, beside Ádám and Mózes Székely, her stepchildren from Haller's first two marriages.³⁰

István Haller after his third wife's death took a wealthy widow as his fourth wife, but death separated them after one year. István Haller did not

28 Wesselényi, *Sanyarú világ*, vol. 2, 229.

29 Ibid., 551–52.

30 Ibid., 557–60.

enrich the list of stereotypically evil stepparents, although he could have that chance since he managed to marry more than most of his contemporaries, moreover he managed to live in all the possible blended family-formations.³¹ His first marriage followed a somewhat normal path, both parties being single; for the second one the widowed man chose a maiden for the upbringing of his orphaned child;³² and in the third and fourth marriages it was two widows who tied together their own and their orphans' fates. Thus, Haller had raised his children in a complex blended family: beside his offsprings from the first two marriages he had presumably raised the children of his third—and most definitely also of his fourth—wives, too; a “sad result” of this coexistence would be the marriage between Kata Bethlen (1700–1758) and her stepbrother, László Haller.³³ In her memoir, Kata Bethlen never speaks negatively of her stepfather, although she had only spent one year in his household, during which time she would experience his unmatched tolerance.

It is clear from the enumeration of the parents' genealogy that, as we shall see further on, the great sympathies were directed towards the relatives on the maternal side, since László Székely, did not manage to establish life-long friendships with anyone on the father's side. The grandmother's, Sára Bulcsesdi's half-siblings are only occasionally mentioned by the author, excepting one, the guardian, Dániel Jósika, who is a constant figure in the first part of the autobiography, but the relation the author and his great-uncle had was not based on mutual sympathy. We know barely anything about the family of the grandfather, László Székely, the Elder, since he did not keep in touch with his relatives from Hungary. Only two of the Bulcsesdi-Székely children reached adulthood, and only the memoir writer's father had started a family, therefore there were not many relatives to be inherited. Two persons are prominent in the enumeration of collateral relatives, and curiously both belonged to the Haller family: László (ca.1717–1751), the son of his father's stepbrother, Gábor Haller (1685–1723); and Farkas Bethlen (1705–1763), Kata Bethlen's brother, “my adopted and dearly beloved Bruder,” whose short characterization we encounter for the first time during the enumeration of the Haller relatives.

31 Perrier, “The Blended Family,” 462.

32 Warner, “Introduction,” 12.

33 On the marriage of the stepsiblings see also Erdélyi, “Confessional identity,” 473–96.

Supportive Kinship Ties Across Generations: Aunts and Cousins on the Maternal Side

The reason why László Székely presents in such detail the marriages of his maternal grandmother and of her sibling is that, as we shall see, the most reliable family members for him were on this side of the kinship. As recent studies have demonstrated the fate of orphans was dependent on kinship-networks.³⁴ This is perhaps the most important part in the description of his lineage, where the presentation of the maternal side—the less problematic one—takes place.

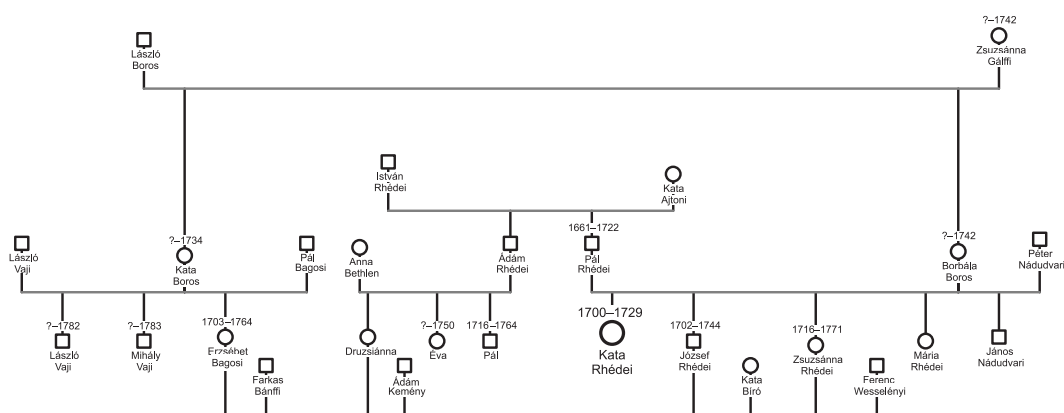


Table 4. The extended family of Kata and Borbála Boros. Siblings and half siblings.

The author describes in detail the course of Borbála's (†a.1734) and Kata's (†a.1742) life, the daughters of his great-grandparents, László Boros and Zsuzsánna Gálffi (†1742). Both Borbála Boros and Kata Boros married twice. László Székely knew nothing more of his maternal grandmother Borbála's first marriage than the husband's last name; he also only mentions in passing the boy János born from Péter Nádudvari, without stating his first name. It seems he would not play any part in the family's life later on. Much more thorough is the presentation of the second marriage of Borbála to Pál Rhédei (1661–1720), especially because the Rhédei family served as cure to the already mentioned frustrations regarding ancestry,³⁵ since the Rhédeis had obtained acknowledgement of their nobility in Hungary as well. From Borbála Boros's marriage to Pál Rhédei were born

34 Sabeau, *Kinship in Neckarhausen*.

35 We may even talk about an obsession with the family name, and origins, since the extension of the genealogical tree influenced the social or political possibilities of the individual. O'Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 68–70.

the mother of the autobiographer, Kata (1700–1729), and her siblings, József (ca.1702–1744), Zsuzsánna (1716–1771) and Mária. The author himself mentions it as an interesting fact that his mother and his grandmother were pregnant at the same time, and that his aunt Zsuzsánna was a few months younger than him: “It is quite remarkable that my mother, Kata Rhédei was already married to my father, and when my mother was half-time with me, my grandmother became pregnant with her daughter, Zsuzsánna, wife of Ferenc Wesselényi, and therefore I was born a half year before my mother’s sister Zsuzsánna.”³⁶

From his maternal uncles, József played an important role in Székely’s life, being referred to as “rather a father, than uncle to me.” József was present, together with his wife Kata Bíró (†a.1764), at several important events of Székely’s life, for example at his wedding as ceremony masters,³⁷ and when he left for Vienna for half a year, they took care of his daughter from his first marriage, the then only six-months-old Zsuzsánna (1743–1744). Nothing proves better Székely’s deep sympathy for his uncle than the emphasis on József Rhédei’s death in both of his autobiographical works, the one written in prose and the one in verse. At the level of narration, the part relating Rhédei’s death is certainly the most dramatically constructed one among the passages dealing with the loss of male relatives, especially because the death of the uncle was preceded by the loss of the author’s first wife: “They did not dare to tell me about the death of József Rhédei [...] after understanding that my poor uncle has passed I was terribly saddened, I was so confused, that when I started reading the Bible I could not see the letters from my tears.”³⁸

Although the half-siblings born from Borbála Boros’s two marriages did not get along very well with each other, the Rhédei children coexisted really well with their cousins. The children of Ádám (1674–1704), brother of Pál Rhédei, were raised together with the latter’s children after the loss of their mother, and based on László Székely’s account, it seems that the relationship between cousins and uncles was very harmonious: “[Ádám Rhédei was] an uncle whom my mother and her siblings loved tenderly.”³⁹ Being raised together must have strengthened this alliance, which had perpetuated itself: Druziánna Rhédei (†a.1764) “an undeniable kind kin” as the author mentions, but especially Éva (†1750) and

36 *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*, 55. However that was not at all that remarkable, since we found several similar cases in the Transylvanian ego-documents. Fehér, *Sensibilitate și identitate*, 243.

37 Fehér, “From Courtship till the Morning After,” 796.

38 *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*, 237, 300.

39 *Ibid.*, 378.

Pál (1716–1764), also due to a certain generational shift, maintained a strong friendship with László Székely. Pál played a role in the forming of the first family nucleus, too, accompanying the author to Bonchida (Bončida) during courting, and László would have been the ceremony master at Éva's wedding. But Éva had suddenly died under tragic circumstances, thus Székely had to take on the role of funeral master. Éva's death had deeply affected the author, since the emotional bond between them was very strong: "many should indeed possess such love and honesty as this poor soul had toward her siblings and other relatives too, and especially to me."⁴⁰ The narrative techniques used in the account of the funeral ceremony and of the grief being similar to the ones used in József Rhédei's case. The affectional bond could be easily traced through this life-cycle-related duties kindred perform in one another's life, or in this case death. It is not a coincidence, that most of our Transylvanian ego-documents, however laconic, always enumerate the occasions when authors performed roles at baptisms, weddings or funerals.

Székely László relates with this same thoroughness the marriages of his grandmother's siblings: the first marriage of Kata Boros to Pál Bagosi, and also the life journey of their daughter Erzsébet (ca. 1703–1764), who married into the Bánffi family; then the fate of Kata Boros's sons born from her second marriage to László Vaji. There is more to this thorough account than the author's drive to present the divergence of family networks. The interest in horizontal kinship ties was based on individual sympathies. Székely mentions Erzsébet Bagosi as a deeply beloved aunt, who had been, together with her husband Farkas Bánffi (1701–1761), a great promoter of Székely's first marriage. Farkas Bánffi was the one to urge the girl's family for an answer, brought engagement gifts back and forth, and served as master of ceremony during the wedding together with his wife.⁴¹ The author describes Farkas Bánffi as "rather father than uncle to me" as well, like József Rhédei. Furthermore, László (†1782) and Mihály Vaji (†1783), although they were cousins of Székely's mother, belonged to the author's generation, and are quite frequently mentioned in the memoir as childhood friends. What is more, Mihály also accompanied the author on his journey to Vienna. In contrast to the children of the Nádudvari and the Rhédei family, the half-siblings born from the Bagosi and the Vaji marriages, lived together in a beautiful friendship according to the memoir.

40 *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*, 344–48.

41 Fehér, "From Courtship till the Morning After," 798.

The author's great grandmother, Zsuzsánna Gálffi, who lived almost 100 years, got to see seven adult grandchildren from her two daughters, and 30 great-grandchildren, and only one year had separated her from meeting the grandchild of her grandchild. Her daughters had raised their children and often their nephews and nieces in extended families. The generational shifts, the great age gaps between siblings, half siblings and cousins resulted in very interesting kinship networks, uncles and aunts being in certain cases younger than their nephews or nieces.

László Székely's Childhood as an Orphan

As studies of Early Modern marriage markets reveal, first generation marriages were the most important ones, since these laid the foundations for the future of family members without grants of nobility by opening the way for better and better marriages.⁴² In the Székely family this was particularly true in the autobiographer's father, Ádám's case, who managed to enter into even more advantageous marriages than his father, the "great" László Székely.⁴³ On the first occasion, Ádám Székely, with his freshly acquired countship (1700), announced his marriage intents to one of the most influential Transylvanian families. His marriage to the governor György Bánffy's (1660–1708) daughter, Anna (1686–1704), was cut very short by death, leaving no chance for providing a successor. As mentioned earlier, Ádám Székely maintained a very good network of family relations, friendships and links that paid off after several years, too. At his second wedding his former brothers- and sisters-in-law performed some very important duties: István Wesselényi was groomsman, and his wife lady of honor; Dénes Bánffy (1688–1709) was bridesman, and his sister maid of honor.⁴⁴ This second marriage to Sára Naláczi (1692–1760) however, was also cut short, this time by divorce. His third marriage in 1715 must have been strongly motivated by the wish to produce an heir.⁴⁵ From his third wife, Katalin Rhédei, was born the autobiographer himself, on September 4, 1716.

The birth of László Székely, was not devoid of agitation, the 17-year-old mother almost losing her life during labour. Otherwise during his infant- and

42 Chaussinand-Nogaret, *The French nobility*, 122.

43 Fehér, "From Courtship till the Morning After," 788.

44 Wesselényi, *Sanyarú világ*, vol. 2, 645.

45 As it was for the great majority of widowers. Lundh, "Remarriages in Sweden," 431, 446; Warner, "Stepfamilies in Early Modern Europe," 480–81.

early childhood, the author himself was also continually in a state between life and death: “from the very beginning, from my birth until I was almost 14 years old, I struggled continuously with different diseases, so I grew up wearing clothes made for my funeral.”⁴⁶ In a feverish state, he often listened to old women preparing for his funeral, among them especially his mother’s old servant spoke openly in front of the child about his death, as though she wished to hasten it. This was because the old servant, Mrs. Galgóczi did not like the boy, what is more, she rejoiced in tormenting and frightening him. László’s childish imagination was invaded by the image of the evil witch, master of life and death, and not even time could alter this impression of her; he did not even dare to eat her cooking: “This pour old woman never loved me, and I was rather scared off her too, after my parent’s death I avoided eating what she cooked.”⁴⁷ But by that time his parents’ love provided some healing for all his childhood pain and fear: “But all my sorrow and pain was sweetened by the gracious providence and diligence of my sweet parents.”

Naturally, in time the family was expanded with new members. László was followed by Ádám I (b-d. 1719), Mária (1722–1728), Ádám II (1724), and József (1726–1736). Ádám I died as an infant, Mária at the age of eight. Soon the children had to face the death of their parents. László Székely was 14, Ádám six, and József four years old when they lost first their mother, and then, their father. József also died at the age of ten, therefore only two children from the third marriage reached adulthood, László and Ádám, who were rather separated than brought closer by their orphanhood. The brothers did not even have time to deepen their relationship, because Ádám was only one-year old when László was sent to college, and except a short period when the Székely boys were spending time together in Szeben (Sibiu) in order to learn German, they had never lived under the same roof. Due to the customs of child circulation, siblings, not only orphans, often spent their childhood years separately, in the company of other children such as their cousins.⁴⁸

The author, being of legal age, was in the position to name a guardian for the three of them since his parents did not leave behind a will. He decided upon Dániel Jósika, the bachelor half-brother of his paternal grandmother: “After

46 *Gróf Székely László Önéletírása*, 71.

47 *Ibid.*, 85. The Transylvanian ego-documents contain several mentions regarding the mistreatment of young nobles by their servants or nurses. Fehér, *Sensibilitate și identitate*, 241–42.

48 Perrier, “Coresidence of Siblings,” 300–4; O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 86–93; Collins, “British Stepfamily Relationships,” 332.

my parents died, I remained orphan at the age of 14. When, because my poor parents did not make any testaments known to me, being the first born of my father, in 1730, I made my poor great-uncle Dániel Jósika to be guardian for me and my brothers, therefore for seven years, until the spring of 1737, I truly lived on orphan bread.”⁴⁹

The author’s choice had a background, too: the unmarried Jósika had promised Ádám Székely the Elder that he would leave his fortune to the latter’s children. Probably this had also played a part in the fact that the relatives did not object to the autobiographer’s choice. The ego-document later reveals that the author ended up utterly regretting his decision. Dániel Jósika’s educational methods were considered outrageous even in those times. The guardian verbally and physically abused the elder boy left to his care, what is more, during his time spent at home, Székely often slept in the company of servants or on the dusty floor next to greyhounds, for he was not allowed to sleep in a bed. His clothing also resembled rather that of the servants. This may remind us of other barefoot and badly dressed little noblemen, who spent the nights on the cold floor; but just like István Apor (1638–1704) or Mihály Cserei (1667–1756),⁵⁰ László Székely also considered that it was due to this harsh upbringing that he became a responsible man: “In a word, he kept me in an extremely miserable state. It is true that if a young man is left alone, and he is not tempered, hardly would become a good man out of a thousand, and even if all things would have gone in the world as I wished [...] nothing good would come out of me.” As Székely argues, corporal punishment as a tool to solicit respect and obedience towards fathers was applied more by Protestants, since Catholics were much more indulgent with their children, which he attributes to the influence of Jesuits.⁵¹

The sorrow of orphanhood, it seems, was felt not only in the lack of (parental) love, but first of all also in the change in financial circumstances.⁵² László Székely would have wished somehow to suffer rather from the reduction of his wardrobe or harsh treatment, but not through the lack of side expenses necessary for the establishment of relation networks, which would develop during dinners or wine consumption. This also hurt his vanity, his college mates and fellows often mocking their “ragged” Count colleague. But orphanhood

49 *Gróf Székely László önéletrása*, 73.

50 Apor, *Lusus mundi*, 21–25. Cserei Mihály *Históriája*, 91–92.

51 *Gróf Székely László önéletrása*, 74.

52 A common concern among orphans Perrier, “The Blended Family,” 469.

also put an end to the Székely boys' prospects for further studies. While László simply thought of it with regret, Ádám, made great financial sacrifices in his adulthood in order to attend Western academies.

By his authority as a guardian, Jósika was tied to the children left to his care through different interests. These were, first of all, financial interests, and although theoretically it was his Christian obligation to compensate for the absence of parental love, it is obvious that more rational reasons had guided him.⁵³ Jósika did not treat the Székely boys the same way: he did not behave badly towards Ádám, and he even liked the youngest one, József, which was certainly also due to the fact that József's youth made him more impressionable than his brothers.⁵⁴ László Székely was unable to do anything against the abuses. Normally it was the family's duty to protect the child from the abuse of guardians, since the family network had to counterbalance the authority of a guardian in major conflicts.⁵⁵ But since the author himself made this otherwise logical choice (Jósika was his closest male relative on the father's side) no kindred interfered in the dispute between the two.

The severity of the guardian had to be suffered only occasionally. Székely spent most of his childhood at college, and he often suggests in his autobiography that he could not have been in a better place in Transylvania then because 50 fellow students coming from noble families were there simultaneously.⁵⁶ College years were followed by three years of apprenticeship spent in the service of the prothonotary (*ítélőmester*) András Szentkereszti (†1736), the one-time prefect of his grandfather at the chancellery. The Szentkereszti family did not take care of the author only with regards to the "great" László Székely, but also due to the insistence on relatives. Székely's aunt on the maternal side, Zsuzsánna, younger than him with a few months, had recently married Ferenc Wesselényi, who intervened with the solitarily living Szentkereszti to take in László Székely. This is how Székely entered into the friendly environment of the Szentkereszti family for a while, which somewhat eased the pain of emotional wounds caused by his guardian. He later formed life-long friendships at the prothonotar's table,

53 Collins, "Reason, nature and order," 314.

54 Horn, "Orphans of Noble Birth," 101.

55 Perrier, "The Blended Family," 460–61.

56 The importance of these friendships could be as well traced in the life-story of some of the author's colleagues. Székely played an important role in the marriage of two of his school comrades, Sámuel Szentkereszti and István Radák, both marrying Székely's sister-in-law. We will later analyze the part played by another former college colleague, András Barabás in the second marriage of the author. The most significant example is however that of Pál Balázs, who lived his whole life in Székely's household.

and would roam the dusty roads of Transylvania together with Szentkereszti's grandson, Sámuel (1721–1772), in search of a marriage partner. This friendship was eventually strengthened by marriage too, the two becoming brothers-in-law.⁵⁷

Székely, freed from under his guardian with the help of András Szentkereszti, did not know how to manage his freedom and fortune at first, wasting it, making mistake after mistake.

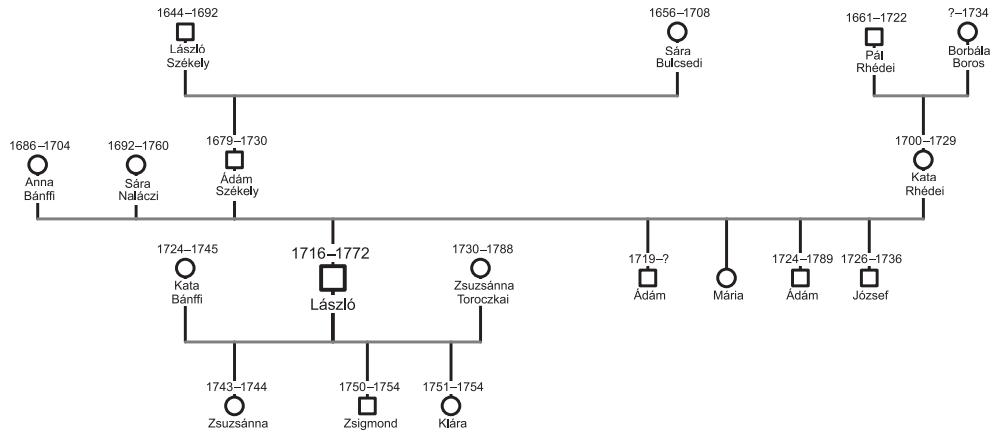


Table 5. The lineage and marriages of László Székely

The Autobiographer's First Marriage

As a result of his grandfather's property acquisitions László Székely came by a considerable financial capital, as well as a noteworthy social capital through his father's marriages. Thus with his own marriage he did not really need to achieve anything, and since as an orphan at the age of marriage he could make an individual decision with the assistance of distant kin and close friends. By that time his guardian Jósika was no longer present in the life of the author, since a few years earlier, when he reached the legal age, Székely terminated the guardianship. In the absence of parents and guardians the support of distant kin and friends was extremely important, since in early modern times the majority of youth were

⁵⁷ The widow of András Szentkereszti, Mária Korda asked Székely to propose for his son, since he already had great connection with the guardians of Klára Bánffi. In her request Mária Korda makes several references to the time Székely lived in her household, and ask him to remember the favors András Szentkereszti made him. So his involvement in the marriage could be also interpreted as a return for the favors he once received from them. *Gróf Székely László életrajza*, 322–26.

orphans or half-orphans when making their marriages.⁵⁸ Following the custom of repeated marriages, he also consciously tried to strengthen an existing alliance with the same family:⁵⁹ his first wife was a member of the Bánffi family, the also orphaned Kata Bánffi (1724–1745), niece of his father’s first wife.

Kata Bánffi lost her mother, Ágnes Toroczkai (1703–1733), when she was nine years old, then after two years, in 1735, her father, György Bánffi (1688–1735). Kata’s upbringing was taken on by her paternal aunt, Klára Bánffi (1693–1767), whose husband, Ádám Bethlen (1691–1748) was named guardian of the orphans by testament. Kata also had a brother, Dénes (1723–1780), and four sisters, Klára (†1750), Ágnes (1731–1754), Anna (†1740) and Zsuzsánna. The Bánffi orphans thus grew up together with their guardians’ children, Ádám (1719–1772) and Gábor Bethlen (1712–1768),⁶⁰ who loved their cousins as siblings, proof of this being the role they played in marrying them off.⁶¹ But it was not only the guardians’ immediate family that took care of the Bánffi orphans; the other Bethlen and Bánffi relatives had also spent time in Bonchida. Székely’s autobiography emphasized several times how supportively the kinship ties within the Bethlen family operated. The siblings: Kata Bethlen (the wife of József Teleki (†1732) by this time), Imre (1698–1765) (with his wife Klára Gyulai (†1757) and Ádám spent not only holidays, but also the everyday together. The author’s courtship was thus observed with attention by many interested people who most certainly voiced their opinion on it, too: “The wives of József Teleki and Imre Bethlen [the aunts of the bride, sisters of Ádám Bethlen] often said that they have never seen such a shy suitor as I was, although they constantly observed me, to see if I stare at my future bride, but they couldn’t catch me.”⁶² The autobiography enumerates the aunts for several times, therefore we can be sure that every gesture of the young couple was carefully measured, and not just in order to be sure that nothing inappropriate happen, but to analyze the character of the suitor as well. The whole family acted as mediators, taking a great interest in the future of their relatives, fulfilling in this way their Cristian obligation toward them.⁶³

58 Dülmen, *Kultur und Alltag*, 136; Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 244.

59 Erdélyi, “Stepfamily relationships,” 161.

60 The autobiography doesn’t mention the third boy, Miklós, but his wife Kata Csáky is constantly present in the narrative, especially in the Diary, and in Zsuzsánna Toroczkai’s memoir. She was a good friend to Székely’s wives, to both of them, even if her controversial character, not to mention that she was a zealous Catholic, was tolerated by the author very hard. *Székely László önéletírása*, 188–89.

61 Fehér, “From Courtship till the Morning After,” 790–91.

62 *Székely László önéletírása*, 98–100.

63 O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 74, 84.

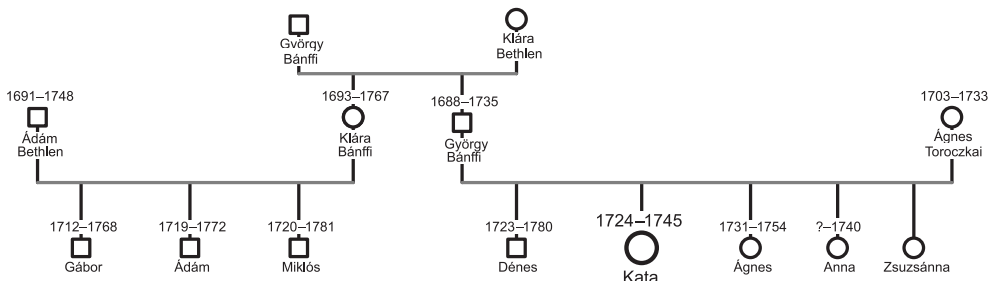


Table 6. Ádám Bethlen and Klára Bánffi's household with their biological and foster children

We meet the foster family for the first time in the description provided on the occasion of the official bride-visit. Every serious marriage plan began by visiting the home of the chosen girl. It seems that this did not happen in such an official manner, with such accompaniment and grandeur as we may read in Péter Apor's (1676–1752) *Metamorphosis Transylvaniae*,⁶⁴ through diligent workings of parents and guardians, but mostly with the help of young bachelors and friends,⁶⁵ as earlier Transylvanian memoirs seem to confirm.⁶⁶ The first encounter between László Székely and his first wife was organized with the help of Kata's cousins, especially that of Gábor, who helped the loving couple from the beginning.

The otherwise disliked guardian, Dániel Jósika entered the scene only after these steps, when Székely, putting aside his childhood wounds, requested it from him to ask Kata Bánffi's hand on his behalf. The custom was to ask the family's most influential member to carry out the proposal.⁶⁷ But the answer was delayed by four months. Eventually it was Farkas Bánffi, husband of Erzsébet Bagosi, Székely's aunt, who urged things forward at the girl's house. Theoretically the proposal of the young bachelor was being considered first by the head of the family or the most influential men, but as the autobiography clearly suggests, the opinions of the family's female members were also taken into account. The final decision, with few exceptions was left to the young ones.⁶⁸

During courtship and the bride-visit it was friends who had a greater role; during the proposal and the exchange of engagement gifts – the relatives. At the wedding ceremony the two kinship networks met: the bearers of good tidings

64 Apor, *Metamorphosis Transylvaniae*, 55.

65 O'Hara, *Courtship and Constraint*, 30–31.

66 Sárdi, "Leánykérés, házasság, szerelem," 51.

67 Radvánszky, "Lakodalmak a XVI–XVII. században," 223–42.

68 Sárdi, "Leánykérés, házasság, szerelem," 54; Béla Mihalik's study adds further valuable data to the problem. Mihalik, "...nemcsak anya, hanem atyai gondjukat is viselén."

(*örömmondók* – Székely’s college mate and dear friend Sámuel Szentkereszti; his mother’s cousin, Pál Rhédei), the wreath runners (*koszoróifuttatók* – Mihály Vaji, his mother’s cousin, who played a great role in winning the wreath), the bridesman (*vőfély* – his younger brother Ádám), the groomsman (*násznagy* – Ferenc Wesselényi, husband of Székely’s aunt), the lady of honor (*nyoszolyóasszony* – the wife of Ferenc Wesselényi Zsuzsanna Rhédei, Székely’s aunt), the maid of honor (*nyoszolyóleány* – Krisztina Bánffi (b.1726), daughter of his mother’s cousin, Erzsébet Bagosi). At mealtime, helpers were Székely’s friend Farkas Kun and the several masters of ceremony: Zsigmond Bánffi and his wife, Erzsébet Bagosi, Farkas Bánffi, József Rhédei and his wife, Kata Bíró.

Székely served the family of his first wife in his quality of brother-in-law, too, because he helped a lot during Dénes Bánffi’s courtship and in acquiring a positive answer from the Barcsai family, and it was also him asking for the hand of Klára, his wife’s younger sister, on behalf of Sámuel Szentkereszti, his college friend. Kata’s brother, Dénes would become a constant figure in the young married couple’s life. Among the siblings it seems that it was these two who were closest to each other. They lived also near, and when they were not at their estates, they ran a common household (in Szeben and Vienna).⁶⁹

Just like his father’s first marriage, the author’s first marriage did not last long either, due to Kata’s sever lung-illness. As he notes numerous times, “the Székely family has no luck with the Bánffi girls.” Kata Bánffi spent the last weeks of her life with her foster family, at Dénes Bánffi’s mansion in Csanád (Cenade), where the rest of the relatives were also dwelling. Klára Bánffi insisted to be by her foster daughter’s side during her last moments. The Bánffi family did not leave László Székely by his own in his widowhood either; both his brother-in-law and the foster parents of his wife would be by his side in the following years of his life.

Székely’s Remarriage and Second Family

The thought of remarrying was alien to László Székely for a while, who believed that “second marriages were rarely lucky.”⁷⁰ It seemed extremely complicated to fill the void left by the ideal wife who had died young. But because his younger brother, Ádám Székely wished not to marry, the 32-year-old author had to ensure the family’s survival by producing offsprings.

69 As we mentioned it was not unusual for sisters to take care of their bachelor brothers. O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 74, 89.

70 *Székely László önéletrása*, 328.

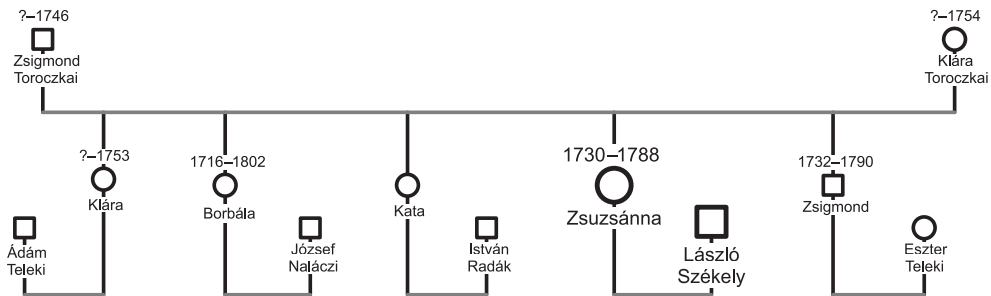


Table 7. The second wife Zsuzsánna Toroczkai's family

Székely started to think about remarrying under pressure of friends, who recommended the Toroczkai girls and praised especially the beauty of the younger one, Zsuzsánna Toroczkai. Even though Zsuzsánna had an elder maiden sister, and Székely was warned that there was little probability for “the younger one being married off before the elder one,”⁷¹ he chose Zsuzsánna, which probably induced the older sister’s later resentment towards his brother-in-law. The bride-visit was organized by his brother-in-law in his first marriage, Dénes Bánffi, with whom the author had also discussed his views on the Toroczkai girl: “After dinner I went to sleep over the Count’s apartments, when only the two of us remained, the Count asked me if I liked the person, to which I replied, that I really liked her, and if they would give her to me, I would gladly marry her. To which Master Dénes replied, if I trust him, he would ask her for me.”⁷²

However, the second marriage faced trials already in its incipient stages. Dénes Bánffi, charged with the proposal, was preparing for widowhood (since his wife was suffering in child-bed), and in the meantime he ended up taking a liking to the younger Toroczkai girl himself, thus he did not rush to initiate a discussion on Székely’s marriage intentions with the girl’s parents.⁷³ Eventually László Székely received unexpected help from a former college mate, András Barabás, who at the time was in the service of the Toroczkai family, and would be the one bearing the good news to Székely.⁷⁴ The exchange of engagement gifts, as with the first marriage, happened without the pair meeting, the Toroczkais being represented in this matter by the prospective bride’s sister, Klára Toroczkai (†1753). The narration of marriage rituals is succinct; one could say it conforms completely to our expectations regarding Transylvanian memoirs, since it narrows

71 *Székely László önéletírása*, 329.

72 *Ibid.*, 330; Fehér, “From Courtship till the Morning After,” 791.

73 *Székely László önéletírása*, 330–32.

74 *Ibid.*, 335.

down to the short description of the guests list, relatives and friends with more important functions in the wedding ceremony. We meet Farkas Bánffi again, this time as groomsman, next to him the wife of Ádám Kemény Druziánna Rhédei as lady of honor, and her sister Éva as maid of honor. Therefore, the most important roles are again played by the maternal lineage. Farkas Bánffi the husband of Erzsébet Bagosi, Druziánna and Éva, cousins of Kata Rhédei, the author's mother. Ádám Székely not only did not take on the role of bridesman, but we do not find him amongst the guests either, the brothers' relationship having completely deteriorated by this time. The author was actually very concerned regarding this matter, since he tried in his testament to protect his second wife from any future unpleasantness coming from Ádám Székely, by that time very influent and powerful: "And since the Lord has not given me any successors so far, and foreseeing that if my brother mocked a lot even with me, his older brother, he would be all the more unpleasant with my widow."⁷⁵

The relationship with the in-laws, however, began to form. The author's second marriage differed in more regards from the first one. The prospective bride was a maiden, who had not experienced the sorrows of a long orphanhood since she had lost her father only one year before her wedding. Thus Székely had to obtain the approval of the mother and gain the sympathies of the biological siblings. The autobiography – and the two memoir fragments, that of the author's wife and of the administrator Zsigmond Kis – suggests that in contrast to the Rhédei, Bethlen and Bánffi families mentioned in the previous subchapters, sibling relations in the Toroczkai family tended to be more often tense than loving. Just like with László and Ádám Székely, there were insurmountable disagreements between the Toroczkai siblings, too, which would only periodically ease up. The pressures did, of course, only intensify with time, and the clueless Székely approached his future wife's family with great trust during his courtship.

The second marriage is barely present at the narrative level, which could be of course explained structurally. While the recounting of the first marriage can be said to follow the scheme of typical framed narratives where the subsequent biographical episodes bear their own chapter titles, the second marriage unfolds day by day as an ongoing experience.⁷⁶ This is where the narration about the children born in the second marriage finds its place, children whom the memoir mentions more rarely than we would expect from an author "living an unusually

⁷⁵ *Székely László önéletrása*, 371.

⁷⁶ Fehér, "Székely László önéletrása," 73.

deep emotional life.” We would like to avoid the usual trap of searching for excuses and explanations for why the descriptions of hunts and sledding adventures were allotted more narrative space than the children. It is a fact though that the author’s daughter from his first marriage was only six months old when the parents parted with her for half a year; the children from the second marriage were also divided between parents and grandparents, uncles and aunts.⁷⁷ The Transylvanian ego-documents suggest that the upbringing of children was not only the responsibility of the nuclear family, but of the extended family, adult siblings cooperating and sharing in the task that secured the future of the noble families. Klára (1751–1754) spent the three years of her life at her maternal grandmother, Klára Toroczkai (†1754), unlike Zsigmond (1750–1754), who was raised by his parents, and only spent shorter periods at his grandmother’s court.

Zsigmond Kis’s accounts tell us also of the presence of other children, too.⁷⁸ László Székely does not mention the eight Katonai–Barcsai orphans whom he had raised, educated and then properly married off. We don’t know the lineage-connection between the author and the Barcsai family, we only know that they were distant kin. The children are therefore missing, although a flitting entry at the end of the autobiography does mention Klári Katonai’s (“my dear little daughter”) illness,⁷⁹ we do not find out anything more about the child or her siblings. Székely expressed his emotions often, sometimes even in an artistic way, such is the case with his autobiographical poem, and he enjoyed recalling the emotional bounds he nourished with his family and friends. The reason for the absence of the Katonai–Barcsai orphans, from the Székely family chronicle, could be explained with the fact that they do not fit in the narrative of the family lineages. Székely recalls not just his life-events, but transformed his autobiography at a certain extent into a family chronicle as well. In this chronicle these children played no roles, they did not inherit, did not carry the name further, thus they are part of another family-saga, not the Székely.

The Emotional Barometer: Grief, Support and Consolation

The Székely–Toroczkai couple had lost both their children in a short time. Contrary to what one would expect, they did not receive any emotional support from their relatives. Székely emphasized it multiple times, that after the loss

77 O’Day, *The Family and Family Relationships*, 84; Warner, “Stepfamilies in Early Modern Europe,” 485.

78 *Kis Zsigmond feljegyzései*, 462–63.

79 *Székely László önéletírása*, 438.

of their children, neither his own brother nor his brothers-in-law stood by his side during the mourning period, and that he and his wife only received spiritual support and consolation from friends and acquaintances. Moreover, the Toroczkai siblings, after the death of both of their parents, wanted to exclude Zsuzsánna from the inheritance saying that she did not need her part since she had no living children: “[Klára and Borbála Toroczkai (1716–1802)] were very upset about the way things turned out for them, but it was too late and they could not change the draw. Both asked for our arrow [i.e. the states they inherited by draw] arguing in such a nice, brotherly compassionate way, that we did not have any children [i.e. do not need the inheritance].”⁸⁰ It seems that the brother Zsigmond Toroczkai (1732–1790) was the only one who could somewhat gain Zsuzsánna’s confidence by leaving his son to his widowed sister’s care multiple times, hoping that thus he could acquire a larger part of the fortune as well.

In Székely’s memoir, the description of mourning and its rituals has a central role. The detailed account of the funeral ceremonies, the description of the participants and their roles are important not only from the viewpoint of representation, but served also as a sort of emotional barometer. All the three texts (the autobiography of Székely, and the two memoirs of Toroczkai and Kis which follow and continue it) highlight the behaviour and the number of participants at the funeral ceremony, which was, it seems, followed with lively interest by many in those times. The expression of feelings on such occasions was of great significance. Transylvanian ego-documents contain a great amount of information regarding the preparations for funerals from both sides, from the one of the moribund and from the family as well. While for the first one it was extremely important to behave like a true Christian, and not to fear death, for the later it was required to expose as many emotions as possible, since their tears and sorrows reflected their feelings towards their kin. The society was very vigilant and keen in observing the intensity of these emotions. In Székely’s autobiography the dying persons played exceptionally their parts, preying or singing psalms on their last hours.⁸¹ But we know from Wesselényi’s diary that the grandmother of László Székely, Sára Bulcsesdi wasn’t at all content with her situation, she had a difficult passage, and was bothered by the “curiosity” of her visitors, asking at one point if it is really necessary for a dying person to be so exposed to public

80 Ibid., 365.

81 We must be aware of the major impact funeral orations had on these personal narratives. Since almost all Transylvanian ego-documents describe death in a similar way, we must talk about a fashion, influenced by the edited orations. Fazakas, “tetszett az Úristennek,” 270–75.

eyes.⁸² It seems that it was, since the majority of our personal narratives reflect on this topic, describing the last moments and dialogues between the dying and its family, interpreting the lack of emotions as a bad sign. The loosening of bonds between siblings from the Toroczkai and Székely families, detailed above, or estranged relations are best noticed in the case of grief and funeral ceremonies. Zsuzsánna Toroczkai mentions that many had visited László Székely on his death bed, but neither his brother Ádám Székely nor the Toroczkai sisters-in-law or brothers-in-law honored him with their presence.⁸³ Zsigmond Kis records similar things about Zsuzsánna Toroczkai's death struggle.⁸⁴ Neither the sisters nor the brother-in-law went to Alamor [Alamor], but following the news of his death they immediately sealed up the doors of Toroczkai's house in Szeben. There were veritable fights for the inheritance which not only the blood relatives wanted to acquire: "The administrator [Zsigmond Kis] and the doctor as well reported this last and deadly affection of hers [Zsuzsánna Toroczkai] to Baroness Naláczai [Borbála Toroczkai], but she did not bother to come [...] she was rather thinking how could she seal all the good and houses [of her sister] from Szeben. Just as she did it, right away, in the day the Countess died, very sudden, since the Countess died between four and five in the morning [...] and by six all her things were sealed in such a hurry, that the late Countess body was not even in the Church when all her goods were already locked."⁸⁵

The reading of the accounts of Toroczkai and Kis suggests that the kindred was not so much preoccupied with mourning but rather with securing the fortune. Every eligible family member delegated guards to the deceased person's houses, properties, and waited tensely for the division of the inheritance. And even if it has been suggested that the weaker the blood relationship was, the greater was the greed, the autobiographical narrative suggests that close blood relatives caused the biggest tensions. Zsigmond Kis describes the lack of fraternal love in both houses without any emotional attachment, as an outsider, and he also points at scrounging as the reason for all estrangement. Neither Ádám Székely

82 Wesselényi, *Sanyarú világ*, vol. II, 433. Otherwise we know a few cases recorded in the memoir-literature about frightened and angry moribund. (Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok*, 259–60) We learn from Rettegi that even Ádám Székely, the autobiographer's brother was one of them, since he never attended funerals and was afraid of death. (Rettegi, *Emlékezetre méltó dolgok*, 270.) We consider that these cases are recorded because they were perceived as unusual, and because they deviate from the normal, socially accepted behavior, that of silent and honorable death.

83 *Toroczkai Zsuzsánna feljegyzései*, 442.

84 *Kis Zsigmond feljegyzései*, 458.

85 *Kis Zsigmond feljegyzései*, 458–59.

nor the Toroczka sisters are painted in a favorable light in Kis's recollections. In fraternal bonds within the Székelys and Toroczka, feelings were overwritten by personal interests.

Conclusion

The autobiography of László Székely familiarize the reader with the complicated network of Transylvanian noble families. In the first part of the article I focused on marriages, and the way these alliances shaped the kinship networks of the author. While describing his lineage, László Székely touched upon these complex family models, and based on his detailed accounts, the kinship with the paternal (Székely, Szalánczi, Jósika) and that of the maternal (Boros, Vaji, Rhédei) side can be easily traced. The autobiography lingers more on the maternal lineage, in contrast to other Transylvanian egodocuments written by nobles, which usually underline the importance of the paternal side. This shift could be on one hand explained by the fact that the Székely family belonged to the new-nobles of the principality, therefore they were not totally accepted by the old Transylvanian families, thus the importance of the well-known and “pure” lineage of the maternal side. On the other hand, the autobiography suggests that the supportive kinship network the author relied on after he faced orphanhood came also from this side of the family. Moreover, this supportive network was formed not only by biological kin, but by several distant relatives coming from a step-lineage, since each four grandparents of the author in different life stages, either as children or adults, experienced living in families including stepparents, half-siblings and stepsiblings. The autobiography suggests that small children lived as orphans for only a limited period of time before gaining a stepparent, until their parents seek a new partner, as did the great-great grandmother (Anna Szalánczi) and the grandmother of the author (Borbála Boros). If both of the parents died other solutions were found, such as the foster parenthood, as was in the case of the author's first wife, Kata Bánffy, which was also a common kinship tie that reintegrated orphans into families, or the guardianship, as was the case of the author. These new alliances and family-formations were not always successful, since the author himself faced great difficulties living under the guardianship of his grandmother, Sára Bulcsesdi's half-brother, Dániel Jósika. Székely's life changed once he entered into college, since his circle of interest expanded beyond his kindred. The friendships he made during these years with his fellow noble students were of utmost importance, some of them

got integrated into the extended family through marriages, as brothers-in-law, and others coming from the lower nobility became integrated into his household fulfilling services for life.

After Székely founded his own families family life became more flexible, due to the overlapping of the biological family and the new one. Once important relations became now less significant, since new family members and several new family relations appeared. These new family alliances sometimes outlast the original bond. After the death of the partners the “inherited kin” did not disappear, but supports for several years their former sons and daughters-in-law, or brothers and sisters-in-law. In Székely’s life these new families played a very important role, even if sometimes not in a positive way. The autobiography tells us not only about the presence, but also about the absence of emotional ties between the Székely and Toroczkai siblings. The ego-documents suggest that in the adulthood of the author, and especially after losing his biological children, alliances outside the nuclear family, the fictive kinship network and the inherited step-family relations proved to be more determining.

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Dávid Rozsnyai’s “Orphans”: A Stepfamily through Divorce in Seventeenth-Century Transylvania¹

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My paper examines the documents pertaining to the life of a stepfamily made through divorce in seventeenth-century Transylvania. The focus is on the interfamilial relationships before and after the divorce. I examine the ways in which the attitude of the father, Dávid Rozsnyai, toward his first wife and children changed during the divorce and after formation of a new family. I also consider how the appearance of the new family members (second wife, half-siblings) affected the equilibrium within the family. My analysis shows that in Early Modern Transylvania there were social and personal customs involving the assignment of social positions to both adult and child members of a family broken by divorce, which facilitated the integration of these families into the community. The scattered family documents and witness hearings show that the divorced father ensured, through his testament and other documents, that the two sons from the two different marriages would share inherited wealth equally. In their turn, the stepbrothers worked together to pay off their father’s debts.

Keywords: stepfamily, divorce, Transylvania, children, remarriage, inheritance, stepsiblings, half-siblings, orphans

Introduction

In recent years, there has been a growing interest among historians in the lives of Early Modern stepfamilies.² This has involved a shift from the study of patterns of remarriage to relations within the new family unit formed by remarriage, such as the relationship between stepparents and stepchildren,³ stepsiblings living in

1 The research enjoyed support provided by the Hungarian Academy of Sciences’ (HAS) Domus Hungarica Program and the HAS Momentum “Integrating Families” Research Group.

2 The earliest major work on the subject is Laslett, “Parental Deprivation,” in the 1990s Collins, “British Stepfamily Relationships,” Collins, “Reason, Nature and Order,” Roderick, “Stepfamilies.” The latest contributions on this subject are Warner, “Stepfamilies in Early Modern Europe” and Warner, *Stepfamilies in Europe*.

3 Erdélyi, “Stepfamily relationships.” Nickus Moore, “Stepfamilies.” Guerson and Wessell Lightfoot, “Jewish families.” Stretton, “Stepmothers.”

the same household,⁴ and illegitimate children living within the family.⁵ This new perspective has led many scholars to argue that in pre-Modern Europe, the nuclear family was more of an exception than the norm. Due to high mortality rates, men and women were very often widowed, and they often remarried. Consequently, children born in consecutive marriages often lived within a blended family, developing bonds which crossed over blood ties, both within the stepfamily group and among friends, the neighborhood, and the community.⁶

A big part of today's societies also lives within blended families, often established through divorce,⁷ but studies have shown that, in earlier generations, stepfamilies were mostly composed of widows or widowers and considerably less often of divorced or abandoned spouses.⁸

The Early Modern stepfamily on which I focus in this article is the Rozsnyai family, which is a distinctive case, as it wasn't created in the "usual way" presented above (through the death of a spouse), but rather through divorce. Family egodocuments, complaints, petitions, and witness hearings which have survived⁹ offer glimpses into an Early Modern protestant family's transformation from a nuclear family, broken by divorce, into a stepfamily with the arrival of a new spouse and more children. The documentary evidence provides insights into the relationship between the half-siblings after their father's death. The problems which emerged among the members of this stepfamily before and after the father's death confirmed that the grant of a divorce in the protestant Churches not only annulled the bond between the spouses, but also had emotional and economic consequences.¹⁰

4 Perrier, "Coresidence of Siblings." Bastress-Dukehart, "Sibling Conflict Within Early Modern Germany."

5 Bellavitis, "Stepfamilies and Inclusive Families." Coolidge "Virtual Stepfamilies."

6 Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*; Chaytor, "Household and Kinship." Tadmor, *Family and friends*, Fehér, "Család és élettörténetek."

7 Pill, "Stepfamilies," 186; Coleman and Ganong, "Remarriage and Stepfamily," 926–27; Ihinger-Tallman, "Research on Stepfamilies," 27–29.

8 Warner, "Introduction," 3–4; Bellavitis, "Stepfamilies," 56–57.

9 Most of the family archive from Udvarfalva (Curteni) was destroyed, except the documents that were preserved by József Koncz, teacher at the Calvinist College from Marosvásárhely. Today, these documents are in the Mureş County Branch of the Romanian National Archives in the former collection of the Calvinist College. Presumably, the personal archive of József Koncz might contain other documents from the Rozsnyai family archive, but unfortunately, this archive located in the Cluj County Branch of the Romanian National Archives is not processed and cannot be accessed.

10 Safley, "Civic Morality," 178–79.

Families which underwent changes as a result of divorce and remarriage constitute the least documented and least investigated slice of Early Modern stepfamilies. The lack of scholarly interest and the dearth of secondary literature can be explained through the sparsity of the documentary sources and the isolated nature of the cases, encountered in a relatively small geographical area of the larger pool of Early Modern Europe's protestant communities.

Sociological research distinguishes multiple forms of stepfamilies formed through divorce based on the dynamic of the divorcee's remarriage and decisions reached concerning child custody.¹¹ It could be argued that a stepfamily has been created only when the parent who has custody of the child or children remarries. As the Early Modern family was built only through the cohabitation of husband and wife, but also through a network of kinship bonds which transcended the household environment, when children who were not living with their remarried parent were parts of this kinship connection, they can also be considered members of the stepfamily.

Dávid Rozsnyai and His Families

The main character of this story is Dávid Rozsnyai, known as the last Turkish scribe.¹² He was born in Marosvásárhely (today Târgu Mureș, Romania) in 1641 to a family of the Transylvanian petty nobility.¹³ He was 34 when he married for the first time to Anna Nagy Nyerges. This comparatively late marriage may have been the consequence in part of the fact that he frequently traveled and spend time abroad. He may also have waited until he had acquired a position and accumulated wealth to start a family.¹⁴ The wedding was held at the princely court of Radnót (Iernut) in September 1675, under the auspices of the prince.¹⁵

11 Allan, Crow and Hawker, *Stepfamilies*, 14–15.

12 On Transylvanian Turkish scribes, see Kármán, “Az erdélyi,” and Kármán, *A Seventeenth*.

13 On his family, see Szilágyi, “Rozsnyai Dávid,” 170.

14 After finishing his education, Rozsnyai moved in 1664 to Segesvár (today Sighișoara, Romania) in order to obtain a position in the service of Prince Mihály Apafi. He was helped in his endeavors by Mihály Csepregi, the former envoy to the Ottoman Sublime Porte, who was a close friend of Gáspár Veresmarti, Reformed bishop and Rozsnyai's brother-in-law. Csepregi recommended Rozsnyai to the Transylvanian Princely Court as Turkish scribe. After he learned to read and write in Turkish, he had a successful career as a diplomat, and he even translated in front of the sultan in 1667. Szilágyi, *Rozsnyai Dávid*.

15 See the wedding invitation sent by Mihály Apafi to Bethlen Farkas' counselor, Szilády, Szilágyi, *Török-magyarokori*, 352. On the Early Modern Transylvanian wedding ceremonies, see Fehér, “The Role of Family, Kin and Friends.” On marriage customs, see Szabó, “Betrothal and Wedding.”

From their marriage, three children reached the age of adulthood: a boy named András and two girls, Rebeka and Zsuzsanna.

Dávid Rozsnyai professional work and career as an interpreter and an envoy to the Ottoman Empire and his service to Prince Mihály Apafi's court are well-known from his ego-documents. There are a number of biographies focused on his diplomatic career. Fragments of his journal (1660–1670, 1705) have survived, as have fragments of his autobiography (1663, 1669–1673), the list of his services to the Prince written in November 1667, and a number of diaries (1663, 1665–1674). But these ego-documents are from his highly dynamic earlier life and his work in the service of the state prior to his marriage in 1675, so they provide no information about his private and family life.¹⁶ Among his writings there are also 13 annotated pocket calendars which contain Rozsnyai's notes from the years 1668, 1680, 1681, 1684, 1702, 1708, 1709, 1710, 1711, 1712, 1715, 1716, and 1717.¹⁷ If we compare these yearly calendars with the dates of the other ego-documents, there is only one year that overlaps, 1668. We do not know whether, for the missing years, there were also journals or parts of his autobiography that did not survive, but from the numbering of the calendars, we can assume that some volumes are missing.¹⁸

The first insight we have into the life of the Rozsnyai family is provided by the documents that were created when the paterfamilias was imprisoned. In 1678, upon returning from another delegation to the Sublime Porte, Rozsnyai was accused of supporting Pál Béli's conspiracy¹⁹ against the prince and was consequently imprisoned. He was held captive in Görgény (today Gurghiu, Romania) and Szamosújvár (today Gherla, Romania) until 1682. During his captivity, he sent letters and instructions to his wife which offer some indication of the relationship between them at the time, while some fragments also show

16 Published in Szilágyi, *Rozsnyai Dávid*.

17 Some of the annotations have been published in Simonfi, "Rozsnyai Dávid," 112–26. The Teleki-Bolyai Library in Marosvásárhely holds the collection of calendars, including the ones annotated by Rozsnyai and his sons.

18 On the back of the calendar from 1668 we can read "from '57 to '68," and on the 1680 calendar one finds "from '80 to '89." Thus, he started writing in the calendars when he began his schooling. These annotations could be the source on the basis of which the journals and autobiographies were written later on. There was a common practice among the Transylvanian memoir writers of expanding their brief notes in the calendars into proper autobiographies or memoirs. We can see this in the case of Mihály Cserei, and Miklós Bethlen also refers to this practice in his memoir. Tóth, "Műfaj vs. íráshasználat?" 362–70.

19 Pál Béli, Székely, aristocrat, counselor to Prince Mihály Apafi, who was accused of treason and imprisoned between 1676–1677. After his release, he sought refuge in the Ottoman Empire, where he was imprisoned and died.

how Rozsnyai represented himself as a father and what his attitude was towards his children. We do not know the exact birthdates of the children from his first marriage, but at the time of his captivity, their son András and at least one of their daughters had already been born.

Their marriage lasted only 12 years. In 1687, at Rozsnyai's request, they divorced. Their statements during the divorce proceedings show not only the deterioration of the relationship between them, but also the way in which Early Modern spouses tried to get rid of each other.²⁰

In the first year after the divorce, Rozsnyai was permitted to remarry, and in 1688, at the age of 47, he married Rebeka Fogarasi.

From Rozsnyai's second marriage, three children were born who survived into adulthood: a boy, Sámuel, born in 1698, and two girls, Anna and Klára. The calendars of the elderly Rozsnyai contain details about more family members. He had at least three more children from this second marriage who died at a young age, and he recorded the dates of their deaths. In 1698, he wrote about the death of a daughter named Ráchel. We do not know how old she was, but she was not a newborn, as Sámuel was also born that year. In 1709, Rozsnyai made a record of the death of his 18-year-old daughter, Sára. Her death and funeral were commemorated in his later calendars, too. She was probably his first child from the second marriage. In 1712, he recorded the death of a second child named Ráchel, a newborn, who was buried near her sisters. The two other girls are totally absent in the family ego-documents, and their existence was confirmed by the aforementioned József Koncz, who made a detailed family tree.

Rozsnyai and his new family moved from Marosvásárhely to Fogaras (today Făgăraș, Romania), as he probably wanted to keep his ties to the princely court. But the family became poorer and poor, as Rozsnyai did not receive the wages due for his services to the Court. He pawned more and more of his belongings, and had debts to several noble families. His oldest son, András, helped him deal with these financial problems. He died at Fogaras in 1718 at the age of 77.

After the divorce, the children from his first marriage remained with their mother, but Rozsnyai promised to support them financially at the divorce hearing and in his letter to his ex-wife.

²⁰ The documents of his divorce trial were preserved in the protocols of the Partial Synod of the Maros Diocese. Marosi egyházmegye levéltára, prot. I/1. Series *causarum*, published: Sipos, "Rozsnyai Dávid," 303–5.

The divorced parents were obliged by law to feed and educate their children and to ensure and provide for their future. The children remained legal heirs to their parents after the divorce, too, as they kept all their innate rights and their positions.²¹ The children from different wives of a divorced father inherited their father's wealth and belongings together,²² as the mother's wealth and belongings were inherited only by her children.²³ In terms of inheritance, there was a difference between male and female heirs. Only sons born within marriage inherited the their father's accumulated wealth. Female heirs, in accordance with the so-called *Tripartitum* (a manual of customary law which had been in use in Hungary to varying extents since it was published in 1517), had no claim to their father's estates. They received the so-called filial quarter, which was usually money, equally shared between the daughters, thus preventing the alienation of the families' estates. The family archive was kept by the eldest son, even if he had older sisters or if they concerned the girls' inheritance.²⁴ The paternal house was usually inherited by the youngest son.²⁵

The goods in the Rozsnyai family were mostly divided according to the *Tripartitum*, too. András inherited the family archive, while the house in Fogaras remained in Sámuel's possession, and the father stipulated in his will that his sons would equally share his other belongings, but he omitted his daughters from his testament.

Rozsnyai's First Marriage

The sources which have survived concerning his relationship with his first wife were created at moments in their marriage which may well have been among the most trying for both of them. In the fourth year of their marriage Rozsnyai was imprisoned. From the letters and instructions which he sent from prison to his wife we know that she visited him several times during his captivity and provided things he needed. In his letters, he gave strict instructions concerning the administration of the household: to control the expenditures and the servants. We also have detailed lists of instructions concerning the items he wanted while he was being held, both in Görgény and in Szamosújvár: clothing (with precise

21 Dósa, *Erdélyboni*, 55.

22 The order of inheritance in Transylvanian noble families was based on István Werbőczy's *Tripartitum*.

23 Dósa, *Erdélyboni*, 386–87.

24 *Ibid.*, 415

25 *Ibid.*, 414.

indications of material and color), buttons, sewing utensils, cookware, spices, food, drink, medicines, books, writing materials, etc. He gave specific instructions regarding the date and the route his spouse should take when visiting him: “Do not come yourself until you have sent somebody (to me first), and I will send a message through that person when you are to depart.”²⁶ Moreover, he tells her how to ensure that the household is taken care of while she is absent: “Find the optimal time for making the journey, do not saddle the poor cattle and horses in bad weather, the day the wagon departs you should also get going, but leave the things at home in good care; in order to avoid damages, secure the barn with a padlock, [making sure] that nobody wastes the cereals [...] order [the servants] not to have big fires in the fireplaces, and, especially at night, to put them out and not to let them burn, and keep the dried fruits under lock and key to ensure that they are not eaten by servants as they please, as they need to be rationed.”²⁷ He writes in a tone which suggests he saw himself (or sought to present himself) as a husband who ruled his household and all its members with an iron fist and who, even if not present, had to be informed and decide on all family issues.

The opening and closing formulas of his letters,²⁸ however, are expressive of a balanced or even loving relationship. He opens his letter from November 1679 with the formula: “God bless you my sweet wife” and closes with “Your sad-hearted imprisoned husband.” In his other letter from 1679, the phrase “my sweet wife” is changed to “my relative” or “my kin” (“*atyámfia*” in Hungarian), as in, for instance, “God bless you with a lot of goods my good relative,” but the letter in question still closes with “Your Orphan imprisoned half.” In the letter from October 1781 he used both invocations: “Bring all the written things with you, forget any of them, my good relative, God help you, sweet half.” In this letter, he still emphasizes the closeness between them as husband and wife, a bond which should not be weakened by his imprisonment.

Rozsnyai instructed his wife to provide a written account of all activities taking place in his household: “Don’t let yourself be misled when selling the cattle and horses, and afterwards take care to have everything that you sell written down [...] don’t forget, as I ordered, to note which fields have been sown, and note their type and place.”²⁹ Their relationship was based on the wife’s subordination,

26 Koncz, “Oklevelek.” 158.

27 *Ibid.*, 157.

28 Five letters (November and December 1679, April and October 1681, April 1682) and three short-length written instructions (*memorialé*) were preserved, they are published in Koncz, “Oklevelek.”

29 Koncz, “Oklevelek,” 156.

even when, during his captivity, Rozsnyai was entirely dependent on her support. Rozsnyai entrusted his spouse not only with household administration, but also with more special tasks. When he was moved from Görgény to Szamosújvár, he sent presents to János Toldalagi (his supervisor) and Toldalagi's wife through her. He also instructed her to send a letter to the same Toldalagi, probably composed by Rozsnyai himself: "Have this supplication nicely written, my sweet relative, and take it with you, give it to the lord, beg his wife, too, in order to obtain a good answer."³⁰ In the same letter, he asks permission to attend church service, to receive visits from his uncle from the nearby city of Kolozsvár (Cluj Napoca), to read, to practice writing in Turkish, and to translate.³¹

Rozsnyai uses several rhetorical instruments to maintain a tight grip on his wife and household. One finds expressions of concern and care, but also complaints and threats in his letters: "If you have a soul in God don't complain about having to feed me or cloth me from what is mine, to ease my misery until I have some things, and to send presents where I tell you to. These things are not more precious than me, God commiserates with me and gives us other things in return, my sweet wife."³²

In his letters, Rozsnyai frequently complains that his wife does not tend to his wishes, for instance that she does not send enough food, drink, or clothes, and he reminds her many times that what she must purchase she buys from his earnings, and she should spare no expense.

During his captivity, the burdens of tending to the family's affairs fell on his wife's shoulders, including administering the household, securing the financial means for everyday expenses including food, finding supporters for her husband's cause, and, on top of that, providing childcare. The letters written in 1681 suggest that she found it increasingly difficult to make ends meet, at least judging by the reproaches Rozsnyai makes. "It seems, my kin, that you haven't given too much care to my drinks in the past two and half years, and in my present condition I had to drink less and less, even if I always mix it [the wine] with water, now I can drink only once every two weeks, because I don't have more, and I don't have money to buy any more. I can see that if I am silent about this, you are happy to be silent, too; you can't convince me that you have no

30 Ibid., 159.

31 The short answer he received from Toldalagi tells us, that Toldalagi grants all these requests, except for writing and translating, for which he requires in his turn the prince's permission. Koncz, "Oklevelek," 161–2.

32 Ibid., 161.

money, because I gave you before instructions concerning how to make money, even if you are not able to sell [the grain], I even freed you to sell it below price, but do not force me to beg.”³³

The children are mentioned in this letters too, as Rozsnyai asked his wife to bring András to see him in 1679, but he also showed his paternal rigor by asking his wife to take care of their education: “The children should learn, they should not spend their time in vain pursuits, and they should be looked after diligently.”³⁴ He put a particular emphasis on András’ education: “The child should go to school daily, don’t let him near wells or horses.”³⁵

Unfortunately, we have no sources on the family from Rozsnyai’s release in 1682 until the divorce in 1687. Their marriage lasted 12 years, three of which Rozsnyai spent in prison (leaving his wife with three children to care for). During the five years after his release (for which we have no sources), the marriage, which had undergone the stresses of Rozsnyai’s imprisonment, may well have deteriorated further. His wife’s perspective and the details of their private life can only be observed through the documents of the divorce trial from the Partial Synod.

The Divorce

In 1687, Rozsnyai accused his wife in front of the Partial Synod³⁶ of the Maros Dioece of having left their family house which was in her care in Herepe (Oláhherepe, Hăpria) and traveled in the night to Marosvásárhely for an unknown

33 Ibid., 162

34 Ibid., 164.

35 Ibid., 165.

36 In the Principality of Transylvania, the tasks and legal work related to betrothal and marriage were under the jurisdiction of the Church, and the matrimonial cases were judged based on each confession’s own laws and canons. Both the law and the judges belonged to the same confession as the matrimonial case’s bride and groom. For later economic, successional, or criminal issues, the case was transferred to the secular authorities. The ecclesiastical laws were decided by the synods and the secular laws by the diet, where the representatives of the three nations (the nobility, most of which was Hungarian-speaking, the Saxon patricians, and the Székelys) and the Prince took part. In the Transylvanian Calvinist Church, the Holy See of the Partial Synod was primarily charged with the task of judging marital cases. Divorces among the common people and the petty nobility were discussed at the Partial Synod, and its decisions could be appealed at the General Synod; the aristocracy’s marital cases were discussed at the General Synod. Kiss, *Egyház és közösség*, 83; Kiss, “Church Discipline,” 113; Buzogány, “A kálvini etikára,” 1–10. The authority of the Partial Synod started to be limited and suppressed towards the end of the seventeenth century, and starting with the reign of Emperor Joseph II, the divorce trials were transferred from the authority of the Church to the secular courts. Kolumbán, *A törvényhozás egyház*, 120–21, 124.

reason. He also alleged that his wife did not spend the night in the house the family had in Marosvásárhely and that her whereabouts were unknown.

Abandonment was the mildest justification for divorce that was accepted, but Rozsnyai's contention that his wife had spent the night in an unknown place was in fact an accusation of infidelity. The accepted grounds for a divorce in Transylvania were similar to those in other Calvinist or Lutheran communities, but in some cases, local customs also influenced the decisions. The most accepted justification for a petition of divorce was adultery, but the sources contain mention of numerous other explanations, such as adulterous abandonment, impotence, sexually transmitted disease, marriage with a person below one's social rank without the consent of one's parents, life-threatening domestic disputes, or forced marriages.³⁷

Anna Nagy defended herself by saying that her husband had left her alone with their "orphaned" children and they had had to flee together with others in the village as enemies approached (probably a Habsburg army). She claimed that, upon reaching the house in Marosvásárhely, she had been unable to enter it, as it was locked. She and the children had had to find shelter, and they had gone to a relative's house in the city. She also insisted that her husband produce evidence in support of his accusations. As Rozsnyai did not attend the meeting, the court notified him through his representative that, until the next hearing, he should make provisions for the financial support of his children and wife and even pay for her defending representative.³⁸

At the second hearing, which took place on September 10, although his representative objected, Rozsnyai was ordered to pay his wife's trial costs too, as this was the custom both in their diocese and in the others nearby. During the hearing, it emerged that the disagreement between the spouses had worsened with time, and that Rozsnyai "did not support, feed, or clothes his wife or children, but he did provide money, food, and clothing for others, and, to further upset his spouse, he had given her clothes to another women, saying in front of his wife, "How well they fit you, darling, wear them in good health!"³⁹ His alleged failure to provide financial and emotional support was seen by his wife as the clear consequences of his loss of love for.

37 Sipos, "Református eljegyzések"; Kiss, *Egyház és közösség*, 99–145; Márton "Divorce in the Szék"; Márton, "Az egyház normáin"; Fegyveresi, "Házassági ügyek."

38 Sipos, "Rozsnyai;" Marosi Egyházmegye Levéltára, Protocollum. I/1. Series caesarum. 38–41.

39 Sipos, "Rozsnyai," 304.

These allegations illustrate not only the particular situation of this family, but also the obligations husbands had in a family in general and the various forms of recourse a wife had if her husband failed to meet his responsibilities.

Rozsnyai's wife alleged to the court that her husband had had an affair with a woman named Sára Szőcs, together with whom he had been seen sleeping on different occasions by several witnesses. His mistress, it seems, was pregnant, and Rozsnyai had even prepared a concoction intended to cause her to abort.

In a protestant family, in which the ideal of a pure, virtuous life was enforced through strict moral norms and the regulation of sexuality,⁴⁰ an allegation of infidelity against a husband was deemed very serious, and if a person were found guilty of having been naked with someone other than his or her spouse, this was a capital offence: "There are other things which indicate his greater loyalty to and love for Sára Szőcs and her mother than his love for his wife, because he bathed in the same tub with Sára, and both bathed naked."⁴¹

On the basis of these testimonies, the Partial Synod pronounced the divorce, excommunicated the adulterous husband, forbade his remarriage, and forwarded the case to the secular authorities. These were the most severe punishments the religious courts could decree.⁴²

Rozsnyai's wife requested that her testimony not be made public. We can assume that this was either to prevent retaliation from her influential ex-husband or to avoid public disgrace.⁴³

The divorce is mentioned briefly in Rozsnyai's ego-documents. A note in one of the calendars for September 1687 reads: "11 dies divorcio occidens 1687."

As is clear, Rozsnyai probably tried to get rid of his wife by accusing her of deserting her home, which was, with the exception of adultery, the most frequent cause for divorce. Presumably, he was not able to come up with a more plausible accusation that still would have carried adequate weight in the eyes of

40 Hsia, *Social Discipline*, 129; Burghartz, "Competing Logics," 177.

41 Sipos, "Rozsnyai," 305.

42 The mildest sanction was public penitence, where the guilty party was required to wear dark clothes during mass and to sit in a specially designed place or in the church's entryway. He or she had to do public penance in front of the entire congregation in order to be accepted back into the community. Additionally, the guilty spouse could also be compelled to pay a fine. A harsher punishment was excommunication, which prohibited participation in any religious event or service, including receiving the communion. The guilty spouse could not be married again for a specified period of time or until the other spouse remarried. This restriction was called "ligázás" or "ligába vetés," which is derived from the Latin verb "ligo, -are" meaning "to bind" or "to tie."

43 Marosi Egyházmegye Levéltára, Protocollum. I/1. Series causarum, 77–80.

the authorities. His wife did not accept the social stigma and, by summoning witnesses, she convinced the court of her innocence.

Wives could also petition for divorce, but they rarely attempting to seek a legal way out of the marriage.⁴⁴ Women tended to request intervention by the court when the marriage promise was not kept or when they wanted to break or enforce the marriage after having been abandoned by their husband.⁴⁵ In all likelihood, Rozsnyai's wife would not have initiated the separation from her adulterous husband if it hadn't been for his appeal to the court. Financially, the Holy See ordered that the cost of litigation be paid exclusively by the husband and that he also provide for the family for the duration of the trial. But after the divorce, the actual arrangements regarding his former wife were not specified, as this fell under the jurisdiction of the secular authorities.⁴⁶

In Early Modern Europe, most divorce requests were initiated by husbands.⁴⁷ In most cases, an accused wife found herself in a difficult position, even if the divorce wasn't her fault. After the divorce or separation, alimony was not a secure income, as it was difficult to enforce payment. As a loosely regulated amount, alimony varied based on the wealth of the former husband, on the former wife's capacity to work, and on the number and age of the children.⁴⁸ In Transylvania, child support began to be mentioned in the synodical divorce decisions in the second half of the eighteenth century. The Partial Synod usually entrusted the innocent spouse with custody of the children, but it did not specify an amount the other party had to pay. The sum was based on a mutual agreement between the parties.⁴⁹ Compared to Lindau for example, where all the family's possessions were given to the innocent spouse,⁵⁰ the consequences of adultery in Transylvania were relatively mild.

In the case of the Rozsnyai family, the Partial Synod held on April 2, 1688 (seven months after the divorce) ruled that Rozsnyai make public penance in Szentbenedek (today Mănăstirea, Romania) and, taking into account his services to the principality, the Synod lifted the interdiction on his remarriage. Rozsnyai reached his goals. He legally escaped his first wife and got off relatively lightly

44 Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 73.

45 Wiesner, *Women and Gender*, 73; Johansen, "The History of Divorce," 46.

46 The details regarding his civil trial cannot be found: the city court's protocols from the years 1683–1698 are missing. DJAN-MS, *Procesele verbale ale tribunalului*, 263.

47 Watt, "Divorce in Neuchatel," 144–45.

48 Bailey, *Unquiet lives*, 181.

49 Kolumbán, *A törvényhozó egyház*, 122.

50 Shafley, "Civic Morality," 180–81.

with a mild punishment for adultery. Because of his influence and good relations, he was permitted to marry for a second time, even if he was the guilty party. He was not forced to wait until his former spouse remarried, nor was he forced to marry his mistress.⁵¹

Forging New Relations Within the Stepfamily

The surviving sources contain no information concerning Anna Nagy's life after the divorce except for the fact that the financial support provided by her husband was inconsistent. This was not an isolated case. Protestant confessions may have allowed for divorce, but the position of the women was still primarily defined through their relationship with the men in their lives: they were daughters, sisters, or wives. Divorced women were still seen by protestant society as an anomaly, as were single women.⁵² Widows were exceptions, but even they were pressured to remarry,⁵³ and poorer widows in particular tended to, as they were afraid they might become a burden to their family and have to seek the help of their relatives.⁵⁴ However, many widows who belonged to the aristocracy decided not to remarry, regardless of their marital experiences, good or bad, as they had begun to enjoy their freedom and the advantages this position provided.⁵⁵ The uncertain and vulnerable position of women coming out of a divorce is visible through the formula of address used by Rozsnyai in a letter to his former wife and children offers a clear illustration of the uncertain and vulnerable position of a divorced woman: "To orphan Anna Nagy and her orphan children."⁵⁶ Through this form of address, Rozsnyai assigned his ex-wife a conventional position within the social norms, as "orphan" in this case does not mean parentless, but "honorably abandoned," which also meant vulnerable

51 Sáros, "Rozsnyai," 305; Marosi Egyházmegye Levéltára, Protocollum. I/1. Series causarum. 92–3. Gábor Sáros, who published the divorce proceedings, also highlighted the reference to Rozsnyai's services to the Principality as a one-of-a-kind argument. But taking into account the Turkish scribe's important connections inside the prince's court and the fact that his brother-in-law was the Calvinist bishop, the fact that he used this reasoning should not come as a great surprise. We also know that the political and social role of spouses exerted a strong influence on the decisions concerning their divorce. See Kingdon, *Adultery and Divorce*.

52 Stjerna, *Women and the Reformation*, 38; Wiesner, *Women and gender*, 76–77.

53 Schmidt, Devos and Blondé, "Single Life," 5–8.

54 Géra, *Házasság Budán*, 50–51.

55 Horn, "Nemesi árvák," 64–65; Johansen, *Widowhood in Scandinavia*, 174–75; Houltbrooke, *The English Family*, 205, 211–12.

56 Koncz, "Oklevelek," 165–66.

and defenseless. The Hungarian secondary literature first noted, in the case of Kata Bethlen, that the community assigned the divorced women the status of “orphan,” and the letters, prayer books, testaments, and autobiographies left behind by divorced women who belonged to the aristocracy (like Kata Bethlen) indicate that they accepted this designation in their textual representations of their identities. Presumably, they assumed this designation in order to align themselves with the expectations, roles, and cultural patterns of the society in which they lived. This designation or identity (“the orphan”) was formed around the image of the widow but also based on biblical references.⁵⁷ The overlap between the widow and the divorcee is not unique. In his analysis of family and household history, Peter Laslett suggested that in the census-type documents divorced wives were not distinguished from widows.⁵⁸ This explains the seemingly odd form of address used by Rozsnyai in his letter.

Gergely Fazakas offers more examples of people, both men and women, using the term “helpless orphan” for self-representation, even in cases when they were not widows, in other words they either had been abandoned or their spouses had been imprisoned, exiled, or sent away on military duties. In other words, the term was used to designate people whose social or financial security was endangered.⁵⁹ Another example of this is Rozsnyai himself, who signed his letter from October 31 with the formula “Your orphan imprisoned half.”⁶⁰

The children were referred to as “orphans” many times, both by Rozsnyai and his wife during his imprisonment and during and after the divorce due to their unfortunate and abandoned state.⁶¹ They were deprived of the presence of their father well before the divorce because of Rozsnyai’s frequent travels and his later imprisonment, so the balance in the family had already shifted, even if the children did not have to go through the loss of a parent or life with a stepparent.

After the divorce, Rozsnyai was bound by law to support his children, at least financially. His letter from June 1688 to his divorced wife reveals an ongoing conflict, as he apparently failed to meet his financial obligations to his children. He asks forgiveness for not having visited and he promises his ex-wife

57 Fazakas “Tetszett az Úristennek”; Fazakas, “Az ‘árvaság’ reprezentációja.”

58 Laslett, “Introduction,” 86–87.

59 Fazakas, “Az ‘árvaság’ reprezentációja,” 45–46.

60 Koncz, “Oklevelek,” 164.

61 “I pray you, in the name of God, to take good care of the poor orphans and educate them with the fear of God, and be blessed together with the poor children.” Koncz, “Oklevelek,” 161

that he will take care of the children, but he argues that his financial situation is dire, and he begs their patience: “I certainly wanted personally to greet my poor children, but I, too, was in a hurry, and as you were also not at home, the occasion passed. In my promises to provide for my children I don’t want to be a liar or an infidel, but we are not to be blamed if our endeavors are postponed because of helplessness, God gives where there is shortage.”⁶² His letter indicates that right after the divorce, even if he were not present in the everyday life of the family, he still sought to craft a textual image of himself as the paternal authority and the person on whom the family relied for financial support. In the following passage from this letter, for instance, he begs forgiveness while at the same time making further promises and also reproaches: “Blame me for not fulfilling my promises and doing even more if I ever get the money I have been promised. Until then, if God allows, I will help you with wine and wheat, even though I also often drink water. Before God brings in the cold, perhaps I will be able to send some fabric for children’s over-clothes, but you should not always think about what you need and how much, but about what you can do with what I provide.”⁶³

In this letter, sent barely five months after he was allowed to remarry, Rozsnyai referred to his new spouse as “my present wife.” The new spouse, Rebeka Fogarasi, sent presents through Rozsnyai to his children from his first marriage: a belt for András, ribbons and wool cloth for the girls, and a lace garland for Rebeka (the eldest daughter, as she was probably due to be married): “my wife sent a cord belt for András, light pink wool cloth for coats and some ribbon for both the girls. A golden lace garland for Rebeka. Henceforward, if God allows, she will try to do more.”⁶⁴ Rozsnyai also wrote in the letter that his new wife pledged to offer more help in the future. His new wife may have sought to gain the good will of the children and their mother, though again, the claims may have been Rozsnyai’s invention, as he may have sought, simply, to try to minimize conflicts and tensions by presenting his new wife in a favorable light. The appearance and subsequent acceptance of a new wife is always a challenge for the husband’s first family. A new spouse could influence the husband’s decisions in the partition of the patrimony,⁶⁵ shift his relationships with his children from his first marriage, and produce more children who would

62 Koncz, “Oklevelek,” 165.

63 *Ibid.*, 166.

64 *Ibid.*

65 Stretton, “Stepmothers,” 98–102.

also have claims to the family inheritance. Stepmothers had a stronger influence on their husbands than stepfathers did on their wives, as, in theory, the latter could not interfere with the possessions the women brought from their previous marriage,⁶⁶ but there were also counterexamples, when a stepfather became the orphans' guardian.

The surviving sources offer no indication of the previous family status of Rebeka Fogarasi, Rozsnyai's second wife, but from the number of children to whom she gave birth in the marriage we may deduce that she was much younger than her husband. Rozsnyai's decision to marry a younger bride makes his case typical, since men preferred, when they were remarrying, to marry women with no children from previous marriages.⁶⁷ Anna Nagy's demand to have the clothes she left in the former husband's home returned can be interpreted as a sign of hostility towards the new wife. Rozsnyai replies that he could send back only some of the garments she demanded, as the others no longer existed: "With regard to your writing about some of your belongings, God knows we don't have anything else besides the gloves, your lace for collar, your golden apron, and the Turkish pelisse; where they disappeared in all this I don't know. None of them is with us, as even greater men than I don't have things like these with them nowadays, but keep them some place safe. I sent you all of the above but the pelisse, I will bring instead cloth for the mantle. Don't be afraid regarding the other things, because my present wife won't use them even if you leave them here forever."⁶⁸

This reply sheds a little light on the relationship between the two women, as Rozsnyai assures his ex-wife that his new wife will never wear any of the clothes she left behind, even though we know from the divorce documents that he had clothed his mistresses in his wife's clothes. A widower's new wife could sometimes inherit the clothes of the former wife, which was a symbolic expression of her appropriation of the family role. In this case, it is possible that, by refusing to wear the former wife's clothes, Rebeka Fogarasi did not want to perform this role-switching.

66 Stretton, "Stepmothers," 103; "Perrier, "Coresidence of Siblings," 309–10. There are also counterexamples. In 1704, the Transylvanian Chancellor István Apor divided among his heirs the possessions of his third spouse, Zsuzsánna Farkas, who in her turn had inherited from her previous husband Zsigmond Korda. Zsuzsána Farkas appealed to the governor, asking that he intervene and address this injustice (DJAN Cluj, 377 Fond familial Korda, 2/XXI, 2).

67 Warner, "Introduction," 13. This was the case in Early Modern Swedish society, too: Lahtinen, "Stepfamilies in Sweden," 45.

68 Koncz, "Oklevelek," 166.

Rozsnyai, as a father, considered the intellectual and spiritual development of his children of the utmost importance. He knew from his own experience that, through learning and knowledge, one could climb the social ladder and obtain important positions. But the change in the structure of the family influenced the level of his involvement in his children's education. During the first marriage, he tracked his children's progress from afar, insisting, in his letters sent to his first wife from captivity, that she had the children study and not waste their time and also emphasizing that András should be sent to school every day.⁶⁹ After the divorce, he asked Anna Nagy to make sure the children did not abandon the church or the school, and he promised to send more money for their education: "After I finish my work here, I will go again to Jára [today Iara, Romania], if God lets me [...] then I will take care of paying the school and the master, as all I have now I need to spend on curing [the hay]. For God's sake, I warn you and ask you, the children should not to drop out of school and church, for those I am willing to give the shirt off my back."⁷⁰

But the children's later writings reveal that, later, they did not receive the promised paternal support. Probably their relationship with their father was interrupted after Rozsnyai moved to Fogaras and had children from the second marriage. This is proven by the petition sent to János Haller, the Governor of Transylvania, by Zsuzsanna (one of Rozsnyai's daughters from his first marriage) in 1748, in which she asked for her share of her father's retrieved salaries from András and András's son, József. Rebeka, the other daughter, also asked her nephew (József) in 1748 to give her a share of the recuperated salaries.

In her written complaint against her brother from 1748, Zsuzsanna suggested that she had not been given adequate care by her father: "I grew up outside my father's house with the bread of the orphans, I dressed myself of my own labor, I was married-off from a stranger's home, and, until now, I got nothing from my father's hereditament."⁷¹

András sent the Governor a reply to her sister's complaint in which he also made some remarks on concerning his youth and his education: "When she writes that she didn't receive anything of our father's belongings, that she was raised in a foreign house, I offer the following answer: regarding my education [...] I was raised by count Mihály Teleki together with Pál Teleki. I wore his clothes, as he [my father] never in my whole life spent more than one thaler on

⁶⁹ Ibid., 165.

⁷⁰ Ibid., 166.

⁷¹ DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1006.

me, and even that money was given to my magister. This family [Teleki] was my father, and, after we accompanied Mihály Teleki's corpse to Görgény,⁷² I went to the court of Prince Apafi [the younger],⁷³ where my father took me back in his good graces, and I was in his service there until he left [Mihály Apafi].⁷⁴ Afterwards, I left together with Márton Sárpataki and Sigmond Toroczkaï to Sámuel Bethlen's [company], then after the latter's death, I went together with Balássi to count Mikes's domicile. Why are we reproaching each other over the education we both received?"⁷⁵

In the same letter, András explained that, after the divorce, his father had paid an amount (the text is unclear on the actual sum or what was it for) to their mother, but that from that moment on, he had stopped being involved in their life. Later, when the boy went to the Princely Court, Rozsnyai took his son back under his wing: "When my father divorced my mother, he paid her what was due, I know this well, but I can also prove it under the letter M⁷⁶ (because it can be observed that they had gathered lot of debts while he was married with my mother) but, after this [the divorce], he almost never cared about me or his daughters, but I later enjoyed his paternal love while I was at the Princely Court."

He explained that the services he did for his father were the reason why he got back in his good graces: "I also gave a motive for that, because I troubled myself in helping him change his misfortune before the Princes, I also helped him in his needs [...] I served him in these matters in front of Count István Haller and General Rabutin, [intervening] through several noblemen, for which he thanked me almost crying. These are the things he took into consideration in his testament, in which he wrote that I served him and I helped him."

It was not by chance that András was raised in the court of Chancellor Mihály Teleki, where they had probably a patronage relationship,⁷⁷ because earlier Teleki had been one of Rozsnyai's protectors, who often mediated his requests to the Prince and even was his guarantor when he needed loans.⁷⁸

After Mihály Teleki's death in 1690, András went to serve the young Mihály Apafi, and then his father reconnected with him. This renewed relationship was beneficial for both father and son. András helped his father with his financial

72 Mihály Teleki died in 1690.

73 Mihály Apafi II, son of the Transylvanian Prince.

74 He was moved to Vienna to the emperor's command.

75 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat fond. 96, inv. 1467/1008

76 He had a list of documents attached to his letter, but only the letter was kept in the archive.

77 On the Early Modern Transylvanian patronage relationship see Tóth, "Tango-ere."

78 On Rozsnyai's correspondence with Teleki see: Bittenbinder, "Adatok."

problems, and in return, the son was integrated into his father's family and given a claim to his hereditament. There are two letters written by Rozsnyai to his son from 1713.⁷⁹ These letters show that the boy's education paid off and that they were working together to get rid of some of the father's debts and to handle the other debts trials. Rozsnyai also gave him the deeds to his properties in Jára: "I have copied the acts of the domains from Jára and have them sent them to you. May God help you use them well."⁸⁰

András was secretary to Mihály Mikes at the time,⁸¹ whose support Rozsnyai wanted to obtain through his son in order to recover his past-due salaries and for regularize his debts to the Bethlen family. He wrote about this in both of his remaining letters. They seem to have had a good father-son relationship in this period. Rozsnyai expressed his regret for not talking to András personally, but he promised to meet him soon. One of his postscripts suggests that András was visiting him in his home: "You left 3 silver coins here, you will find them here when you return." The forms of address and closing used in the letters also suggest an intimate family bond. Rozsnyai signed his letters as "Your father who wishes you all the good from God," and on the envelope he wrote, "I wrote in a hurry to my dear sweet son, András Rozsnyai."

Though Rozsnyai had another son from his second marriage, the first born, András, was the one who became the keeper of the family archive and also inherited half of his father's possessions. To ensure this, in 1712, Rozsnyai compiled a list in front of witnesses of all the family archive's property deeds, in case he was to die. At the end of this registry, he specified that the list was made to the benefit of the two sons. He further enforced this through a curse on the family if they were to fail to provide the register and all the later archive documents to his eldest son.⁸²

Rozsnyai's involvement in the life of his son from his second marriage, Sámuel, is more constant, as from 1694, Transylvania no longer needed a Turkish scribe, and we can assume Rozsnyai spent more time with his family. He was able to forge a deeper bond with his youngest son, and he supervised his education and even taught him Turkish. In his calendar notes, his son's birthday on March 20, 1712, affectionately referring to him as "my dear Samuka." The calendars

79 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat fond. 96, inv. 1467/1027, 1028.

80 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat fond. 96, inv. 1467/1027.

81 Mihály Mikes, Transylvanian aristocrat, elevated to the status of earl by the Habsburg Emperor Leopold, counselor of Transylvania's governor office from 1713.

82 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/ 994.

they shared also suggest that they had a close relationship. Sámuel began writing annotations in his father's calendars in 1708. In the first years, they both wrote notes in the calendars, but later on, Sámuel wrote his father's notes, too. At this time, he also began writing his father's letters and copying his works.⁸³ This practice of sharing or continuing the composition of an ego-document was not unique in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries in Transylvania. There were several cases of a son continuing his father's notes⁸⁴ or wives continuing their husbands' writings or an estate manager continuing a mistress' writings.⁸⁵ These texts were not written exclusively for the intended recipient. Rather, the authors expected their children and other family members to read them, which is why they are considered "family ego-documents."

In Rozsnyai's family from his second marriage, the father and son communicated with each other through their calendar notes, too. In January 1709, Sámuel wrote about how he had started to learn verb conjugations, and his father replied beneath, "May the Lord help you grow if this is in His liking."⁸⁶

After his father's death, Sámuel also used Rozsnyai's diaries to make some annotations at the end, drawing up an inventory of the property deeds before giving them over to his half-brother, the legal heir to the family archive.⁸⁷

Both András and Sámuel followed in their father's footsteps and became translators. Their translations appeared around the same time, which might indicate that they were in competition for their father's recognition. Sámuel notes in the calendar from 1715 that he translated a Turkish work on healing horses.⁸⁸ In 1716, András translated a collection of meditations entitled "Stimulus compunctionis" from Latin into Hungarian.⁸⁹

Neither the second spouse nor the daughters from the second marriage received the same amount of attention as the younger son. With regard to his daughters, Rozsnyai only noted the deaths of three of them in his calendars. Their deaths appear both as events and as recurring commemorations. In the calendar for 1702, he marked April 19 as the fourth anniversary of the death of

83 András Rozsnyai also has his own calendars. Two of them are still preserved in the Teleki-Bolyai Library.

84 In the seventeenth century, Kálnoki István's diary was continued by his son, Sámuel. Papp, *Tollforgató*, 138–40.

85 Fehér, "Család és élettörténetek," 16–17.

86 Teleki Bolyai Library 22616.

87 Szilágyi, *Rozsnyai Dávid*, 310–11, the original: BCU Cluj, Ms 156.

88 Teleki Bolyai Library 22621.

89 Kelemen, "Rosnyai András," 234.

his daughter Ráchel (the first of his two daughters to whom he gave this name). In the calendar for 1709, he marked January 21 as the date of the death of his 18-year old daughter, Sára. He marked the day in February on which her coffin was sealed, and he marked the day in May on which her funeral was held, which was a common funeral, as her recently deceased 5-month-old sister, Ráchel II, was also buried. From this point onward, in each of the calendars which has survived (1710, 1711, and 1712) he marks the days on which the girls died, the days on which the funerals took place, and the location of their graves. He seems to have been deeply touched by the death of his 18-year old daughter, Sára, as with every anniversary of her passing, he added details regarding her sickness and her untimely death. These texts were written in a very neat, calligraphic handwriting, as if they were supposed to be a memorial in their honor, thus adding to the public character of the calendars.

The Half-siblings and Rozsnyai's Testament

After Rozsnyai's death, the relationship between the children from the two marriages ceased to be dependent on the authority of the father. The witnesses' testimonies kept in the family archives show that, after Rozsnyai's death in 1718, his widow sent the testament to their son, Sámuel, in Vienna, but it seems the letter got lost on the way, and the boys used a copy of their father's testament to divide the inheritance.

At this time, Sámuel worked at the Transylvanian Chancellery in Vienna, probably as a referent. He died there in 1746 without any successors (presumably he never married). His father's personal writings and books⁹⁰ probably remained first in Sámuel's possession in their home in Fogaras, but later, following Sámuel's death, they were sent to András's family, together with Sámuel's personal archive.

The fight for the inheritance could have had a powerful impact on the relationship between the stepsiblings,⁹¹ but the correspondence between Sámuel and his stepbrother's son József suggests that, even if there were tensions

90 He had a letter sent to his mother on May 23, 1725 in which he asked her to send him some books: "I wrote to you not long ago, when I asked you, if you can find a way, to send me the following books: Cuintus Curtius, Gerhardus, and another Hungarian book which is Loci Communes Theologici." DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1003.

91 Houlbrooke, *The English family*, 218; Perrier, "Coresidence of Siblings," 309–10.

between them due to the inheritance, they worked together to pay off their father's debts and tried to recover their father's past due salaries.⁹²

András authorized his son József to represent him because of his illness. In the 1740s, while András was ill and Sámuel was in Vienna, József was the one who finally succeeded in obtaining the long overdue salaries owed to his now deceased grandfather. Three letters give an impression of the relationship between uncle and nephew. Sámuel offered to recommend his nephew for his current post in the Chancellery if he himself were to be promoted. He also ordered a belt for Jozsef, and asked if József had gotten used to his work at the Gubernium. He also expressed gratitude for his work: "your big work deserves recognition, as for myself, I won't be ungrateful." The boy even helped Sámuel recover his own salary.

After receiving news of the recovery of his father's overdue salary, Sámuel gave his nephew instructions concerning how to share it: "First, we have to pay the Bethlen family ... but we should ask for a good receipt from them, because if any of them have some other written promises made by our father, they should forfeit any other claims from us [...] then we should give the discernments you promised, but if possible, a little less than you promised everybody, invoking the fact that we have a lot of debts to our creditors. After this, I will take 200 forint for my mother's debts [...] and the rest we will divide in half, I will take half for myself, the other half [will be] for my brother."⁹³

These letters also offer an impression of the relationship between András and Sámuel. In addition to the fact that they corresponded with each other (though unfortunately they did not continue this correspondence), Sámuel offered his stepbrother advice through his son: "If God helps me to get well, I will write to my brother not to spend his share, but to buy properties, he can live from that, and his sons also after him, otherwise he will remain without money or property."⁹⁴ While recovering from an illness, he joked about his shaky handwriting: "Please greet my brother with my word and my sister-in-law, and the rest of the family. My brother should not learn my writing style, as I'm afraid he won't gain anything with that change."⁹⁵ The other suggestive thing about their relationship is the way they referred to each other. Neither of them wrote

92 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1003, 1032, 1033.

93 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1003.

94 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1003.

95 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1003.

about the other as his half-sibling, but as “my younger brother” or “my older brother.”

Rozsnyai seems to have excluded his daughters from the testament. But Rebeka and Zsuzsanna, his daughters from the first marriage, did not accept being left nothing by their father, and they attacked the procedure, arguing that the division of the property had been done on the basis of a copy and not the original testament. The succession trials dragged on to the next generation. A number of witnesses’ hearings were organized to investigate the fate of the testament and the documents on which the inheritance was divided. Their written proceedings were also kept in the family archive.⁹⁶

In 1750, after his father and uncle had died, József composed a formidable argument, citing from the documents in the family archive in support of his contention that his aunts had no claim to any part of the inheritance. This argumentation shows that in 1712, when Rozsnyai listed the family documents for his eldest son, he also asked him letter, in which András committed not to withhold anything from his brother and also to share with Sámuel anything he would recover from Rozsnyai’s overdue salaries or other goods.⁹⁷ This document also contains a fragment from Rozsnyai’s testament: “András lives in a good place, he should recommend his brother enter under count Mikes’s protection or in a position close the Gubernator, the president [of the Diet], or to the Chancellor, and they should use their services there until they are able to harvest my sweat [recover overdue salaries]. If my two sons receive the amount due, for which I have documents as proof, they have to divide it in two equal parts, and they should buy back my pawned properties, but they should also give 200 forints to my wife, Rebeka Fogarasi. My eldest son should not forget about Sámuel or my wife, and, under curse, he should not disobey any of my orders. I was being equitable when I left him out of my estates from Fogaras, and I disposed of everything freely. If both of my sons pass away without heirs, based on our law, properties these can go to my two girls or their heirs.”

The debts and pawns he left behind made the two stepbrothers work together to pay them off and secure the whole inheritance. If the curses he left in his testament and other writings to discourage them from hiding anything from each other did not worry them, the unclear situation of their inheritance brought the boys together. They were able, 27 years after his death, to recover

96 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1002, 1007, 1013, 1014, 1015.

97 DJAN-MS, Colegiul Reformat, fond. 96, inv. 1467/1130.

their father's overdue salaries and, up until then, they continued to manage their father's financial obligations. Therefore, it is no surprise that they didn't want to share anything with their sisters/half-sisters. As we can see, Rozsnyai used one more method to strengthen their relationship: he instructed András to help Sámuel to obtain a good position, so that they could both act for a common goal.

Conclusions

The lives of members of Early Modern stepfamilies which came into being because of divorce and the evidence of the relationships among the members of these families are rarely mentioned in the kinds of sources on which historians can draw in the study of the history of the institution of family. Nevertheless, it is important to consider these families, because they are good examples of how relationships are redefined after a divorce and how family members deal with the emotional burden of this separation. They also offer insights into how the arrival of new family members (stepparents and stepsiblings) influences the equilibrium inside the larger family.

In the case of the Rozsnyai family, the divorce disrupted the original structure of the family, but it did not cause it to disintegrate. The parent who left continued to be involved in the lives of the children, especially of his son, and as head of his second family, he ensured his firstborn's position as heir. Even our scattered sources offer insights into the husband's position towards his former wife. The appearance of the stepmother in the larger family was not a great challenge for the children, since they did not live in the same household. But interaction with her was inevitable, even if they didn't share a complex relationship. Rozsnyai attempted to establish a connection between his second wife and his children from the first marriage and, through them, with their mother.

After the divorce, the father promised to ensure financial support for his children and take care of their education, but he was only able to establish a closer emotional bond with his son from his second marriage through his continuous presence and guidance. His oldest son was already a young adult when they reconnected and the estranged son helped his father manage his financial problems by taking advantage of assistance provided by his influential supporters.

Of the relationships among the halfsiblings, we have details only about the one established between Rozsnyai's two sons, which developed in part due to the

early introduction of the eldest son into his father's financial matters and also due to the preparation of the younger son for the division of the inheritance. Through his testament, Rozsnyai also seems to have done his best to ensure that his two sons would have an amicable relationship, because he bequeathed them an equal share of his wealth.

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Remarriage Patterns and Stepfamily Formation in a German-speaking Market Town in Eighteenth-Century Hungary*

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First, this study addresses issues related to the gendered patterns of remarriage in an eighteenth-century market town. Second, it investigates interpersonal relationships in the new family formations, including stepparents and stepchildren. When and why did widows and widowers choose to remarry? How did new marriages effect the lives of children born into earlier marriages? Drawing on several kinds of archival sources, such as marriage contracts, council protocols, court and parish records, the paper provides an in-depth case study, which by tracking multiple marriages and children of both spouses shows the complexity of the blended families which came into existence through the remarriage of spouses.

Keywords: Óbuda/Altofén market town, stepfamilies, marriage strategies, remarriage patterns, stepparent–stepchild relations

Patterns of Marriage and Remarriage

Stepfamilies in Early Modern Europe were formed mainly through remarriages following the death of one of the spouses.¹ The analysis of patterns of remarriage by widowed parents can therefore be a valid starting point in the study of stepfamilies, which shed some light on the social or economic situation of the family, household structures which could favor or work against a new marriage, and emotional and personal motivations. Accordingly, this study first addresses the issue of patterns of marriage in Óbuda in the eighteenth century. At what age did young men and women marry? How did patterns of remarriage among widows and widowers differ? Were there any detectable local discrepancies, or did the trends and patterns correspond to contemporary European tendencies?

* This paper enjoyed the support of the MTA BTK Lendület Családtörténeti Kutatócsoport [Lendület Integrating Families Research Group] and the MTA Bolyai Scholarship. Mihály Pásztor examined several aspects of family life, including marriages, children, mortality, etc. in his book about Pest and Buda at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

1 Warner, “Introduction,” 9–13.

The study of everyday life and family history in Pest–Buda–Óbuda in the eighteenth century has produced significant results in recent decades.² As Óbuda was a market town (*oppidum*, *Marktflecken*), its inhabitants were mostly peasants and craftsmen, which means that little has survived in the way of sources on which historians could base their research. The extant documents were written mostly in the course of legal processes (I am thinking of documents such as marriage contracts, testaments, probate documents, complaints, petitions, and the like). Some private letters from the 1770s have survived. Census-like data are also available, but unfortunately, they do not contain the kind of detailed information which could be used, for instance, to reconstruct the household-structure of the entire town. István Gajáry offered a detailed examination of the society of the town at the end of the eighteenth century.³ Recently, Eleonóra Géra published two books about everyday life, family life, and marriage in Buda in the first decades of the eighteenth century.⁴ My subject is strongly connected to this book, as many circumstances were similar in the two settlements. In both places, the reoccupation of Buda from the Ottomans caused a massive immigration even decades after the event. Both in Buda and in Óbuda, the vast majority of the population consisted of German Catholic settlers. The main difference is that Óbuda, although it was a market town, had a strong rural profile, even at the end of the eighteenth century, while in Buda, artisans played a major role in local life. Viticulture exerted a strong influence on the lifestyle of the town, including household structure and marriage patterns. Nevertheless, the sources for Buda and Óbuda are quite similar: council protocols, marriage contracts, testaments, probate records, etc. As the population in Óbuda was smaller, we can also collect and analyze the data of the local parish church, which provides a general overview of marriage patterns in the community.

The Saint Peter and Paul parish church's registers offer useful data on the marriage strategies in the community (the books contain marriages of both Catholic and Calvinist spouses).⁵ I complement this data with information from other kinds of sources.⁶

2 Dezső Dümmerth arranged a detailed overview of the inhabitants of Pest at the end of the seventeenth century on the basis of archival sources. The legal historical summary by György Bónis, although it focuses on the cases of the royal free cities of Pest and Buda, is also useful in the case of the market town Óbuda.

3 Gajáry, "Óbuda keresztény népessége," and Gajáry, "Óbuda lakosságának rétegződései."

4 Géra, *Kőhalomból*, and Géra, *Házasság Budán*. The second book deals with marriage patterns and cases.

5 BFL XV.20.2 A185

6 Warner, "Introduction," 11–13; Brown, "Becoming widowed," 118–19. Brown used the so-called *Sellenbeschreibungen* of the examined Austrian parishes, with which families and also households can be reconstructed. In the case of Óbuda, we do not have such detailed sources.

In the first half of the century, 1,080 marriages were registered. Although the vicars did not always note the family status of the spouses (especially in the 1730s), the data still give some general impressions about the marriages (Fig. 1). I have categorized the marriages according to the marital status of the brides and bridegrooms as follows: 1. the union of unmarried (single) spouses, 2–3. (re)marriages where one partner was still unmarried, while the other one was a widow or widower, and 4. marriages where both spouses were widowed.

Naturally, nearly half of these marriages were the first marriage of both spouses (43 percent). Almost this common were remarriages where one of the spouses was a widow or widower (40 percent), though the number of marriages between widows and single men was a little bit—not significantly—higher than the number of marriages between widowers and maidens. One reason for marriage between widow and maiden was that a maiden could take care of the widower's children (if she was not negligent) as if they were her own, and she didn't threaten the economic stability of the family, as she entered it without children. Last but not least, a man could have more children in a new marriage.⁷ A widow was forced to remarry mostly for social or economic reasons. If she remained a widow, she became the head of the household or lived together with her son or son-in-law, who took over the duties in the household.⁸ One probable reason for higher bachelor-widow marriages is that Óbuda in the first half of the eighteenth century was a permanent “destination” for newcomer settlers (nearly in every fourth bachelor-widow marriage, that means 35 cases, the bridegroom was provably outlander). Another observation is that almost every fifth of this-type marriage (27 cases, 18,5 percent) was tied between a young artisan and a craftsman's widow.

Matrimonies between spouses where both parties had been widowed were not uncommon (ca. 16 percent), but they were not as common as marriages between a widow or widower and an as yet unmarried person. This corresponds to data from other parts of Europe at the time.⁹ There was notable growth in

7 Although Warner says that stepfamilies with stepmothers were more common in Early Modern Europe, in Óbuda this difference was not so significant in the first half of the eighteenth century. One reason for this was that immigration into the town was continuous in this period, so the population changed continuously. Warner, “Introduction,” 11; Warner, “Conclusion,” 236–37, 254. About widower, maiden marriage strategies, see Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn'...*,” 180–81.

8 For examples from rural Austria, see Brown, “Becoming widowed,” 117–18.

9 Even fairy tales suggest that this was the most uncommon type of marriage and sometimes the most horrible regarding the (step)children. Warner “Conclusion,” 236.

the number of marriages between widows and widowers in 1739, as nearly half of the population died at the time as a result of a major plague epidemic.¹⁰ The vast majority of widower and widow marriages (102 cases, ca. 90 percent) was tied between peasants.

A significant ratio of first marriages were formed between new settlers (77 cases, 39 percent where the husband was a newcomer and 43 cases, 22 percent where both parties came from elsewhere).

In one fourth of the marriages, the husband was an unmarried man and the wife was a widow (37 cases), which suggests that this kind of marriage was a common strategy for new settlers to integrate into the community, especially in the 1740s, during the great settlements after the aforementioned outbreak of plague. In this decade, nearly half of these marriages were between a foreigner artisan or tenant youngman and a widow from Óbuda.

	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>	<i>Number</i>	<i>Percent</i>
	Single bridegroom		Widower	
Single bride	299	44 %	127	18,5 %
Widow	146	21 %	113	16,5 %

Figure 1. Registered marriages according to the status of the spouses in Óbuda (1704–1750)

Unfortunately, the ages of the spouses were recorded only from the last third of the century. 1777 was the first year when the spouses' ages were noted. The parish priest noted the age of the groom and the fiancée since 1771, but he was not consequent and did not noticed the age in every case. If one takes samples from the last third of the century (we analyzed the marriage records of the Catholic Parish Church—which includes the Calvinist marriages as well—from every ten years, 1777, 1787, and 1797),¹¹ the following phenomena are striking (Figs. 2, 3 and 4): in every year, the vast majority of the marriages were the first for both parties (68 percent). The proportion of marriages where one party remarried and the other married for the first time is almost the same, while remarriages between widows and widowers became insignificant in number

10 Gál, *Az óbudai uradalom*, 69. The parish registers of this year are full of lacunae, because the parson, Christian Ignaz Barwik, also fell victim to the epidemic.

11 42 marriages were noted in 1777, 60 in 1787 and 56 in 1797. The database of marriages is not finished yet, we currently processing the data of 1772. Our aim is to process all data of the parish registers from the 18th century. BFL XV.20.2 A185.

(5 percent). The reason is that, thanks to the arrival of the so-called Military Montour Commission and the establishment of manufactures (especially silk-manufactures, like the so-called *filatorium*, the *deglomeratorium*, and other textile manufactures), Óbuda appealed to many craftsmen in these decades as a place to come and settle down in.¹²

On the basis of the ages of the widowed spouses, it is clear that they preferred an unmarried companion when they were in their 20s or 30s. Presumably they reckoned with the possibility of having children with their new mates, and they also needed a helping hand in the household.¹³

Once they were over 40 years of age, widows and widowers tended to choose a partner in the same marital status,¹⁴ as remarrying widowed spouses who were older but still able to work could help each other maintain the household.

The members of the mostly German-speaking population of Óbuda in the eighteenth century also married for the first time at the end of their adolescence. The youngest groom was 18 and the youngest bride was 16.¹⁵ According to Péter, the reason for this was that they became capable of maintaining their own household at this age.¹⁶ There is a significant difference between the data concerning seventeenth-century Murány and the data concerning eighteenth-century Óbuda. In Óbuda, in most cases (112, 73 percent) the groom was older than the bride. An older (widower) man had a better chance of remarrying than an older woman. However, the town seems to have had an adequate “supply” of marriage partners, because the age gap in the majority of cases was minimal between the parties (0–5 years, 92 cases, 60 percent), which corresponds to data from other territories in which the population was overwhelmingly German-

12 About the manufactures and the population of the town, see Gajáry, “Óbuda mezőváros lakosságának,” Gajáry, “Óbuda keresztény népessége,” and Gajáry, “Óbuda lakosságának rétegződései.”

13 However, men had more possibilities to choose from: in the case of widowers and maidens, the groom was on average 10 years older than the bride, while in the opposite case, the widow was 3 years older than her fiancé. In these three years (1777, 1787, and 1797), the maximum age difference was between the 63-year-old widower bootmaker János Valassik and a 19-year-old handmaid named Barbara Liszi. The two were married on June 8, 1797.

14 The data correspond to Katalin Péter’s findings, though she examined the Hungarian peasants in the demesne Murány in the seventeenth century. Péter, *Magánélet*, 149–53.

15 The results correspond to the data of Gyula Benda on marriage patterns in Keszthely in the same period. Benda, *Keszthely*, 41. In the neighboring city of Buda, thanks to immigration, modernization, and the urbanization of the city, the average age was higher at the end of the eighteenth century, even in first marriages. Faragó, *Házasságkötés*, 173–74. Gajáry examined the years between 1786 and 1789 in Óbuda and reached a similar conclusion. Gajáry, “Óbuda keresztény népessége,” 151–52.

16 Péter, *Magánélet*, 151.

speaking.¹⁷ The average age of spouses who were marrying for the first time in Óbuda differs significantly from the average age of first-time brides and grooms in Western Europe.¹⁸

The data suggests that a widow had her last chance to remarry¹⁹ when she was in her 40s, while a widower could marry again even at the age of 60. These data correspond with Géra's and Štefanová's findings. A widow in her 40s was considered a matron (which reduced her chances of marrying again), while a man was considered old only once he had reached the age of 60.²⁰



Figure 2. Marriages in the last third of the eighteenth century based on samples from three years (1777, 1787 and 1797)

17 In general, the groom was two years older than the bride. Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn’...*,” 48–49.

18 In Óbuda, the average age of the grooms was 25 / 25 / 23 years, while in the Saxon town Belm it was 29 / 29 / 29. The average age of maidens in Óbuda was 20 / 21 / 21, while in Belm it was 28 / 27 / 26. Schlumbohm differentiates the data according to the socio-economic status of the spouses. In the case of Óbuda, the data of the parish registers do not allow an examination from this perspective. Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe*, 104. The average age of spouses who were marrying for the first time in the German territories gradually rose over the course of the eighteenth century. Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn’...*,” 47–48.

19 On the chances maidens and younger and older widows had to (re)marry, see Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn’...*,” 187–88.

20 Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn’...*,” 47–51; Géra, *Házasság*, 155–56, Štefanová examined three estates which were under demesne lordship and which, thus, were similar to Óbuda. Štefanová, “Widows: Outsiders in rural economy,” 271.

Year	1777		1787		1797	
Spouses' relations	Groom	Bride	Groom	Bride	Groom	Bride
	First marriage					
average age (years)	25	20	25	21	23	21
	Never-married man – widow					
average age (years)	30	32	28	34	31	32
	Widower – Never-married woman					
average age (years)	37	23	38	23	40	24
	Both spouses in viduage					
average age (years)	47	35	42	36	37	35

Figure 3. Average age of spouses in the last third of the eighteenth century based on the marriage records from three years (1777, 1787 and 1797)

Spouses' relations / Age disparity between spouses (years)	First marriage	Never married man – widow	Widower – Never-married woman	Both spouses widowed	Total	Percent
Younger groom					29	19
A bride 11–13 years older than the groom	–	3	–	1	4	
A bride 6–10 years older than the groom	1	7	–	1	9	
A bride 1–5 years older than the groom	9	6	1	–	16	
Same age	12	–	–	–	12	8
Older groom					112	73
Groom 1–5 years older than the bride	58	3	2	1	64	
Groom 6–10 years older than the bride	22	3	4	2	31	
Groom 11–15 years older than the bride	–	–	4	–	4	
Groom 16–20 years older than the bride	1	–	5	3	9	
Groom 22–30 years older than the bride	–	–	3	–	3	
Groom 44 years older than the bride	–	–	1	–	1	

Figure 4. Age disparity between spouses at the end of the eighteenth century (based on the marriage records from 1777, 1787 and 1797)

The Meaning of Family

To understand the remarriage strategies in the market town, one must consider the contemporary uses and meanings of the word “family.” *Familie* (family) only began to come into use at the end of the century in Óbuda. Before that, people referred to their families as *Wirtschaft* (economy), which essentially included the married couple and their children and sometimes the grandparents. They lived under the same roof, and the head of the household was usually the husband. Like in Buda or Austria, servants and handmaids also usually belonged to the household in Óbuda (children from horizontal kinship also could live as servants or handmaids in a relative’s house).²¹ Thus, the word *Wirtschaft* referred to the family and the household and denoted an economical unit at the same time.

In Buda and Óbuda, the word *Blut-Freundten/Verwandten* was used to refer to kin.²² Both consanguineous and affinal relatives, such as siblings, in-laws, and their children, were understood as kin. It is crucial to explore the kinship network and its spatial aspects, since relatives often lived near one another and took care of one another’s (step)children, who learned trades and crafts and worked in these households.²³ For instance, Johann Schlosser complained in 1759 that his sister-in-law, the widow of Hans Georg Schlosser, and her new companion, Johann Baumeister, allowed his nephew (the son of his deceased brother) to live in his household only in winter, but when spring came, and the nephew could be used as part of the workforce in the household, they took him back. The council decided that the boy should stay in his mother’s and stepfather’s house, and the Baumeister-couple should pay the cost of the boy’s maintenance.²⁴

As the word *Wirtschaft* suggested, the main task of the members of the family was to run the household and manage the domestic economy effectively, since the vast majority of the population was engaged with viticulture, which required a huge labor force. As the prefect of the demesne, Franz Xaver Ferberth wrote repeatedly in his reports about why the mulberry plantation was unsuccessful: the inhabitants subordinated everything to viniculture, “in qua videlicet omnium eorum fortuna, et subsistentiae ratio sita est.” He also noted that children were introduced to viniculture when they turned eight years old, regardless of their

21 On Austria see Lanzinger, “Emotional bonds,” 169.

22 Géra, *Házasság*, 181.

23 On this issue see Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe*, 191–99.

24 BFL V.1.a Vol 4. May 12, 1759.

sex.²⁵ According to contemporary public opinion, a twelve-year-old girl was thought to be able to provide for herself. In 1747, the council assigned the four-year-old pupil of Paul Resch, Anna Maria (and her two vineyards), to Johannes Herbst, who was to serve as her foster guardian. Herbst had to take care of the child until she turned twelve and became “self-sufficient” (*inclusive biß daß kind selbsten fehg ihr Stuckh Brodt zu gewinnen*). According to the protocol, the girl later got her vineyards back, when she married.²⁶

The head of the household was responsible for the family’s fortune and for ensuring that it grow. Other members of the household were expected to provide assistance to reach this goal by fulfilling their obligations.²⁷ As shown by Schlumbohm, whose findings correspond with ours,²⁸ the head of the household was usually a married man, and the number of women as head of household was low in Óbuda (for instance, in 1777 approximately 4 percent of the households in the town were headed by women, Fig. 5). One third of these households included an adolescent or adult child or a handmaid (unfortunately, the tax-lists denoted only children above 15 years of age in the household, so we do not know the number of smaller children). However, these data suggest that the female household keepers could also expect help from her kin (which does not appear in the tax lists).

Number of female household keepers	Widows as head of the household	Social status				Children above 15 years in the household		Handmaid
		Tenant	Inmate with house	Inmate without house	Other, not noted	Son	Daughter	
30	15	13	7	3	7	4 ²⁹	3 ³⁰	3 ³¹

Figure 5. Female household keepers in 1777 (based on BFL V.1.j Vol 1.)

25 Fertbert’s report to the Hungarian Chamber, January 18, 1769, and Ferberth on the silk business in Óbuda, January 8, 1772, and April 26, 1773). MNL OL E 328 Protocollum (1768–1777), p. 19–20, 79–80, 162.

26 BFL V.1.a Vol. 4. p. 90. June 8, 1747.

27 Both Christian Fritz and Paul Zeller’s widow Francisca brought a vineyard into their marriage. Fritz had to take care of seven children (who were 17, 14, 12, 9, 7, 5, and 4 years old) and preserve their inheritance, another vineyard. The wife also had one third of a vineyard under her free disposition. BFL V.1.b Nr. 101. January 7, 1771.

28 Schlumbohm, *Lebensläufe*, 232–40.

29 Two sons living in two separate households and two sons living together in another one.

30 In three different households.

31 In three different households.

As a married man, the head of the household had to be honorable, and he was expected to support his kinsmen (this meant mutual assistance). He was also expected to take care of his wife and his underage children, who became independent when they married. As the tax-collector Mathias Giegler summarized in his complaints against his brother-in-law Franz Oliva in 1779: “It is known that, when he wanted to live with and provide support for his wife and children, as any honest man strives to do, the wife’s wealth, into which he had married, not only was not kept from him in any way, but also he could have gotten support from the neighboring friend.”³²

Legal Arrangements in the Process of Remarriages

As the inhabitants of Óbuda were mostly illiterate viticulturist peasants, the available sources for the most part are legal documents written by literate experts, such as marriage contracts, protocols, testaments, and probate documents. Marriage contracts usually identified the spouses’ goods separately and provided protections for the inheritances of spouses’ children. Last but not least, they also give us glimpses into wider family relationships, such as relationships among parents and children, siblings, and sometimes other members of the kin.³³ The legal practice resembles the practice in Buda and Lower Austria.³⁴

During the marriage, acquired goods were designated common goods. In some exceptional cases, one of the spouse’s specifically expressed his/her wish that the new stepparent take care of his/her children as if they were his/her own, which also meant that the stepchildren have a claim to the inheritance equal to the claim of the children of the stepparent (their gender did not matter).³⁵ According to the Codex Theresianus in 1766, a child’s inheritance depended on the marriage from which he/she was born and what his/her parents acquired during that marriage.³⁶ In practice, after one parent’s death, the council made probate inventory, and if needed (for instance, if there were debts), it sold the properties through auction. The council could also sell estates with the consent

32 “Gewiß ist es, daß wann Er mit seinen Weib und Kinde, wie ein anderer ehrlicher Mann zu thun pfeget, leben und wüthschaften wollte, ihme das angeheyrathe weibliche Guth, nicht nur gar nicht unterhalten würde, sondern von denen benachbahrten Befreunden so wie möglich seine Unterstützung überkommen hätte können.” Mathias Giegler to the Council of Óbuda, November 22, 1779. BFL V.1.b Nr. 287.

33 Lanzinger, “Paternal authority,” 345–47.

34 Bónis, *Buda és Pest* 288–98; Géra, *Házasság*, 79–81.

35 BFL V.1.x Nr. 113. November 3, 1798.

36 Warner, “Conclusion,” 247.

of the demesne.³⁷ Finally, the council assessed each child's portion, drawing a distinction between the paternal and the maternal inheritance. If one of the children stayed in his/her parents' house, the new householder gave his/her siblings the siblings' portion in money or other goods.

If both stepparents brought children into their new marriage, they promised to take care of them equally. In his testament, Rupert Kayll ordered his wife to take care of her four stepchildren "with motherly love" and to educate them and make sure they had a profession. She had to meet these conditions if she wanted to inherit Kayll's wealth.³⁸ A new paterfamilias, father, and householder was especially needed when the widowed mother was pregnant. In this case, the new marriage guaranteed the legal birth of the child. Elisabetha Jetzlin, Jacob May's widow, married a mason named Lorenz Pernfer in 1760. Her fiancé proclaimed that he would recognize and raise the child as his ("To recognize the child, whom the bride has from her previous husband, Jacob May, and still carries in her womb, not as his own and to take care of it faithfully and in fatherly way, likewise as his own."),³⁹ and he added that the child would be an equal heir with its future stepsiblings.⁴⁰ A widower also needed to remarry if he had several and/or young children.⁴¹ As noted above, in this case most widowers preferred a young bride who had never been married before. A widower brought his properties, goods, and, last but not least, his children to the marriage, while a young had the strength to take care of the children, and, not incidentally, as she did not have her own children, she could pay attention exclusively to her stepchildren, while the father could perhaps have more children with his younger wife.⁴² Jacob Hauswürth married Catharina Auschizin presumably because of his six children, three of whom three were still little.⁴³ For Karl Lieb, it was not important that

37 About similar practice, see Štefanová, "Widows: Outsider in rural economy," 272–74.

38 BFL V.1.x Nr. 33. February 10, 1784, and BFL V.1.b Nr. 71. February 27, 1761 (published on January 30, 1762).

39 "Daß Kind, welches Sie Brauth von ihrem Vorigen Mann Jacob May annoch in Mutter Leib draget, nicht anderß, als sein eigenes Kind erkennen, selbes gleich seinen Kindern Treü Vatterlich besorgen." BFL V.1.b Nr. 247. October 19, 1760.

40 BFL V.1.b Nr. 247. October 19, 1760.

41 Lanzinger, "Emotional bonds," 168.

42 In Europe, this type of remarriage was most frequent. Marriage between widowed spouses was especially complicated when each spouse brought children to the family, not to mention the relationship between the children who became half-siblings and stepsiblings. Warner, "Introduction," 11–13, and "Conclusion," 254.

43 BFL V.1.b Nr. 176. January 13, 1739.

Anna Maria Schlosserin could afford only 15 forints as dowry. She was appealing as a new wife because she could provide care for his five little children.⁴⁴

Some marriage contracts include fairly detailed descriptions of the ways in which the spouses expected children to be raised. The widower Fidely Matheißer ordered his wife Magdalena Konen to raise Matheißer's two sons until they turned 15 years old in the event of his death. The stepmother was then obliged to invest their inheritance until the sons married or learned a profession.⁴⁵

The clarification of financial circumstances was necessary to avoid future controversies, as case of the Zeller-family clearly shows. The children claimed their rightful heritage in 1780. Their father, Paul Zeller, had died eleven years earlier without having left a testament, and his children inherited a house and two vineyards. He had inherited the vineyards from his grandparents (one of them had died in the plague epidemic), and he had acquired the house before marrying. He married Francisca Mayerhofferin, who was a newcomer to the town whose dowry was only one cow and 25 forints. They had had eleven children, but at the time of the petition, only five of them were still alive. Two years after the father's death, the mother married a man named Christian Fritz without a marriage contract. She did not even make an agreement with the children about their inheritance. The children, however, suspected that the mother wanted to use their rightful inheritance as the dowry for her new marriage, which would be “against every law” (*welches wider alle Rechte wäre*), so they sought help from the legal authorities.⁴⁶ Their story is a typical example of the “cruel mother” who abandons her children in order to remarry and establish a totally new family, in contrast to the lone widow, who takes care of the inheritance of her children.⁴⁷

A parent's last will could define precisely what each member of the family would inherit in order to prevent feuds. In some cases, last wills also give some hints about the relationship between the husband and wife. Theresia Mayerin married her third husband, Jacob Flessler, in 1764. She had two daughters from her previous marriages. The stepfather was expected in the will to finish raising his stepdaughters⁴⁸ and to ensure them proper dowry: a cow and a bed with five

44 BFL V.1.b Nr. 217. September 24, 1775.

45 BFL V.1.b Nr. 113. June 23, 1765.

46 The outcome of the case is unknown. BFL V.1.b Nr. 297. April 5, 1780.

47 Giulia Calvi examined how the picture of the “cruel mother” and the “nurturing mother” evolved in Renaissance Italy. Calvi, “‘Cruel’ and ‘nurturing’ mothers”; Perrier, “Stepfamily relationships,” 192; Warner, “Conclusion,” 250.

48 It was not uncommon in Óbuda for a stepfather to raise his stepchildren and take care of them after the death of his spouse, but the council managed these cases strictly. Children also were “mobile” between the households of the kinship. See further examples above.

bolsters, two bedsheets, and one feather-bedding for each of them. The girls also had to “serve” (work in the household) for their own wedding dresses, as Mayerin specified on her deathbed. She left no room for Flesser to make his own decisions on these questions, even though she had been satisfied with his performance as the head of the household: he “brought two vineyards into the marriage and served (!) me faithfully and managed the household well.”⁴⁹ Her phrase (“served me”) is extraordinary, and it suggests that their marriage was fairly unequal. Presumably the widowed woman was *de facto* the head of the household, while Flesser was something of a helping hand.

Elisabetha Hiedlin and Barbara Hauswirthin wrote similar things about their husbands. In her will, Elisabetha Hiedlin indicated that her marriage contract had been kept, because her husband had taken care of her “in sickness and in health with love and devotion.”⁵⁰ In addition to the items specified in their marriage contract, Barbara Hauswirthin bequeathed Mathias Lindmeyer 300 forints and her bed, her chest, her table, and half of her silverware “for the faith and sincerity which he showed me during our marriage and for his efforts to support my household.”⁵¹ She also stated that the council should distribute her wealth fairly among her husband and his stepchildren.⁵²

In 1782, Anna Maria Liebher also included words of gratitude for her husband, Matthias Hackell, in her last will. She strengthened their marriage contract and left her nuptial bed (including a rich array of linens) to Hackell in recognition of “his requited love for me.”⁵³ It is hard to tell whether this was an honest emotional statement or just a formality. Hackell was her third husband. Hackell, who had never been married before, married Anna Maria in 1780. The bride brought three sons from her first marriage into the marriage, as well as a ship mill of great value, which she purchased with her second husband. Its purchase price was not revealed before the wedding. Hackell could afford only his “honest name and his learned profession,” as he was a miller. He also promised to take care of Anna Maria’s three “orphaned” children, as if he were their father (“to take care as if I were their father of the three orphans from

49 Marriage contract (May 1, 1764) and testament (January 29, 1776). BFL V.1.b Nr. 224.

50 BFL V.1.b Nr. 78. June 30, 1761.

51 “Für die mir durch die Zeit unßerer Verehligung erwiefene Treüe und Aufrichtigkeit, dann über meine Wirtschafft getragene Sorge.” BFL V.1.y Nr. 14. November 4, 1796 (published on November 12, 1796).

52 BFL V.1.y Nr. 14. November 4, 1796 (published on November 12, 1796).

53 “Vermög seiner gegen mier gehabter aufrichtiger Gegenliebe.” Last will of Anna Maria Liebher (April 12, 1782, published May 24, 1782). BFL V.1.b Nr. 340.

the first marriage with [Florian] Rohr”).⁵⁴ This all suggests that the union was advantageous for both of them. The wife was in a difficult predicament, as she had to pay off the debt which she and her second husband (Johann Georg) had accrued when they purchased the ship mill (they had purchased it for 900 forints, and when she died, they had only paid 300 against this debt), and she also had three adolescent sons to take care of. As her third husband, Hackell had to fulfill the duties of a father and a head of household, and he had to continue the work the second husband had done as a miller. Anna Maria Liebher was satisfied with Hackell. Whether Hackell really loved his wife or just played his role well we cannot know. Anna Maria died shortly after composing her last will and testament,⁵⁵ and her two sons claimed to the council of Óbuda that their stepfather, Matthias Hackell, was trying to defraud them, as the council wanted to sell the family’s house and its goods through public sale. The two remaining sons (the eldest, Hans Michael Rohr, had died earlier), the 18-year-old Florian and 16-year-old Paul, stated that the house and the effects in it had belonged to their inheritance from their father, and neither their father nor their mother had left passive debts behind, hence there was no need to sell the properties.⁵⁶ They were partly right. Their inheritance and the proportion of this inheritance that each of them was to receive were clearly stated in their mother’s marriage contracts, but their mother was never able to pay the entire price of the abovementioned ship mill, although it was clearly a huge mistake in the legal procedure that the council (or the stepfather?) wanted to arrange probate inventory—with valuations—before the auction. Finally, the council distributed the inheritance as follows: the stepfather received the ship mill, but he had to pay the price for which it had originally been purchased (900 forints) to his stepsons, and he had to pay the rest of the purchase-money to its previous owner (600 forints). Although the house was sold by auction in the summer of 1782, a half-year later Florian Rohr, the younger successfully regained it. He may have been a difficult personality, as the council permitted his request with the following strict conditions: he had to work diligently in his learned profession and he had

54 “Die aus erster Rohrischen Ehe erzeugte 3 Waysen väterlich zu sorgen.” Marriage contract (April 27, 1780). BFL V.1.b Nr. 340.

55 She died on April 13, 1782. The parish record says that she was 42 years old, but in the same registry book, the marriage between Anna Maria Liebher and Matthias Hackell was entered on May 7, 1780, and the wife is described as a 34-year-old widow and her husband as a 32-year-old single man.

56 Samuel Jeszenovszky to the Council of Óbuda, June 8, 1782. BFL V.1.b Nr. 340.

to give up his shameful lifestyle.⁵⁷ Based on the extant sources, their story can be interpreted in many ways. Matthias Hackell and Anna Maria Liebher may have sincerely loved each other and taken care of each other. Hackell may have played the role of the caring stepparent and the responsible head of household in front of his wife (though one would think this would have been difficult to do convincingly for years). Whatever the case, Hackell's relationship with his stepson was troubled. The council's reference suggests that Florian Rohr became a hard-tempered young man. If this was the result of his education (and his complicated family relationships and the effect of having two stepfathers), it could not be Hackell's fault, as he only lived together with them for two years, and when he became Florian's stepfather, Florian was already 16 years old.

Simon Genszky, the judge of the town, was careful to make provisions for his children's wellbeing. He stipulated in his will that his wife could not take with herself as dowry to a new marriage the vineyards that she had acquired together with him during their marriage.⁵⁸ With his last words, Genszky wanted to prevent future conflicts between his wife and his children, the kinds of conflicts which were fairly common in Óbuda, especially if one of the parents died intestate. A widowed woman was often forced to remarry (and Genszky reckoned with this possibility) in order to sustain the household or be sure someone remained who could pursue the deceased husband's profession. An adult unwed son could help in the household. In this case, the mother could remain a widow.⁵⁹ In 1778, the 63-year-old widow Elisabetha Jakoschitzin submitted a request to the demesne. She contended that she was old enough to manage her household.⁶⁰ It was clear that she had no chance of marrying again. She lived with her two sons. The younger was only 14 years of age, so he was not able to become the new head of the household, while the widow feared that her older son would be recruited into the military. The mother asked in her petition that her son, Andre Jakoschitz, not be recruited and that he be allowed to remain with her and become the new

57 "Hat man ihme gedachtes Hauß nach seinem Willen mit diesen beding zugelassen, daß Er sich zu seinen Erlehrnten Handwerk begeben fleissig arbeithe, und sich von seinen üblen Leben abhalte." Protocol, February 22, 1783. BFL V.1.b Nr. 340.

58 June 16, 1758. BFL V.1.b Nr. 42., about similar practices in Southern Tyrol, see Lanzinger, "Paternal authority," 347.

59 Similar examples from Austria: Brown, "Becoming widowed," 118–19. Brown's final finding is that widowed heads of household were mostly poor women.

60 "Da nun aber in meinen dermahligen alten Wittib Tügen, meine Würthschaft zu pflegen aüsser Stande mich befinde, dahero gezwungen bin, sothanen Würthschaft meinen alteren Sohn Andre Jakoschitz zu übergeben." Application of Elisabetha Jakoschitzin, about December 12, 1778. BFL V.1.b Nr. 274.

head of the household, as he had already asked a woman's hand in marriage, and her son and his fiancée wanted to move into her house after their wedding. The prefect of the demesne, Samuel Jeszenovszky, supported her request, as he believed the council should "help widows, orphans, and the needy."⁶¹

Widowed and/or old parents could also leave a household to their children or children-in-law in exchange for lifelong maintenance and some private space (which normally meant a bedroom, a kitchen, part of the garden). These maintenance or retirement contracts (*Ausgedinge*) became common only in the last third of the century in Óbuda, and they frequently gave rise to harsh family debates in a short period of time.⁶²

It is remarkable that in Óbuda the community tried to mediate intensely between parties in potential conflicts. Andreas Baider made the same statement as Genszky, but the council asked the wife whether she was pleased with this or not.⁶³ When János Tót's wife, Anna, made her last will, she left an inheritance to only one of her sons, Ferenc. The council asked her if she wanted to bequeath something to her other son, Jancsi, but she insisted that Ferenc be the sole heir. Anna had had another husband earlier, István Molnár, from whom she had inherited the house. János Tót, her later husband, died during the great plague epidemic around 1739. After that, she administered the household with Ferenc Tót. In the end, she gave Jancsi only some livestock.⁶⁴

Family bonds were not contingent on blood relations. Emotional ties could be forged by co-residence and caregiving.⁶⁵ Lorenz Unger did not draw a distinction between his two stepchildren, Johann and Marianna, and his daughter, Barbara.⁶⁶ Johann Huber bequeathed his vineyards to his stepson, Michael Wigarth, because Wigarth had "nursed him during his illness faithfully and steadily."⁶⁷

61 "Valamint Eözvegyeknek, Árvaknak ha valami nélkül Szűkölködőknek, Segétséggel lenni tartozunk." Samuel Jeszenovszky to the Council of Óbuda, December 12, 1778. BFL V.1.b Nr. 274.

62 People in Óbuda usually wrote about the maintenance of the parents in their children's marriage contracts or in their own testaments. In the last decades of the century, retirement agreements were mostly written in the protocols of the town. Retirements in sales contracts, like in the Bohemian villages, also occurred, but only at the end of the century. Temporary retirements were not in use in Óbuda. On retirement contracts (*Ausgedinge*) see Warner, "Conclusion," 243; Štefanová, "Widows: Outsiders in rural economy," 272, 276; Lanzinger, "Paternal authority," 347–48.

63 March 17, 1754 (published March 31, 1757). BFL V.1.b Nr. 22.

64 September 10, 1746. BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 47.

65 Especially among peasants. Some French examples, see Perrier, "Stepfamily relationships," 197.

66 BFL V.1.b Nr. 179. April 2, 1772.

67 However, he stated, that his other stepson, Nicolaus Aumillet, should not claim anything from that. January 27, 1768 (published March 28, 1768). BFL V.1.b Nr. 141.

A short complaint in the protocols from 1762 gives an impression of the potential complexity of family relations. Mathias Kayser complained lamentably (*klaget schmerzlichen*) about his stepsons, Michael and Franz Jetzl, who got drunk in a tavern in Buda-Újlak and had an argument in the course of which Michael spoke ill of their stepmother. According to the complaint, Michael had insisted that “his mother is a whore, and she always will be a whore.”⁶⁸ According to all indications, they quarreled all the way home, because his last words were shouted in front of their stepparents’ house. As Mathias Kayser said, Michael’s words were peculiarly painful, because Kayser’s wife, who was Michael’s stepmother, as she had been married to Michael’s father before his death (Michael had been only two years of age when his father had died), had taken devoted care of the boy and nurtured him. Thus, in Mathias Kayser’s perception, Michael should have thanked her for this, as she had been a good mother to him, and not a cruel or cold stepmother. As Kayser said in the complaint, “she is not a stepmother, but a proper mother for him, she was faithful to him, she nurtured him truly, he should be obliged to give thanks to her.”⁶⁹ This family of stepparents and stepchildren evolved as follows: Michael and Franz Jetzl were small children when their mother died. The father married another woman, who took care of them. After the father died, their stepmother married Mathias Kayser, in consequence so the brothers lived with two stepparents in the same household. The case illustrates how much it meant for contemporary public opinion if someone became a stepparent of a child when it was very little. In other words, in the eyes of the community motherhood could evolve through affiliative ties, and not only by blood. Kayser, who also became a stepparent to the Jetzl-brothers, defended his wife’s reputation. (The disrespectful son was sentenced to 20 strikes as punishment.⁷⁰)

Tensions could become even more harsh after one of the (step)parents died. Éva, the widow of Gergely Nagy, submitted a claim against her stepson, Samu

68 “Seine Mutter sei ein Hur, und verbleibe eine Hur.” The protocol contains the word “mother,” not “stepmother.” Perhaps Kayser used this form, or perhaps it refers to the Europe-wide phenomenon that everyday parlance did not draw a distinction between “real” and step-relationships. BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 345. January 9, 1762. On linguistic usage (and the difficulties of interpretation of such sources) see Warner, “Introduction,” 8–9; Perrier, “Stepfamily relationships,” 193.

69 “Ihme nicht als eine Stief Mutter, sondern als eine rechtmässige Mutter sein, Treü erwiesen, ihme ehrlich erzagen, soll darumb Jenem seiner Stief Mutter vielmehr schuldigen danckh sagen.” BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 345. January 9, 1762.

70 The protocol is not specific, and only mentions the word “Prügeln.” It could have been blow, switch or lashing.

Nagy. Samu was the son of Gergely Nagy and another woman, and he had an infant half-brother, who was Éva's child. After the death of the father, Gergely Nagy simply kicked his stepmother out of the house with her 18-month-old child, Gergely Nagy II. He did not want to accommodate them in the house again, nor did he want to support his infant stepbrother. Given the seriousness of the case (a mother with an infant but without a home or any sustenance), the council decided quickly and divided the inheritance equally between the stepbrothers.⁷¹

The Consecutive Marriages and Families of the New Settler, Hubertus Lautenbach

I now offer a discussion of stepfamily dynamics through an analysis of one case study. Remarriages exerted a dramatic influence on the lives of family members, new and old, even when the stepchildren were already adults. The case in question shows how various considerations made (re)marriage particularly appealing for a young person who was still unwed, a young person who had been widowed, or an older widow or widower. The story of Hubertus Lautenbach [Lauttenbach] and his fourth and last wife also offers a good example of the complexity of the family networks which evolved as a consequence of consecutive remarriages (Table 1). Lautenbach was born in Cologne in 1727.⁷² He studied there, and he wanted to become a locksmith.⁷³ He was 30 years old when he arrived in Buda, where he got married with amazing speed (after only a few months).⁷⁴ He was a young but presumably penniless man, while his first wife, Margaretha Philippin, widow of Johann Renner, was significantly older than he. Lautenbach could offer her only “all love and devotion, and his honorable name,”⁷⁵ while the widow brought two children with relatively large inheritances from their father (150 forints per capita) into the marriage. One has the impression that their union was in all likelihood a marriage of convenience: it was the first step

71 BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 175. May 10, 1754.

72 According to his birth certificate (September 9, 1741), he was born on February 11, 1727. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

73 Certificate of the Smith Guild, Cologne, on January 24, 1757. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

74 He got his certification from the Smith Guild in Cologne on January 24, 1757, and his marriage agreement was signed on February 11. Marriage agreement between Hubertus Lautenbach and Margaretha Philippin, Buda, on February 11, 1757, BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

75 “Alle Liebe undt Treyheit, wie auch sein Ehrlichen Nahmen und Herkomens.” Marriage agreement between Hubertus Lautenbach and Margaretha Philippin, Buda, on February 11, 1757, BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

taken by the young man to fit into his new community and land a fortune, which was common practice, especially among artisans, who could more easily obtain entry into the guild through these unions. In such cases, a large age gap (with the widow as the older spouse) did not matter.⁷⁶ The widow, Margaretha, was most probably much older than Lautenbach, since we know that she was already married in 1732.⁷⁷ Margaretha's first husband, Johann Renner, had been a nail-smith (*Naglschmidt*) who had earned citizenship in 1738.⁷⁸ Lautenbach presumably not only married his widow and took care of her children as the stepfather, but also adopted Renner's profession too. The short interval between the date of issue of the certificate of the Smith Guild of Cologne and the date of the marriage agreement also strengthens this supposition. Moreover, it suggests that their marriage was probably mediated.⁷⁹ It is worth noting that Margaretha was already a widow in 1754, so she probably managed her husband's profession until she married Lautenbach.⁸⁰

The marriage did not last long, because Lautenbach re-married the following year, bringing an end to a short period of widowhood.⁸¹ His new spouse, Anna Maria Windtnerin, was also a widow, and she was ten years older than he.⁸² Their marriage contract is interesting for several reasons: the groom does not mention his underage stepchildren from his previous marriage, and we do not know anything about their fates. Neither the parish registers of the suburb

76 Warner, "Introduction," 13–14.

77 She and her first husband, Johann Renner bought the vineyard in *Mathias Berg*. At that time, they lived in the Újlak (*Neustift*) suburb of Buda, next to Óbuda. BFL IV.1009.c Vol 72 Nr. 736. (on November 13, 1732).

78 He was registered on February 22, 1738. BFL IV.1002.u Vol 1 p. 110. They lived in Buda-Újlak, and they bought a house near the Danube (*in der Donau Zeill*) in 1741. Perhaps here was also a tavern, because "the heirs of Margaretha" sold it to a tavern-keeper in 1761. They had another house in Neustift, which was bought in 1752 and sold in 1754. In 1754, Margaretha was already a widow. BFL IV.1009.c Vol 14 fol. 27r (March 22, 1741) and 200v (June, 15 1761); fol. 124r (March 27, 1752) and fol. 145 (July 15, 1754).

79 We have no direct sources about this case, but there are other examples of the guild, the city, or private persons mediating in marriages. Géra, *Házasság*, 70–73. In the case of Lautenbach, the mediation presumably happened through the guilds of Buda and Cologne. Lautenbach appears in the protocols of the Council of Buda in 1757 once, after his marriage, when he wanted to be a burgher, "as his predecessor also was a citizen, and given his honorable dealings." ("Lautenbach Hubert, da seiner Vorfahrer Burger gewesen, bittet Er sich in Ansehung seines ehrlichen Wandels vor einen Burger anzunehmen.") In his petition, his predecessor means the previous husband of his wife, of whom he inherited his spouse and his profession. This also refers to the mediation of the guilds. July 4, 1757. BFL IV.1002.a Bd. 60. fol. 158r.

80 BFL IV.1009.c Vol 14 fol. 145 (July 15, 1754)

81 Margaretha Lautenbach died on February 11, 1758. BFL XV.20.2 A182

82 According to her death record, she died on July 13, 1768 at the age of 51. BFL XV.20.2 A202.

Országút (*Landstrass*) and Újlak (*Neustift*), nor the city's reports about orphans, nor Lautenbach's further documents make any mention of them. Renner's daughter may have been the bride who is mentioned in the parish registers of Buda-Újlak: Theresia Rennerin married Andreas Eibel on November 11, 1758.⁸³ In this case, Lautenbach tried to dispose of his stepdaughter from his previous relationship. He gave the girl an endowment, and he also dealt with problematic property issues at the same time, which was common practice⁸⁴ (and quite often reflected the intentions of both the children and their stepparent).⁸⁵ However, we still do not know anything about the other daughter's fate (either she died or was she was taken in by her mother's relatives). What is remarkable is that in the course of that one short year, Lautenbach acquired a vineyard in Matthias Berg, which was actually his legacy from his first wife (and her previous husband, Johann Renner).⁸⁶ Anna Maria Windtnerin, his second companion, came into the marriage with her two daughters, the 12-year-old Victoria and the 6-year-old Catharina.⁸⁷

Their union was long, successful, and productive. They obtained two other vineyards in 1760,⁸⁸ and Lautenbach finally was granted citizenship in 1763.⁸⁹ He also became a grocer, lived in the suburb Országút, and opened a tavern in a busy place in the city: near the so-called Kaiser Baths and Kaiser Mills. The tavern was already functioning in 1769.⁹⁰ He was a prosperous taverner. His brother Wilhelm, who also tried his fortune in Hungary as brewer, called him “the famous tavern-keeper and grocer” in 1772.⁹¹

83 The witness of the bride was Franz Renner, but their relationship is not clear. BFL XV.20.2 A180

84 Daughters were more often given away into another household than sons, who remained under their mothers' custody. Warner, “Conclusion,” 238, 250–51.

85 For instance, in 1775, Theresia Höferin preferred to live with her grandparents, and not with her new stepfather. BFL V.1.b Nr. 206.

86 In the Ground Protocols of Buda (BFL IV.1009.c), Lautenbach was registered only with his second wife. According to the entry, Johann Renner seized the vineyard in 1732, which became common property of Renner and his wife. Hubertus Lautenbach inherited it after Margaretha's death. He and his second wife, Anna Maria Windtnerin, were registered on August 21, 1758. BFL IV.1009.c Vol. 79 p. 57.

87 Marriage agreement between Hubertus Lautenbach and Anna Maria Windtnerin, Buda, on June 23, 1758, BFL V.1.b Nr. 533. They married on June 26, 1758. BFL, XV.20.2 A202.

88 One in *Paulthal* and another in *Francisci Berg*. BFL IV.1009.c Vol 79 p. 506.

89 Certificate of citizenship, on February 21, 1763, BFL V.1.b Nr. 533. and IV.1009.u Vol 1 p. 73.

90 Various certificates (tax, chimneysweeping etc.), 1769–1783. According to these documents, the name of the inn was “at the blue peacock” (“beym blauen Pfauen”) in 1780–1781. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

91 ‘*Renomirten Weinschenker und Greisler nebst der Kayser Mibl*’, on March 18, 1772. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

His second wife, Anna Maria, died in 1768.⁹² Although they were married for ten long years, they did not have common children. Lautenbach married again six months later. This time, as a successful middle-aged man, he chose an 18-year-old maiden, Rosalia Rauschin from Óbuda, as his bride. As noted earlier, it was common for men of his age to choose a young woman who had not been married before as a second or third wife.⁹³ In the third marriage, as he wanted to start a totally new life, he had to address the question of the inheritance of the two Winklerin daughters, especially because the older of the two, Victoria, was already married. Lautenbach and Rosalia gave his stepdaughters their share of the maternal and paternal legacy (100 forints and 500 forints per capita), and in exchange for this, they gained the house in Buda-Országút and the vineyards, which previously had been the property of Lautenbach and Anna Maria, in accordance with Anna Maria's testament.⁹⁴

Their marriage was short and ended tragically. They had only one child, a young daughter, Anna Maria, who was probably named after Lautenbach's previous wife. The child died when she was two years old. Shortly after that, Rosalia also died.⁹⁵

Soon after Rosalia's funeral, Lautenbach married for the fourth and last time.⁹⁶ The sources offer no clear explanation for why he entered this marriage. Neither of the partners had young children. Lautenbach had already given his stepdaughters their inheritance from their mother (Anna Maria), and the children of the new wife, Magdalena Forschin, were already adults. Lautenbach was 45 years old, and Forschin was 41.⁹⁷ They may well have needed some companionship and material support, as both had some financial difficulties, which would explain why Lautenbach sold his vineyard in 1773 "for 385 forints

92 On July 13, 1768. BFL XV.20.2 A202.

93 They married on February 2, 1769. BFL XV.20.2 A202. Testament of Anna Maria Lautenbachin (Buda-Országút, on April 6, 1768, published on July 18, 1768), BFL IV.1002.y I.1404. The elder daughter, Victoria, was already married in 1768. The younger one, Catharina, died in 1772. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

94 About the two vineyards: BFL IV.1009.c Vol 82. p. 555–56. (February 14, 1771), about the house, which was bought by Georg Windtner and his wife in 1754: BFL IV.1009.c Vol 6 fol 71v (March 27, 1754) and fol. 116r (February 14, 1771).

95 Anna Maria (or Maria Anna) Lautenbach (born on January 15, 1770, died on January 23, 1772). The mother, Rosalia Lautenbach, died on April 24, 1773. BFL XV.20.2 A202.

96 The marriage contract was signed and the church wedding was held on the same day, on July 13, 1773.

97 According to the parish record, she was 51, but it is inaccurate, because it also mentions Lautenbach as a 55-year-old widower. She was born on May 27, 1722. Her death record says she was about 80 years old when she died in 1787, but her age was overestimated (she was probably in very poor health when she died).

and 1 cubic fathom firewood,”⁹⁸ They also kept their separate households for years, Lautenbach in Buda-Országút and Magdalena in Óbuda. Finally, Lautenbach sold his old houses in 1782, one for his stepson from his last marriage, Mathias Conrad.⁹⁹ In 1783, he left Buda and lived with his wife, and he died two years later.¹⁰⁰ One short comment suggests that his identity within the family, i.e. his role as a pater familias, was important to him, although he could prove himself a good stepfather only by taking care only of his stepchildren, as his biological daughter died very early. In his letter in 1772, he wondered why his brother had never married, and he clearly did not understand this: “I am very glad that my brother is well, but I wonder more that he remains unwed at so old an age, and [that] he never decided to change this during that time, but let it be as you want it to be.”¹⁰¹

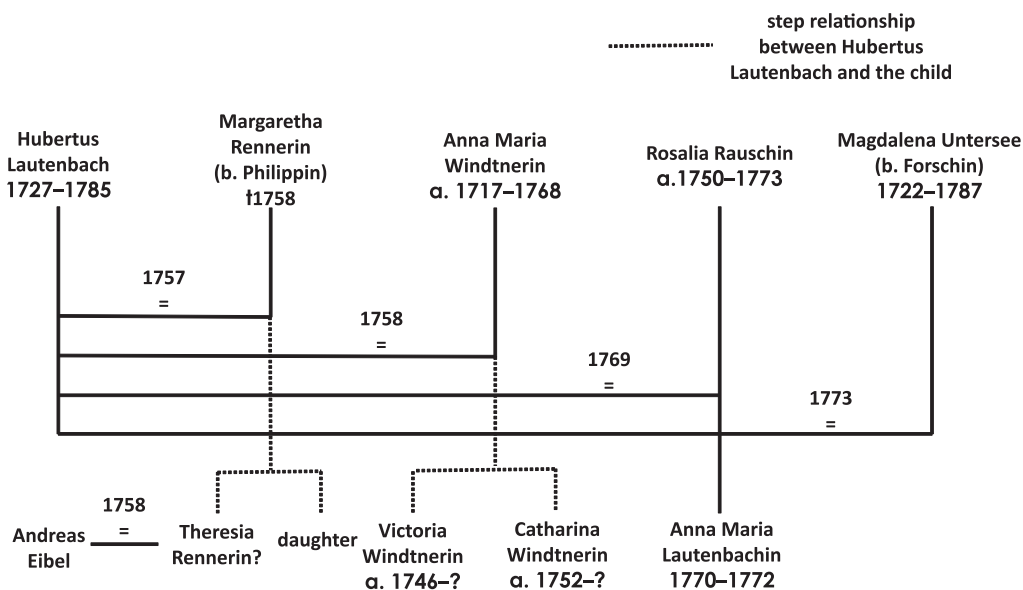


Table 1. Hubertus Lautenbach and his marriages

98 That was his first vineyard, in Mathias Berg, BFL IV.1009.c Vol 84, p. 168. (August 27, 1773)

99 Sales contract between Hubertus Lautenbach and Mathias Conrad and his wife, Barbara Schweichartin [Schweichardt], Óbuda, on January 29, 1782; Sales contract between Hubertus Lautenbach and Anton and Xaver Mundtlinger, Buda, on April 16, 1782, BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

100 Tax note, 1783. Hubertus died on October 16, 1785 in *hectica*. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

101 “Des Brudters wohlauf seyn erfreuet mich sehr, doch mehr verwundere ich mich daß derselbe seinen ledigen stand in ein so hohes alter hinauf zellet; und sich niemahls entschlossen dißer Zeit demselben zu verändern, doch seye es wie es whole.” Hubertus Lautenbach’s letter to his brother, Wilhelm. Buda, on April 28, 1772. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

The Story of the Last Wife and Her Children: Magdalena Forschin and Her Families

Why did Magdalena, the carpenter Wolfgang Unterseher's (Untersecker, Untersee) widow, choose to marry so many times? According to her testament at the age of 65,¹⁰² she was married five times (Table 2). There are only two small hints about her first husband, but the sources contain neither his name nor any further information about their marriage.¹⁰³ Her second husband, Andreas Binder (Pinter), died in 1754 at the age of 56, and he was definitely older than Magdalena. They had a daughter, Elisabetha, who married in 1753.¹⁰⁴ The date suggests that Magdalena was either fairly young when she gave birth to Elisabetha, who also married as an adolescent girl, or (and this seems more likely) she was a young stepmother to her, with whom she developed strong affiliative ties in time, which explains why Magdalena called her "daughter" and not "stepdaughter."¹⁰⁵ It is also possible that she and her enigmatic first husband were Elisabetha's parents. In this case, Binder raised the child as his own (he also referred to her as his "daughter" in the sources). Whatever the case, Magdalena wanted to hide the existence of her first husband for some reason.

After Binder's death she chose a man who had not yet been married, Joseph Bltazer (Plaßer), a newcomer from Kistorbágy. The marriage was certainly unequal. The young fiancé could afford only 20 forints for his bride, while Magdalena had a vineyard and her house and its furnishings. She also commented that she was obliged to fulfill her second husband's last will and still had to give some donation to the local fraternity. As her adult daughter was already married and not part of her household, the widow does not mention her.¹⁰⁶ She seems to have wanted to start a new life with the help of a new strong, young companion. The sources do not reveal whether they had common children or not. In 1759,

102 On May 11, 1787, published on October 25, 1787. (She died May 13, 1787.) BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

103 She mentions him in her testament, and her marriage contract with Joseph Blatzer declares that Andreas Binder (Pinter) was her second husband. Marriage contract between Joseph Blatzer and Magdalena Binderin, September 17, 1755. BFL V.1.b Nr. 26.

104 Andreas Binder died on October 21, 1754. His testament was written on October 15, 1754. The daughter, Elisabetha, married Jacob Weiß on November 5, 1753. BFL V.1.b Nr. 24., BFL XV.20.2 A185

105 Elisabetha does not occur in the parish registry between 1736 and 1740. If Magdalena had been her mother, they both would have had to have gotten married at the age of roughly 15. By the end of the century, as noted, the youngest bride was 16 years old.

106 Their marriage contract was written on September 19, 1755, and the church wedding was held on October 7, 1755. BFL V.1.b Nr. 26.

her young husband died in an accident.¹⁰⁷ Two months later, in January 1760, when she married for the third time, she mentioned only her daughter from Andreas Binder. This time, she married a widower, Wolfgang Untersee.¹⁰⁸ Their (step)children were already adults, and both spouses brought wealth into the new marriage. Untersee had his profession (as noted above, he was a carpenter) and a vineyard, and Magdalena again had her vineyard and house.¹⁰⁹ The marriage was also a new chapter in Untersee's life. His previous wife, Anna Maria Hiedlin (Burnhauserin by her maiden name), had left him with her natural children from her former husband (Table 3). Not surprisingly, shortly after his marriage, Untersee complained to the city council about his stepchildren's inheritance.¹¹⁰ The council distributed the inheritance between him and Anna Maria Hiedlin (born Burnhauserin)'s children, Anna Maria Neubauerin and Johann Hiedl (who were stepbrother and stepsister). Untersee's stepdaughter and his stepdaughter's husband were distressed, as they feared they might not get the maternal inheritance, because Untersee appeared again before the council and claimed that his stepdaughter publicly complained about it. Finally, Untersee got a moratorium to pay his stepdaughter, Anna Maria Neubauerin the rest of her legacy.¹¹¹ It is clear that Anna Maria Neubauerin worried because she assumed that her stepfather would use her inheritance as his own property for his new marriage. Based on later documents, she also had personal conflicts with her stepfather's new wife. In a letter written after Magdalena's death, she referred to her as "die sogenante Lautenbachin."¹¹²

We can understand her bitterness and the complexity of their stepfamily, if we also take a look at the events from her point of view. Her parents were Joseph Neubauer and Anna Maria Burnhauserin. She was a small child when her father died, and her mother married the single man Johann Georg Hiedl.¹¹³ Thanks to this marriage, she got a half-brother, with whom she grew up. They

107 He was 27 years old and he died on November 13, 1759. The church register identifies the cause of death as "Infelix casus." BFL XV.20.2 A185

108 The marriage contract was written on January 12, 1760, and the wedding was held on January 27. BFL V.1.b Nr. 56.

109 At the time, she did not obtain the money (9 and 10 forints) for holy masses for her former husbands. She also noticed that her (step?)daughter, Elisabetha, the wife of Jacob Weiß, was entitled to 100 forints as her inheritance from her mother. BFL V.1.b Nr. 56.

110 BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 277–79. (January 19 and 21, 1760)

111 BFL V.1.a Vol 4 p. 279. (February 9, 1760)

112 BFL V.1.b Nr. 533. Anna Maria Neubauerin to the council of Óbuda, s.d. (around 1787).

113 The wedding was held on February 26, 1743. BFL XV.20.2 A185

were young adults in 1756, when their mother married Wolfgang Untersee.¹¹⁴ The matrimony was urgent for Untersee. His son Gregor was born on January 15, 1756, and shortly after that, on February 6, Gregor's mother, who was also named Anna Maria, died, presumably due to puerperal fever.¹¹⁵ So Untersee was left with a newborn child who desperately needed a mother. Two and a half weeks after Untersee's wife, Anna Maria died, he signed the marriage contract with Anna Maria Hiedl (or Anna Maria Burnhauserin by her maiden name). The fourth point of their contract illustrates Untersee's despair: all he asked of the bride was that she take care of his son Gregor as her own (which also meant that she wouldn't discriminate him when it came time to divide the inheritance among other siblings).¹¹⁶ Gregor, however, died shortly after the wedding.¹¹⁷ So his son was dead, but Untersee now had a new family with a stepdaughter and a stepson. The marriage between Untersee and Anna Maria Hiedlin did not last long, as she died in 1759,¹¹⁸ and just a month later, he subscribed his contract with Magdalena. That is why Anna Maria had good reason to worry about her legacy, fearing that her stepfather would want to take her legacy into his new marriage.

However, in this time, Anna Maria (and Magdalena's daughter, Elisabetha) was married, so they were not forced to live together. Her stepbrother, Johann, was presumably young enough to stay with his stepparents. Wolfgang Untersee's and Magdalena's marriage was childless.¹¹⁹

Finally, when Hubertus Lautenbach and Magdalena, as Wolfgang Untersee's widow, married in 1773, they were no longer young. Their children were adults, and they presumably did not expect much from their marriage. Perhaps they each merely hoped to have someone who would take care of him/her.¹²⁰ After they gave their stepchildren their inheritance, they lived lives of poverty. In

114 Marriage agreement between Wolfgang Untersee and Anna Maria Hiedlin, February 24, 1756. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533. and XV.20.2 A185

115 The cause of her death was noted as *febris biliosa*. BFL XV.20.2 A185

116 "Will, und verheisset Brauth des Braüdigam sein vorhandenes Kind vor ihr eigenes anzunehmen, und in die Zahl ihrer eigener Kinder einzurechnen; also zwar: daß auch dieses an Mütterlichen Antheil gleich denen übrigen sowohl deren jetzigen, als zukünftigen mit Erben solle, und müsse." February 24, 1756. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

117 He was 14 weeks old when he died on April 12, 1756. Untersee had another son, Georg, who died on February 16, 1755 at three and a half years of age, shortly before the birth of Gregor. BFL XV.20.2 A185

118 On December 3, 1759, she was 48 years old. BFL XV.20.2 A185

119 It was mentioned in their stepdaughter's letter, around 1788. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

120 In contrast to the previous contracts, they emphasized specifically that neither spouse would leave the other and they would live together until one of them died. July 13, 1773. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

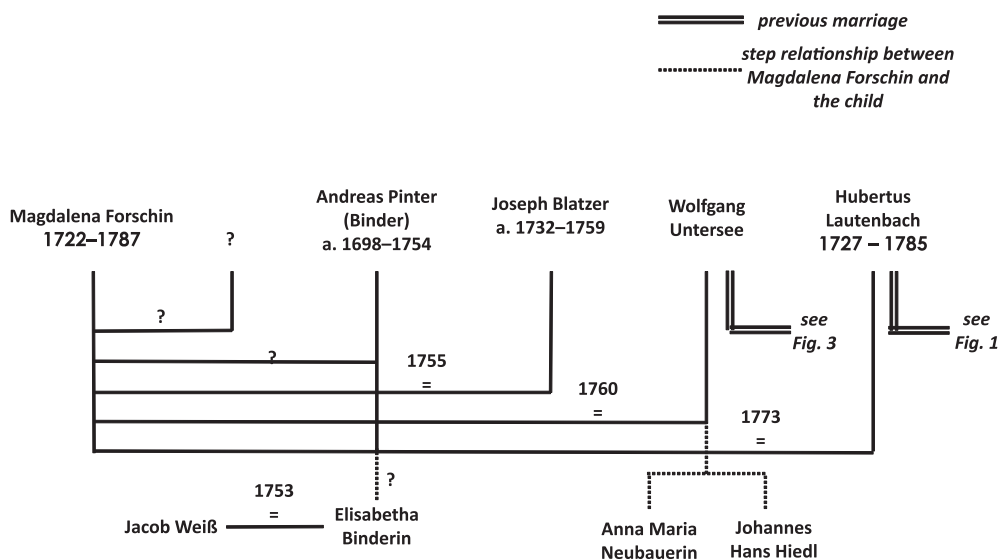


Table 2. Magdalena Forschin and her family relationships

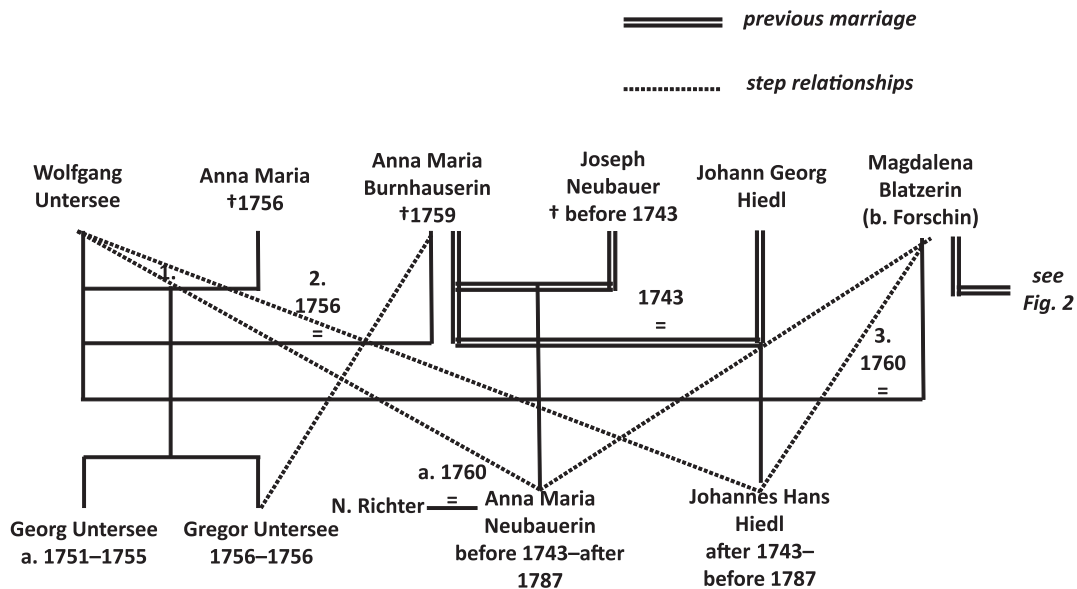


Table 3. Wolfgang Untersee and his family network

1782, Lautenbach sold his house in Buda to his stepdaughter Victoria’s husband, Anton Glatl (Glatel), who lived in Gödöllő as a surgeon.¹²¹ As mentioned above, Hubertus Lautenbach died in 1785. Magdalena died two years later.¹²²

121 April 16, 1782. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

122 Lautenbach wrote his testament and died on October 16, 1785 (published on May 15, 1787). According to the will, only his vineyard in Francisci Berg remained to him. He bequeathed it to Magdalena

Their patchwork-family, which was mostly tied with legal and not natural bonds, dissolved.¹²³

Conclusion

In this study, which is intended as a first step in the study of family life of Óbuda in the eighteenth century, I first considered the bond between the male head of a household and his wife. Through the review of parish registry records, I identified tendencies in first marriages and remarriage patterns. During the entire period, the vast majority of marriages were first marriages for both partners. Marriages between a widowed person and a person marrying for the first time were not infrequent either, but their proportion gradually decreased by the end of the century. Many of these unions were between new settlers and widows, who could afford to remarry because they had either vineyards or a profession, in exchange for which they got a spouse who could serve as a new stepfather if they had young children and a helping hand in supporting and maintaining the household. In these cases, it seems to have mattered less if the bride was much older than the groom, especially if the groom was an artisan and the marriage made it easier for him to progress in his profession.

The same tendency can be observed in remarriages between widows and widowers. There was an extremely high number of marriages between widowers and widows during and after the plague epidemic in 1739–1740, which was the greatest demographic catastrophe suffered by the town during the century.

In the last third of the century, there were some first marriages involving a groom who was at least 18 or 19 years of age and a bride who was 16. Marriages between widowed and yet unwed persons tended to involve spouses who were in their 20s or 30s. A widow was considered old approximately from the age of

and ordered that, after she died, it should be divided among his stepchildren from his second wife and the kinship of his third wife, Rosalia (“ein Theill denen 2 Wintnerischen, und der andere Theil denen Rauscherischen Kindern”). Anna and Magdalena Rauschin and Catharina Wintnerin inherited the vineyard on May 13, 1788. Magdalena wrote her testament on May 11, 1787 (published on October 25, 1787) and died on May 13. She had many debts, and she devoted her remaining inheritance to becoming pious [or “and she gave her remaining inheritance to the Church”?]. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533., BFL IV.1009.c Vol 89 p. 173. 123 The last document containing information on them was written around 1788, when Magdalena’s stepdaughter, Anna Maria Neubauerin (at that time the carpenter Richter’s widow), wrote to the council of Óbuda. She wanted to regain the vineyard in Petersberg or at least its price, because originally it had belonged to her natural parents, but her mother had given it to Untersee as dowry, and Untersee had later sold it with his next wife, Magdalena. By this time, none of Anna Maria’s stepsisters or stepbrothers was alive. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

35, thus if she wanted to have a good chance of remarrying, she was likely to consider a widower. Widowers could choose a maiden or a widow, but by the age of 60 they were too old for marriage according to contemporary public opinion. This view did not change over the course of the century. It prevailed in Buda in the first decades of the eighteenth century, and in Óbuda it remained an opinion of widespread consensus in the last third of the eighteenth century.

As in other communities with mainly rural characteristics (for instance, Lower Austrian or Bohemian villages and smaller market towns), it was crucial for someone who was widowed to remarry in order to fill the gap left by the deceased partner. Thus, as the above examples illustrate, legally bound stepfamilies were formed very hastily, often within a few weeks in order to replace the deceased partner. Stepfamilies were then also broken up in ways that were unpredictable, and underage children often found themselves under the care of a series of couples, often with no biological parent involved. As the available sources suggest, horizontal kin seems not to have played an important role in the upbringing of orphaned children, as I expected at the beginning. In the social milieu under examination, a parent lost had to be replaced and with someone who could meet his/her the responsibilities as a stepparent. Newlywed stepparents negotiated over the fates of their children with their new partners when they were arranging the marriage. Stepparents were often expected to provide everyday care and to treat stepchildren as they treated their own biological children, which could also mean giving them an equal share of any inheritance.

The next period of intensive negotiation came when children and stepchildren married. Often, children had to make a deal with their stepparents or their partners about their inheritance, and the civic legal authorities were involved in these deals. Potential conflicts were often foreseen and mediated by a biological parent on his/her deathbed. Thus, the council of the community often tried to mediate between the members of the family.

The case of Hubertus Lautenbach offers an example of what seems to have been the adventurous life of an individual settler for whom marriage and remarriage served as tools with which he integrated into the community and furthered his own social mobility. He married established, older widows, except in one case, when he had become successful and established himself as a taverner, and he chose a young maiden as his bride. His first marriage gave him a new home, a profession, and vineyards. He made arrangements for at least one of his stepdaughters from this union through an endowment shortly after his

second marriage. On the other hand, he also received two other stepdaughters through his second marriage, whom he raised as if they were his own. His third marriage was short and tragic. His young wife and their only child died young, and his last union seems to have been a kind of makeshift arrangement for two aging widowed partners who had to address financial difficulties. His first two marriages could be considered unequal, as his wives were in stronger social and economic positions. The third one could also be considered unequal, but this time, he was the stronger party because of his age and wealth. In contrast, his last union was between two equal partners, most likely due to financial concerns. The in-depth examination of his life offers an example of the strong, dynamic interaction between career and marriage strategies in the eighteenth century.

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“Mulier Imperiosa”: The Stepfamilies of Eva Elisabetha in Buda in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century

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This article offers a case study based on examination of legal documents concerning the marital conflicts which arose in the three consecutive marriages of a wealthy burgher woman. It situates this specific case in the context of Early Modern gendered marriage patterns. The documents which were produced in the course of the judicial dissolution of the first marriage described the young wife as a slave to her elderly, tyrannical husband. Other sources, however, including documents pertaining to her second two marriages, suggest that it would be misleading to argue, on the basis of the documents generated in the course of her divorce, the wife completely adapted herself to the patriarchal norms of her age. As her later marriages and economic successes show, she was not at all a helpless woman, though she could pretend to be one when this role served her interests. Her case suggests that the patriarchal model transmitted by the normative literature of the age could be successfully challenged, and ambitious, capable women, who had good financial and family backgrounds, had were able at least to some extent to negotiate relationships actively and challenge cultural norms. The documents concerning her second and third marriages add novel information to the study of the relationships between stepsiblings and halfsiblings. This case study highlights, moreover, the ways wedded women and widows could rely at times on the support of their families of origin.

Keywords: widow, remarriage, stepfather, stepchildren, half-sister/brother, family violence, patriarchal model

Introduction

With the help of a Christian alliance, the Habsburgs recaptured Buda, the former capital of Hungary, from the Ottoman Empire on September 2, 1686. After the siege, the town was in flames for three days. The citizens fled or were captured by the victorious army, and little more than deserted ruins remained. Given the proximity of the Danube River and its strategical and commercial significance, the Habsburg court had great plans for the city. The official from the Treasury responsible for its reconstruction had arrived at the time of the siege. The Habsburg court was so afraid of possible traitors and spies that it

supported the total exchange of population in the town, which was under the direct control of Vienna until the turn of the century. They were expecting Catholic, primarily German-speaking citizens, whom they sought to attract by granting them building plots and concessions in an attempt to encourage them to settle permanently in the city. Accordingly, the overwhelming majority of the settlers who were granted civic rights were German-speaking. However, on the outskirts of Tabán (one quarter of the city), the ruler supported the settlement of South Slavic and Hungarian people and other groups from the Balkans, even though their social and economic prestige lagged far behind that of the German settlers. Many settlers came from Vienna to Buda, where the reconstruction and consolidation work to be done, which would last decades, bore many opportunities for adventurers and anyone with an enterprising spirit.

This is where our story begins. Eva Elisabetha was a remarkable woman from Vienna who arrived in Buda as the first, much younger wife of a self-made man. She was highly educated in comparison to the non-noble women of her age, and following the death of her first husband, she led an independent life. She managed the real estate and business that she had inherited, and she chose her second husband herself. Her life was exceptional in the sense that she could and did act as an “equal” partner in a patriarchal world. While we cannot call her example typical, we can still draw the conclusion that a woman’s influence and opportunities in life could in such rare cases depend strongly on her talent and remarkable character, through which she could successfully challenge the ideal model of the patriarchal family characteristic of her age.

Eva Elisabetha grew up as a stepchild in a family in Vienna because she lost her father at an early age. Her first marriage was arranged by her family (presumably her stepfather, though the sources offer no information concerning this), and it was an unequal marriage, as her husband was 30 years older than she. He was a widower who sought to improve his social status through the marriage and provide for a successor. The generational and cultural differences between the spouses, however, led to frequent conflicts and domestic violence, and Eva Elisabetha’s stepfather legally and financially supported his stepdaughter against the aggressive husband. Following the death of the first husband, Eva Elisabetha married again, this time to a man of her own choosing, who was also a widower and who had a son. The marriage was motivated both by financial concerns (Eva Elisabetha gave loans to the man) and the aspiration of the widower to integrate into the city community,

where he was a newcomer.¹ When we examine the marriage strategy of Eva Elisabetha, it is clear that she married socially “upwards” in order to increase her status in the city. This strategy and her age almost excluded men who had not been married before. The stepson did not pose a threat to Eva Elisabetha, as he was almost an adult, and the common child would inherit the property after the mother.² After the death of the second husband, Eva Elisabetha married again, and through this marriage, she rose into the world of the nobility. Her third marriage was probably also motivated by the lack of male relatives in the neighbourhood, as her family lived in Vienna and she had a bad relationship with her stepson, with whom she spent very little time. She had no obligation to give him accommodation in her house after the death of his father. The stepson presumably died young or left Buda. In the third marriage, she gave birth to two sons, who became the half-brothers of her daughter from the second marriage.

As we have seen, Eva Elisabetha spent her whole life in stepfamilies, which was presumably not exceptional at the time. Her struggle for more independence and upward social mobility, however, rendered her an exceptional woman in the social world of the city. While the relationships between the children and the parents or stepparents are important topics in the study of stepfamilies, given the lack of ego documents, we can only make assumptions concerning the legal cases and documents that survived. In this article, I therefore attempt to extend the analysis of the remaining sources to the private lives and emotions of a woman and her extended family.

Eva Elisabetha’s first marriage fits in with the classical, idealized image of obedient (or oppressed) women in the early modern age. The first introduction of the marital dispute by the legal historian György Bónis at the beginning of the 1960s described Eva Elisabetha as a woman suffering under the patriarchal power of a much older husband who was saved from a miserable life only through the help of her powerful relatives.³ However, the microhistorical method that I use enables us to reconstruct the roles of the woman in different families that she played over the course of six decades, a remarkably long period of time, and we can also acquaint ourselves with the relatives of the spouses, who to varying degrees all played roles in her life. In addition, the decisions of our heroine

1 See the article of Katalin Simon in the present issue: “Remarriage Patterns and Stepfamily Formation in a German-speaking Market-Town in Eighteenth-Century Hungary.”

2 Stretton, *Stepmother*, 91–92, 95.

3 Bónis, *Buda és Pest*, 275, 278–80, 287.

had an impact on the later lives of her children from her last two marriages. My microhistorical analysis compels us to significantly modify the image of Eva Elisabetha: while according to the earlier analysis, she was a helpless, impotent, weak, lazy woman who escaped to her relatives, now we see her, already at the time of the administration of the legacy of the first husband, as a very efficient, competent and independent woman who consciously shaped her future and carefully selected her new husband.

Only through the study of a wide range of sources can we determine what constituted the “something else” which distinguished the everyday lives of real couples (*Ehe in Aktion*) from the “ideal type” of the patriarchal family model, which the Church and the state preferred and supported.⁴

On the basis of the available sources, the case study still cannot give a similarly precise picture of the three marriages: the more harmonious the marriage becomes, the less sources we have concerning it. The break-up of the first, stormy marriage was the topic of gossip for the residents of the town, who were interested in the urban scandals. However, the nature of sources limits research on emotional dynamics, because we only have half of the documents in the legal cases which were started to obtain a judicial separation. The available documents depict only the cases which were negotiated in front of the body of the magistrates, and the primary goal in these cases was to clarify property issues. On the basis of these sources, it is difficult to study the emotional background. We thus cannot offer such an inquiry resembling in its level of detail the inquiry conducted by Alexandra Lutz, for example, in Holstein, because we do not have access to the documents of the Holy See, which are essential for any profound study of events in a Catholic town.⁵

Furthermore, according to the documents of the town of Buda, the negotiations which took place with the spouses were primarily verbal, and these negotiations were followed by a written record of the state of affairs and the decisions of the magistrates. The written pleadings clearly reflect the rational

4 Hufton, *Arbeit*, 28–29; Opitz-Belakhal, *Geschlechtergeschichte*, 113; Dionigi Albera writes about the microhistorical scholarship in Italy, contending that it is only through the combination of different sources that we can gain glimpses into the depths of social realities, in particular if we can follow the individual actions of a person for decades. It is only through this method that we can reconstruct strategies, alliances, conflicts, and careers on a local level. Giovanni Levi also warns us that the study of just one household can be misleading, as there was cooperation among individual households. Albera, *Das Haus*, 110–11.

5 Lutz, *Ehepaare*.

arguments of the contemporary jurists. Consequently, we can hardly detect individual voices in these documents.⁶

The story of the second marriage offers a glimpse into the mentality of the era. The relationship between the second husband and his adult son (Eva Elisabetha's stepson) offers an exceptional, individual example of family solidarity, and the conflict between them and the imperial civil servant who sought to destroy them gives another personal element to the family history. Apart from this story, we have to content ourselves with the typical public administration records of the council when we seek to reconstruct the life of Eva Elisabetha and the lives of the members of her extended family. These documents include the schematic records of the registers of the council meetings, files of property and credit issues and cases, and the testament and the documentation of the execution of the will. While these sources cannot replace the missing ego documents and the materials of the family archive, they still offer a more nuanced understanding of the life and eventual social success of an ambitious, urban woman.⁷

Eva Elisabetha, the “Slave” of the First, Elderly Husband

We undoubtedly know more about the life and marriages of Eva Elisabetha than we do about the lives of the other women of the era in Buda, partly because of the scandals which stemmed from her first marriage. The young girl, who was under the guardianship of Georg Freysinger, an imperial saddler, arrived from Vienna to Buda in 1694, where her fiancé was waiting for her. The fiancé, who was decades elder than she, was Johann Georg Unger. Unger had already been married once, and he was an established man in the town. He had accumulated wealth, he was a member of the council of Buda, and he had also been elected mayor of the town. His political enemies argued that Unger, who was a self-made man who had climbed the social ladder to join the ranks of the patricians, was illiterate, uneducated, and came from the lower classes.⁸ However, the charge of illiteracy was unfounded. After his death, an impressive number of files (36) were found in his home which were classified according to subject. The only true statement that we can confirm was that he was indeed a self-made man, since Matthias Fux, his relative, who also lived in Buda and worked as a locksmith, indeed did not belong to the elite of the town. The sources only reveal of his

6 Ibid., 337–38.

7 Warner, *Conclusion*, 234–36, 239.

8 Pásztor, *Buda és Pest*, 149.

first wife that she was a simple woman. The merchant Unger, who was the owner of big houses, vineyards, and two shops, lived at the level of other rich citizens. However, he had no direct successor who would have inherited his fortune.

Unger followed the advice and recommendations of other councilors and friends, who convinced him that he needed a new wife who better suited his acquired social position, for which he had fought for decades. His office as a counselor and a mayor and his financial situation required that he find an educated, wealthy, well-trained woman from a good family. Eva Elisabetha fulfilled all these conditions. Furthermore, she was young enough to give birth to a successor. She brought to the marriage several consumer goods, fine clothes, two valuable golden rings (one of which was decorated with eight diamonds, the other with turquoise), a significant amount of cash (500 forints), and a separate piece of property (1,000 forints). Soon the wife, along with her stepfather, became the husband's main creditor.

The second marriage undoubtedly could have given Unger more social recognition, but in reality, just the opposite happened. The husband and wife, who came from different social milieus and belonged to two different generations, could not live in peace together. The young wife, who had been educated in the contemporary metropolis, Vienna, found herself with a husband who sought strictly to control and “train” his second wife according to his own ideals, referring to the age difference between them as justification and the fact that, as an older person, he had more experience in life. Some contemporary marriage advisors warned the parents precisely on these grounds that they should not choose a husband who was decades older than their daughter. We do now know how the spouses related to each other at the beginning, and we can only guess what kind of emotions or behavior led to the final deterioration of their relationship. The young wife felt that the husband left no space for her. Indeed, she felt that he took revenge on her for any violation of his ideas of what made a good wife by beating her brutally. In a case like this, the woman had the right to turn to her own family for protection and interference or to seek the protection of the body of the magistrates. The family members of the wife, however, could, in principle, only verbally mediate between the spouses; they could not take physical action to stop the beatings unless the life of the woman was in danger, because only the magistrates had the authority to control the “disciplining” power of the head of the family.⁹ The mediation of the family

⁹ Bónis, *Buda és Pest*, 275–76; Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 342.

members was not successful, so the parson was also contacted. He sought to make peace between the spouses for five years.

We know the description of the state of affairs from the petitions which were submitted in the names of the spouses. In these documents, both parties question the suitability of the other as wife or head of the family, according to the contemporary customs. Unger allegedly expected his young wife to assist him in the shop or the management of the family estates. Eva Elisabetha and her family, however, argued that Unger abused his power as the head of the family. According to them, he intervened in things which fell under the competence of the wife. They even protested against Unger's "treatment of his wife as a slave." We can interpret the phrasing that they used ("wie eine Sclavin behandelt") as proof of the exceptional circumstances of the family in Vienna. This assumption is confirmed by the fact that they call the husband a "Tyrannos." On the basis of the targeted, legal reasoning, the family of the second Mrs. Unger relied on the help of an educated, up-to-date jurist who was also familiar with Protestant teachings to write the petition.¹⁰ No one questioned the fact that the husband was the head of the family, but this did not give him the right to abuse his power, prevent her from filling her family role in the household, or forcing her to do "slave work." This behavior ("tyranny") allegedly went beyond the traditional frames, which limited the power of the head of the patriarchal family. Thus, there was grounds for the wife to turn to the body of the magistrates with her complaint.¹¹ In the petitions submitted on behalf of wives, the jurists usually stressed the wives' obedience and subordination to their husbands, which, as women at the time, they were expected to prove: they did not deserve to be punished by their husbands, let alone to be treated brutally. In contrast, the husband mainly tried to prove that his spouse had failed to fulfill her tasks and duties as a wife for a longer period of time, and thus she allegedly deserved corporal punishment. Of the charges a husband could bring against his wife, the most severe was the charge of adultery.¹² Unger was away from Buda at one point for half a year, when he pursued his business elsewhere. He contended

10 The jurist from Vienna was familiar with Luther's reasoning, since the representatives of the wife often depict the husband as a tyrant referring to Luther's argument. Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 176.

11 Dülmen, *Das Haus*, 45; Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 176. It is perhaps purely coincidental, but in the year of the submission of the petition against Unger, Mary Astell's work *Reflections upon Marriage* was published. It met with considerable interest and had many subsequent editions. In this work, Astell asks why, if every human being is born to be free, women are born to be slaves. If there is no need for absolute power in the state, why is a tyrant the head of the family? Bock, *Frauen*, 48.

12 Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 385.

that during this time he suffered a loss of 1,000 forints because of his wife's negligence, as he had entrusted her with the running of the shop. Allegedly, his wife had also started spending time with unreliable characters. She had been dancing into the night and flirting with the shop assistants. Nevertheless, the latter contention was little more than an assumption, as Unger could not produce any concrete evidence of adultery for the magistrates. "She began spending time with unreliable characters" was a formula which was used when there was no concrete proof of adultery. Thus, this allegation made to the authorities without eyewitnesses was merely slander. The elderly merchant from time to time sought to "bring his young wife to her senses" by beating her. For instance, when he found out about the loss that his business had suffered, he beat her with a black-jack. The wife and her family members again accused the husband of brutality in front of various forums. In front of the council, Unger defended himself by stressing that, as her husband, he had the right to beat her if she deserved it. Other husbands who were charged with "excessive disciplining" often used the same reasoning. They argued that their spouses deserved severe punishment because they were too obstinate.¹³ While no one questioned the husband's right to punish his wife, the contemporaries still disapproved of the unnecessary cruelty. There was, however, no precise definition of the border between the "rightful" punishment and brutality. By exploiting this uncertainty, Unger claimed that he, as the head of the family, could rightfully "discipline" his wife, who violated the contemporary norms. According to him, five or six blows with a black-jack constituted "moderate" (*moderirt*) punishment. The family of the wife and the magistrates, however, were of another opinion.¹⁴

In 1700, Eva Elisabetha and her family had had enough of the untenable situation, which was so bad that she had had to flee to Vienna seven times over the course of five years. The honor of a woman who fled to her family's residence was usually not called into question, because when she was treated unfairly, a wife had the right to move back to her parents' or her brother's domicile until the conflict was settled.¹⁵ Unger's repeated accusations of adultery, therefore, were found unconvincing. Eva Elisabetha's relatives, however, eventually succeeded in persuading the magistrates that the elderly husband was mentally ill and needed

13 Ibid. 176–77.

14 On the basis of the investigations of Alexandra Lutz, in Holstein, the courts considered a slap in the face a "moderate" punishment, but a blow to the face or a beating with any object belonged to a different category. Ibid., 337–38.

15 Ibid., 343.

a temporary guardian. Also, a judicial separation was granted. The process by which Unger was made the charge of a guardian is a very interesting story. At the end of 1699, he sat among the members of the council and he voted. One year later, in mid-March, the councilors, referring to a “change of mood and gloomy disposition as far as he [Unger] is concerned,” declared him non compos and appointed curators to administer his property.¹⁶

The granting of the judicial separation was under the authority of the Church, but the clarification of property issues between the spouses fell under the competence of the council. After the Church granted the judicial separation and Unger was put under a guardian, the body of the magistrates ruled that the curators had to pay 300 forints every year (a significant sum of money) to Eva Elisabetha as alimony so that she would be able to pay for accommodation, household costs, clothing, and servants. At the beginning of 1700, Unger was again invited to the council, albeit he could not be in full possession of his property, as the ban on the property would only be lifted under condition that the alimony was paid to his wife.¹⁷ Eva Elisabetha, who had moved to Vienna, however, had received only pennies from him. After a long lawsuit, however, with the help of her stepfather she was eventually triumphant. She received her husband’s vineyards as a leaseholder, and Unger’s real estate was mortgaged in exchange for the significant dowry and the separate property of the wife, which Eva Elisabetha demanded. Thus, her claim had priority over other creditors. The story so far clearly shows that the young Mrs. Unger enjoyed the unflagging support of her prestigious family in Vienna. If a woman had an excessive attachment to the family house, this often led to severe conflicts between the spouses, in particular in the case of a first marriage. Often, both parties in such cases—the wife’s parents and the husband’s parents—expected a young wife to be obedient (and a significant age difference only strengthened these expectations). The relatives of a woman who had a significant dowry often sought to control the situation (and the wealth) by manipulating the young wife.¹⁸ In the case of Eva Elisabetha, though the documents strongly reflect the

16 Géra, Simon, and Oross, *Buda város tanácsülési*, 156. Number of the minute-book (in what follows: Jk.) 480. sz.

17 Géra, Simon, and Oross, *Buda város tanácsülési*, 156, Jk. 505. sz., 814. sz., 815. sz., 902. sz., 1294. sz.

18 The relevant research is not uniform. David Warren Sabean, for instance, found many examples of the manipulation of a young wife by relatives who wanted to control the property, which was given to the husband. This manipulation often led to the deterioration of the marriage. Rainer Beck drew similar conclusions. Alexandra Lutz, however, argued that the wife’s family intervened on an emotional basis. In

targeted strategy and reasoning of the jurists involved, the Unger-case¹⁹ reveals very strong emotions and an intensifying conflict, which had a deep impact on the lives of the spouses. The Church and the magistrates, however, did not accept the emotional reasoning, but some of the sources reveal indirect signs of the intensity of the strife between the spouses, for instance the husbands increasing aggressiveness.²⁰ The wife and her family took revenge in a similar vein. They did not content themselves with the granting of the judicial separation. Rather, they sought to humiliate Unger publicly in the town and place him under the control of a guardian, even if this meant they had to spend even more money on the lawsuit.

Johann Georg Unger died in 1705 without a direct successor. The judicial separation enabled the widow to inherit the property if there were no other relatives. The brothers of the merchant or the locksmith Fux, who lived in the town, could attack the widow's claim to the bequest, but they had little hope against the powerful Wittmann-family, who had excellent contacts in Vienna, so the parties reached a peaceful agreement. The widow, who was still young, returned to Buda from Vienna and became a wealthy woman. She inherited an estimated 10,500 forints. However, her ex-husband also left her a significant debt of 8,759 forints, but Eva Elisabetha was the main beneficiary on various rights as well (dowry, the separate property of the wife, alimony, a loan, in total 6,200 forints). After this money was deducted from the estate, the widow and the two Unger-brothers, who lived far from Buda, shared a further 1,800 forints. Until the brothers arrived in Buda, the councilors delegated Fux, Unger's relative and a reliable citizen, to help the widow administer the heritage. However, Eva Elisabetha had changed a lot over the course of the decade which has elapsed since she had first arrived at Buda. She was no longer an inexperienced young woman who could be treated as a "slave," and she did not let the administration of the property out of her hand. Her husband's business had been running at a loss for a long time, and had she not acted with resolve and determination, the creditors would have taken possession of a large part of the bequest. Eva Elisabetha must have been a good businesswoman, because not only was she able to maintain her claim to her ex-husband's estate, she was also able to make his business profitable again. The renting of the flats brought in a significant

most cases, we can observe conflicts between the mother-in-law, who wants a say in everything, and the husband, who is jealous of her influence over his wife. Sabean, *Property*, 134; Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 339–47, 351.

19 For details see Géra, "Kőhalomból", 256–59.

20 Lutz, *Ehepaare*, 190, 192, 196–203.

income, especially the renting of the house in the castle (4,540 forints). In the impressive building where Unger and later his widow lived, only wealthy residents who were respected members of the community could afford to pay the rent, for instance, the two military constables and a bath owner from Vác, while the shop, which was located in the basement, was rented by the rich tanner from Pest, Herüsch. There were also tenants in the house called Zöld Szőlőfürt (Green Bunch of Grapes, 3,022 forints) in the Víziváros district, but the so-called lower house also served as a manorial building, where the most valuable wine-press of the era (100 forints) was stored. This was badly needed, because Unger's vineyards, which covered 30 quarters (Székesfehérvári-hegy, Pál-völgy), constituted the largest civic vineyard estate in the town. To get an impression of its size, one need merely consider the following numbers: 78 day-laborers gathered the harvest in the abovementioned year, 22 people carried the butts and treaded on the grapes, and the operation of the wine-press lasted 14 days. In 1705, the people who took the inventory estimated the value of the vineyards to be 1,630 forints.²¹ During the 1703–1711 War of Independence led by Ferenc Rákóczi against the Habsburgs, thanks to the shortage of money, the wine from Buda, which was also popular abroad, was also accepted as means of payment. Thus, while the value of other pieces of real estate decreased, that of the vineyards went up. Eva Elisabetha gave up trading and rented out both of the shops which had belonged to her ex-husband.

The widowed Eva Elisabetha managed the indebted property well, which clearly throws into question the contentions made by her late husband, according to whom she had refused to share the tasks of the household and the business, as one would expect of a good wife.²² True, she may not have been a good trader, but this is no wonder, as the merchants of Italian origin in Buda all married the daughters of other Italian merchants, who were brought up to become the wives of traders. Eva Elisabetha, who was given a Latinist education, was presumably brought up to be the wife of a civil servant. Consequently, she was familiar with the world of offices. She knew how to manage the real estate and she had a solid knowledge of housekeeping, which was expected of a wife of her social standing

21 The other large wine-press belonged to the Cettó family and was worth 90 forints. BFL, Buda Város Tanácsának iratai. Hagyatéki leltárak (= IV.1002.z.). When Eva Elisabetha died, 710 akó (1 akó is about 12 gallons) wine was found in her cellars. BFL IV.1002.z. Nr. 716.

22 Another archival source depicts the parallel case of another contemporary councilor, Tobias von Krempel, and his wife, which offers further documentation of the judicial separation. Mrs. Krempel accused her husband of brutality, while the latter accused her of neglecting her household duties and of having committed adultery.

The Honor of the Stepson

Eva Elisabetha did not remain single for long, because the sources from 1706 refer to her as Mrs. Dietz. As a wealthy and childless widow, she may well have had many suitors. She was about 30 years old at that time, so she could still hope to give birth to children, and her wealth enabled her to choose a husband which suited her tastes. Even the Fathers of the Church, who considered the isolated, pious life as the most desirable for widows, were more lenient with childless women who could still bear children.²³ Instead of a patrician, Eva Elisabetha chose Johann Adam Dietz as her next husband, who was an imperial water engineer (*kay. cameral Landt undt Wasseringeneur*). Dietz, who had a higher social standing than the average citizen, was considered a renowned expert, as he had led the water regulation works of the Danube River at Nußdorf, next to Vienna. He was invited to Buda with the task of restoring the waterworks which had been used in the Turkish times but which were destroyed during the siege of the city, but the position also entailed work on the great fortresses of Buda, Esztergom, Székesfehérvár, and the smaller fortresses in their neighborhood.²⁴ Dietz is one of the few contemporaries about whom we have relatively detailed personal information. At the time of his marriage, he must have been at least middle-aged, because he was a father of an adult man who was loved by many women for his good looks and charm, which he probably inherited from his father. With his annual salary of 1,200 forints, Dietz would have become the best-paid employee of the Treasury of Buda by far had he received this money. However, between 1705 and 1708, he did not receive his salary, and in addition to his former claims, the Treasury owed him 4,917 forints, which was the price of a large house in the castle. This was not exceptional, as during the War of Independence, the Treasury was indebted to all of its employees because of the fiscal problems faced by the higher authorities. However, the office owed Dietz the highest sum because in the reasoning of the officials, Dietz did not need to pay accommodation costs as he could peacefully stay at the Bauhof. Further, they argued that the water works, which had been transferred under the authority of the body of the magistrates, was not completed. Dietz met Eva Elisabetha because he resided in the castle as her tenant, since he preferred

23 Ingendahl, *Witwen*, 34; Westphal, Schmidt-Voges, and Baumann, *Venus und Vulcanus*, 169.

24 The invitation of Dietz was decided in 1690, after the death of the sinker of Buda, Virgilius Lindner. Dietz had already seen the waterworks of Buda, whose restoration he had to finish. ÖStA FHKA AHK HFU 03.01.1690 Karton 766 fol. 11–12.

to stay in the dwelling rented out by her to living in the unfriendly storehouse of building materials and the accompanying buildings. Because his salary was withheld, he ended up owing Eva Elisabetha a significant amount of money in rent and also debts from other loans. He eventually followed the example set by other unmarried men who got into debt:²⁵ he married his creditor, the widowed Mrs. Unger.²⁶

We know little of the personal relationship between Dietz and his wife. Eva Elisabetha was busy managing the real estate that she had inherited from her first husband. Dietz had no say in these matters, because as far as the authorities were concerned, his wife had sole say in the management of the property she had inherited from her first husband. They had one child, named Regina, who lived to see adulthood. Their domestic lives, however, were disturbed by Dietz's son, who lived in the common household. Because of his son, Dietz got into a severe conflict with Matthias Lampert Kollbacher, a high-standing officer of the Treasury, who was known for his violent nature and great wealth. Kollbacher accused Dietz's son of seducing his wife. Furthermore, he claimed that the young Dietz was the real father of his wife's children.²⁷ This charge stigmatized a young, unmarried man for life in an age when honor was considered an individual's most important source of social capital. If he failed to clear himself of the charge, he could not count on an office according to his social standing or an advantageous marriage.²⁸ The conflict intensified when the wife, whom Kollbacher called "a beast who needs a lashing," escaped with her valuables to the household of the Dietz family. In 1708, Kollbacher seized their letters, which led to the first open confrontation with Dietz in Vienna. Over the course of

25 See, for instance, Ulrich Benedikt Maylin, a notary in Buda, who married, as a sick and elderly man after a long widowhood, in order to give a dowry to his daughters. Another case is that of Johann Eckher, a bath councilor in Buda, who developed Császárfürdő (Imperial Bath) from the property of his third wife in the critical years of the War of Independence. Maylin had adult daughters, while Eckher had two sons from his previous marriages, and Maylin did not make a secret of the fact that he hoped to solve his financial problems through his second, late marriage. Géra, "Kőhalomból," 254–55, 267–68.

26 ÖStA FHKA AHK HFU 08.01.1709 [r. Nr. 452] Karton 1017 fol. 88.v.; 19.08.1709 [r. Nr. 454] Karton 1023 fol. 202–27.

27 According to our present knowledge, Dietz's letter is the only source from which we know that Kollbacher remarried after the death of his (first or second) wife in 1702. Dezső Dümmerth, who documented the years spent by the Kollbacher family in Pest, mentions seven children, the youngest of which was born in 1702. The reason for the lack of data lies in the fact that Kollbacher, who fought with the council in Pest for ten years and did not hesitate to put up armed resistance, moved to Buda at the time of the conflict with Dietz. Dümmerth, *Pest város*, 229–30.

28 In the German literature, Early Modern Society, which was based on the honor of the individual, is also referred to as *Ehrgesellschaft*. Schmidt-Voges, *Das Haus*, 11.

the next year, Kollbacher made a scene over his allegations against the younger Dietz almost every day in Buda. Kollbacher did not content himself with angry accusations and the charge of dishonesty. He also used his fists to fight for what he perceived as his rights, a tendency which the magistrates of Buda had already had occasion to observe. He sent a message with a priest to the Dietz family claiming that he would “destroy them at any price.” He allegedly added that he would get someone to cut off the older Dietz’s legs, since the older Dietz had defended his son, and he would even get some soldiers who would beat the father and son to death. To stress his message, Kollbacher threatened Dietz with a pistol on the street in front of passersby by making a “knightly gesture.” The most severe assault occurred on a Sunday after mass in the Church of the Virgin Mary. Kollbacher and his companions attacked the young Dietz with swords and pressed him against the wall, forcing him to sit on the ground.²⁹ The older Dietz, who feared for his life and his son’s life, turned to the Treasury for protection, and in his petition he copied abstracts from his own letters and the letters of his enemy. Dietz denied the allegations Kollbacher had made against his son in the name of his family, and he protested against Kollbacher’s attempt to get rid of his wife and their small children by accusing the young Dietz of having seduced her. Furthermore, according to Dietz, Kollbacher also completely disregarded the interests of his children. Dietz presented himself, in contrast, as a family-loving man and as someone who “protects his own honor and the honor of his family until the last drop of his blood.”³⁰ He wanted to set the record straight by calling witnesses from the lay community and clergymen, and he stressed that he would show that he was an honest man who stood as a warrant for his son. One might wonder why it was the older Dietz who turned to the authorities for help and not his adult son. At the time, coming of age meant that in criminal cases a young man was responsible for his actions, and he was also in charge of his own property if he had inherited something from his family. At the same time, he had no say in decisions concerning his father’s affairs. However, young men were only

29 Kollbacher’s threats had to be taken seriously, because it was well known that in 1699, in the company of some imperial commissariat officers, he attacked the mayor and the notary, who were coming from mass. The two men were brutally beaten. Dümmerth, *Pest város*, 229.

30 The original text: “Er seine Ehefrau mit vielen unerzogenen Kindern per force, zwar durch meinen Sohn zu einer S. V. Huren declariren will, wan dan die Eltern in ihren Kindern leben sollen, er aber solches nicht achtet, so bin ich aber eines anderen seins, mein und der Meinigen Ehre biß auf den letzten bluthstropfen zu defendiren.”

considered to have reached full maturity when they were married.³¹ The charge of dishonesty against the younger Dietz, who lived in his father's household, endangered the honor of the whole family, so the head of the family (in this case, the older Dietz) represented his son in front of the authorities. Kollbacher was well aware of this, and so he lawfully called the engineer to account for his son's deeds.³² We do not know the outcome of the story, and the sources do not indicate whether an impeachment followed the conflict. Whatever the case, the Treasury and the office holders in Buda soon found themselves expressing their sorrow at the sudden death of the older Dietz.

The sources reveal very little about Eva Elisabetha's attitude towards her stepson and the conflict in which he found himself embroiled. It is worth noting, however, that in 1711, in a dispute between the dismissed officers of the Treasury and the individuals who had been reemployed by the Hungarian Treasury—a dispute which grew increasingly intense and led to outbreaks of physical violence—she supported Kollbacher, who not much earlier had been threatening to have her husband and stepson killed. An eyewitness stressed that she was passionate in her defense of Kollbacher and had conducted herself with an “indescribable, devilish fury” (*mit einer unbeschreiblicher gleichsamb böllen Furie*). The sources, however, do not reveal anything about her possible motives.³³ The contemporary authors of the guides to proper conduct apparently did not exert much influence on her, because they praised moderate behavior as a female virtue and they warned women against intervening in the affairs of men, especially in the case of official matters. However, some women of higher standing could still feel entitled to voice their opinions, even if they were not encouraged to do so. In Buda, Eva Elisabetha was not the only woman who violated social norms and meddled in disputes among men. Other women of a moderately prominent social standing opposed the measures taken by the office holders of the town or the magistrates. Even the parson's inadequate knowledge of German became a source of complaint. The eyewitness cited above may have been surprised by the widowed Mrs. Dietz's conduct for two reasons. First, Eva Elisabetha had defended the most powerful enemy of her late husband and stepson. Second, the wives of imperial officers were not expected to participate

31 Hufton, *Arbeit*, 27–29; Burghartz, *Zeiten der Reinheit*, 55, 71; Wunder: “*Er ist die Sonn*,” 45; Schmözl-Häberlein, *Kleinstadtgesellschaft(en)*, 109.

32 Dülmen, *Das Haus*, 159; Schlinker: *Das Haus*, 692, 694.

33 ÖStA FHKA AHK HFU 15.01.1712 [r. Nr. 465] Karton 1045 fol. 241–56.

in such scenes. They were not expected to “lower themselves” to the level of the average women of the town.³⁴

After the death of Johann Adam Dietz, Eva Elisabetha started to collect her husband’s claims because Dietz’s retained salary in the Buda years amounted to 6,900 forints, and the Treasury also owed him a significant sum, 2,572 forints for his work on the regulation of the Danube River at Nußdorf. The Treasury disapproved of the demanding tone of her letter, which did not suit a widow, and the authorities also wondered why it was not Dietz’s son who was making the claims, as he was in charge of the estate. The office holders threatened Eva Elisabetha, telling her that if she failed to submit the final accounts of the work her late husband had done, she wouldn’t get a penny and, indeed, she would be summoned to court. Eva Elisabetha, however, was not intimidated because her second petition was of a similar tone, and she strongly disapproved of the rejection of her claim and the setting of conditions. She contended that she was being put into an impossible situation because, for lack of cash, she could not pay the arrears of the salary of the clerk of her late husband, and the clerk refused to complete the accounts until he received his payment. The last statement clearly shows that there was not a good relationship between the younger Dietz and his stepmother, because otherwise he would have helped her or at least would have written a letter of support to the authorities. The house in Buda and the real estate constituted the separate property of the wife, so the young Dietz could not have lived in the house of his stepmother without her consent. After he received his part of his father’s estate, Eva Elisabetha had no other obligations to him. Even according to custom, he was supposed to learn a profession or find a job. We can conclude that there was some kind of conflict between the stepmother and the stepson because the young Dietz disappeared from the sources and there is no evidence that he kept maintained any relationship with his half-sister, Regina. His disappearance may well have been explained by the fact that he also became an imperial officer like his father because the officers of the emperor were usually sent to distant places.³⁵

34 If a burgher woman violated the above norms, her conduct usually had no consequences because the contemporary culture of disputes allowed for a louder voice and more vehemence, even for women. Castan, *Straffällige Frauen*, 494–95, 498–99. In the English literature, Early Modern Society is also called “face to face society” because of the indirectness, openness, and often brutality of the verbal interactions. Haldemann, *Das gerügte Haus*, 446.

35 ÖStA FHKA AHK HFU 09.01.1713 [r. Nr. 472] Karton 1059 fol. 110–111.; 29.05.1713 [r. Nr. 474] Karton 1063 fol. 495–504.; 03.09.1715 [r. Nr. 488] Karton 1097 fol. 49–50.; 04.05.1718 [r. Nr. 507] Karton 1135 fol. 45–48; It is also possible that Kollbacher carried out his threat and the young Dietz suffered an

Half-Siblings and Inheritance in the Third Family

Eva Elisabetha's third marriage enabled her to further increase her social prestige and reach the top of her career. The daughter of a burgher could not hope for a more prestigious husband than an imperial office holder or an officer of a noble origin. In 1716, the woman sold the shop in Víziváros, which she had inherited from Unger. She was still referred to in the documents as Dietz's widow, but in 1718, the documents began to refer to her as the wife of Johann Adam von Lichtenau(er), the imperial commissariat chief director of Érsekújvár.³⁶ The family property came from Eva Elisabetha's previous marriages, and it was well known in the town that the business issues fell under her competence. If her interests demanded, she referred to the absence of her husband in order to gain more time, but this was not the experience of contemporaries.³⁷ Eva Elisabetha, who was in her early 40s at the time of the third marriage, gave birth to at least two children to her third husband, Christian and Franz Joseph. At the time of the fire of 1723, the couple, together with the two children and Regina, the minor daughter from the second marriage, lived in the house, which Eva Elisabetha had inherited from Unger, in the neighborhood of the town hall (today Tárnok Street 26). The house burned down, together with the furnishings.³⁸

Eva Elisabetha, who at some point also lost her third husband, lived in the Unger house until her death in 1752 (its value was 5,359 at that time). She presumably managed the real estate which she had inherited from Unger well, and she even bought a manor below Bécsi kapu in spite of the fire, because she left a significant inheritance to her children, 3,000 forints. Her case offers at least

accident and died like his father. Further research is rendered difficult by the fact that the younger Dietz's father's letters and the letters of the Treasury are the only sources we have on him, because he did not belong under the jurisdiction of the town. Furthermore, the sources do not mention his first name, and the family name was rather common, so it is almost impossible to find out what happened to him if he managed to leave Buda alive.

36 The name of the new husband appears in two different forms in the sources. The form Lichtenau is more frequent, but the signature of the head of the family reads Lichtenauer, while his wife signed as Lichtenau. BFL Buda Város Törvényszékének iratai. Törvényszéki iratok. (= IV.1014.b) Lichtenauerné adósságügye (1718), Buda Város Tanácsának iratai. Végrendeletek. (=IV.1002.y.) A I. 1380.; Buda Város Tanácsának iratai. Vegyes iratok. (=IV.1002.uu.) A Nr. 631., Nr. 68.; The marriage contract dates from 1717. Simon, *Az 1723-as*, 514.

37 "[...] dan beruff sich auch auff die abwesenheit ihres H. mit welchen wir doch nichts zu thun." One of Unger's former creditors wanted to get money that he had lent to Unger 26 years earlier back. The creditor saw through Eva Elisabetha's tactic, who eventually presented counter-demands. The council declared the debt void. BFL IV.1002.uu. Nr. 68.

38 Simon, *Az 1723-as*, 491.

one example of the important role a woman could play in the transmission of property. According to the will of the elderly Mrs. Lichtenau, she named Regina Dietz, her daughter from the second marriage, as her heir general because she brought the largest part of the family property into the third marriage, as she had made it already clear in the marriage contract, where the spouses had agreed on this matter. This was not unusual, because in case of half-sisters or brothers, it was not the sex of the child that mattered, but rather what their parents had brought into the marriage and what constituted common property. Consequently, there could be significant differences in the heritage of the siblings. The parent who made the last will could only ask the children who received a larger share of the inheritance to be fair and support their poorer siblings.

Regina Dietz, who was more than 40 years old at the time, lived as a single woman (*mein villgeliebte Maimb*) in her mother's household. This was exceptional. In her will, Eva Elisabetha mentioned only the names of the women who received larger shares of the inheritance. The male members of her household received only moderate sums, as was the custom. The mother and her unmarried daughter were assisted by a female cook, a kitchen maid, the burgher wife of a local iron merchant, and the bath attendant Kahr, who acted as a nurse to the elderly and sick woman, who was in her 80s, but she did not forget to mention other female members of her household. The largest share of the inheritance, which amounted to a proper dowry (100 forints), was given to a young girl who was called her foster-daughter.³⁹ Eva Elisabetha's funeral was spectacular, and it harmonized well with the lifestyle she had led. In accordance with her request, she was buried next to her third husband, at the Jesuits.

However, Eva Elisabetha's wishes were not all respected, because the children (Regina Dietz, more precisely her half-brothers, Christian von Lichtenau, who lived in Trencsén, and Franz Joseph von Lichtenauer, who served as an imperial postmaster and who represented Regina Dietz in front of the authorities) allegedly complained of "the injustice of their mother," and they attacked the will in front of the magistrates.⁴⁰ As I argued above, Eva Elisabetha made the

39 Under the term *Erziehungskind/Ziebkind*, the contemporaries meant the children of lower social standing who lived in the household of the testator. These children usually belonged to the servants, and they were often orphans or semi-orphans whom the employer liked and therefore helped with the donation of a smaller dowry. Géra, "Kőhalomból," 392–93.

40 Eva Elisabetha did not mention her adult sons in her will. They were presumably mentioned in the common will of her late, third husband, which was sent to the Court War Council of Vienna (and which was destroyed during the discarding of the documents in the second half of the eighteenth century). The only male relative mentioned in her will was a younger man from the Wittmann family, who lived in Buda

will in favor of her daughter according to the prevailing custom at the time, and as the marriage contract shows, she did so with the consent of her third husband. The common will of the spouses also confirms that the husband was well aware of the fact that since he had brought much less to the marriage than his wife, their common children would get less than their sister, who was born from the wealthier Dietz. The conduct of the children was, however, unusual. We can even argue that the change of the will was the “price” of the love of the brothers. Regina, who had no male family members in the neighborhood, could not stay alone in the house in Buda as an unmarried woman, because the whole estate was sold and she presumably moved to a domicile owned by one of her brothers, for which she presumably also had to give something in exchange. We do not know why Regina remained unmarried in spite of her significant dowry. We may assume that something was wrong with her and therefore she had no suitors even after her mother’s death. We have namely no other explanation for the fact that the magistrates approved of the change of the lawful will and the content of the marriage contract. Furthermore, Regina Dietz was undoubtedly in a more difficult social situation than her younger step-brothers, who as imperial office holders had much more valuable networks than an unmarried woman. It is thus no wonder that the men eventually received a larger share of the property than what had been left to them in the will.⁴¹

Imperiosa Mulier: Conclusion

The three marriages and subsequent blended families of Eva Elisabetha offer a good example in support of the notion that the practice of family life could occasionally be rather different from the image of the patriarchal family found in the normative literature. As a 17-year-old maid, she had little say in the choice of her first husband, and as an obedient girl, she accepted the decision made by her mother and her stepfather. However, she apparently selected her two other husbands deliberately and strategically, because with every marriage, she managed to climb higher and higher up the social ladder of the contemporary urban society until she reached the top. Urban public opinion was usually interested in other people’s marriages, especially the female audience. The small booklets which described marital relationships and the popular pieces of *Hausvaterliteratur*

for a while with the mother and daughter. Eva Elisabetha was very sick when she made her will on April 13, 1751. The document was read publicly on January 31, 1752. BFL IV.1002.y. A I. Nr. 1380.

41 BFL IV.1002.z. A Nr. 1482., Nr. 1519., Nr. 716. (Lichtenauné); Bónis: *Buda és Pest*, 275–79, 287.

were mainly read by the educated public. The larger illiterate population was informed of the principles formulated in these booklets from the sermons delivered by the parson. The mostly illiterate crowd preferred the simpler and more entertaining genres if they discussed relationships between men and women. It is not accidental that the plays and farces which dramatized marital conflicts attracted wide audiences. A favorite topic of theater plays, comedies presented at fairs, and printed pamphlets was the “fight for who is wearing the trousers” (*Kampfes um die Hosen*), a subject of which audiences never seemed to tire.⁴² The main actors were mostly urban, wealthy merchants or master craftsmen and their spouses, who mutually tried to take over control of the house. The reader or the audience laughed at the women, who wore the trousers and beat up their husbands, or the men, who wore bonnets and nursed their babies. The authors, who sought more balanced portrayals, would also depict the woman in a subordinate situation (e.g. as a slave) next to the images of the subordinated men.⁴³ Eva Elisabetha was a woman who was gossiped about, but she was also widely recognized, and many women may well have been envious of her, because she won the fight for the trousers. In the eyes of men, she was presumably seen as an *imperiosa mulier*, thus, a woman whom they surely did not want as a wife. However, Eva Elisabetha could never have won this fight without the support of the family into which she was born. Her relatives lived in Vienna, and they immediately ran to help her when she needed money, a lawyer, or a network of influential figures. Eva Elisabetha had an intense relationship with her Vienna relatives for six decades. It is characteristic that in her last years, when she was in her 80s, she and her unmarried daughter, who was in her 40s, were

42 The other variant, “the trousers or the apron” (*Hose oder Schürze*), comes from another influential author of the anti-marriage literature, the Magdeburg priest Johannes Sommer. His first work was published in 1608 under the title *Ethographia Mundi*. According to his next work, the second part of the “true and believable description of the contemporary world” was given the title “Malus mulier.” Two victims of the cruel women, two husbands, who were chased out of their homes. They describe how domestic power was taken from them by their wives. The husbands lament the arrogance of the women (*superbia*), which they explain through their nobler origin: while man was created out of mud, outside of the Garden of Eden, woman was created in Eden, from the rib of man. The pamphlet became so successful that Sommer expanded the second edition with a further anti-woman part at the request of the publisher. *Imperiosus [?] Mulier das ist / das Regiersüchtige Weib. Der alte und lengwirige Streit und Krieg zwischen deß Mannes Hosen und der Frauen Schürze*. The pamphlet, which interpreted marriage as a lasting, domestic war, went through several editions. According to the male discourse, it contained obscene elements and rough jokes. Schilling, *Hose oder Schürze*, 137–40, 144; Westphal, Schmidt-Voges, and Baumann, *Venus und Vulcanus*, 110–16.

43 Wunder, “*Er ist die Sonn*,” 104–5, 111; Borin, *Frauenbilder*, 241–43; Westphal, Schmidt-Voges, and Baumann, *Venus und Vulcanus*, 111–15.

assisted not by the sons from the third marriage but by a nephew who traveled from Vienna to Buda. The case of the second husband, Dietz, and his adult son from his first marriage also testifies to similarly strong family ties. Allegations concerning the abduction and seduction of the wife of another man rendered the young Dietz an adulterer, which was punished by the Church, and the lay authorities also did not disregard the accusations. The husband who contended he had been cuckolded did everything to render the case even more severe, and his conduct showed that he had accused his wife of adultery already before the abduction. The elder Dietz, however, stood by his son in spite of the fact that he very well knew the consequences of abduction, and it would have been easier for him to disown his child. However, he refused to take the easier path, and as a father, he fought with a powerful enemy until “the last drop of his blood” by endangering his own reputation and even his own life.

The case of Eva Elisabetha is a good example which shows that the relationship of a woman to her natal family remained very important even after she had married. After the second marriage, when her husband died, since she as a stepmother had no obligations towards her adult stepson, the relationship between stepmother and stepson did not continue. There is also no sign that the stepson would have been interested in his stepsister, who must have been four or five years old at the time of the death of their father. Even though boys and girls inherited equally, there could be significant differences of wealth between half-brothers and half-sisters, since they inherited the property of their biological parents, which, as we have seen, could easily lead to conflicts. In our case, the power and prestige of the sons born to Eva Elisabetha’s third marriage overrode the mother’s lawful will, whose beneficiary was an unmarried woman, their older half-sister.

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Family Formation, Ethnicity, Divorce, and Marriage Law: Jewish Divorces in Hungary, 1786–1914*

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The role of broken marriages in the formation of “modern” patchwork families is well known, but if one tries to examine its historical roots, one encounters the problem of defining divorce and—despite the expansion of civil law—the differences in perceptions of divorce according to Church denominations. This study aims to consider the above mentioned difficulties in light of the development of Hungarian marriage law and the problem of Jewish divorces.

Keywords: juridical centralization, denominational and state law, official and communal law, Jewish marriages and divorces, use of courts, Jewish women and appropriation of the law, urbanization, social integration, stepfamilies

Until the nineteenth century, the formation of stepfamilies was determined in large part by mortality, more specifically by the high mortality rates of spouses. As long as the institution of marriage remained solid in Western societies (i.e. the bond of marriage was practically unbreakable and extramarital affairs and partnerships were punished with various sanctions), patchwork families came into being as widowed men and women entered into new marriages. Nineteenth-century changes were brought about by higher life expectancies, the crisis of the institution of marriage, the questioning of the indissolubility of the marriage tie, and the introduction and extension of the institution of divorce. These factors, which transformed the constraints of family life, appeared simultaneously, and Lawrence Stone also interconnected the two processes:

In practice, the probability of a durable marriage was low, since it was likely to be broken before very long by the death of the husband or the wife. Indeed, it looks very much as if modern divorce is little more than a functional substitute for death. The decline of the adult mortality rate after the late eighteenth century, by prolonging the expected duration

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of marriage to unprecedented lengths, eventually forced Western society to adopt the institutional escape-hatch of divorce.¹

Stone's statements have frequently been criticized since then, but divorce undeniably took over the "function" of spousal death, and ever since, remarriages following divorce became the most important routes of making stepfamilies.

In light of all this, it seems rather surprising that the connection between the formation of stepfamilies and the spread of divorces has only rarely caught the attention of historians. The number of studies focusing on remarriages between divorcees is limited, and even fewer studies have addressed the fates of divorced husbands and wives or the fates of children from broken and newly-contracted marriages.² This gap in the historiography becomes less surprising, however, if one considers how difficult it is to follow the break-up of marriages in the period.

The difficulties mostly stem from the fact that divorce is more difficult to measure and study than death. While the latter is of biological nature, completed and absolute, and leaves an ineffaceable sign in the life of a family, divorce—in a narrow sense—is a legal act which gained its meaning and importance over the course of a long period of time. For most of the nineteenth century, in the overwhelming majority of the countries of Western Europe, it was exceptional for a judge to break the bond of marriage (and often it was not legally possible), so contemporaries mostly associated "divorce" with self-divorce (meaning separation in practice as the result of mutual agreement on the part of the spouses), separation, and abandonment, which of course made legal remarriage impossible. These spontaneous ways of ending marriages, unlike legal divorces, left hardly any written traces, so there is no way to determine how many marriages were broken up by spouses who chose one of these avenues or what proportion of marriages ended in one of these ways, and it is even more difficult to study how many of these "divorced" persons founded new families or fathered or mothered further children.³ Breaking the bond of marriage in court became a widely accepted social practice only in the twentieth century. In other words, only since the beginning of the twentieth century have significant numbers of

1 Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage*, 55–56.

2 Vikström, Poppel, and Bart, "New Light on the Divorce Transition," 114–15 emphasize this as a future research direction in the study of the history of divorce, and they call for study of the consequences of divorce, noting the underrepresented state of the field. For a pioneering essay on remarriage in the capital of the Netherlands, The Hague, see Poppel, "Nineteenth-Century Remarriage Patterns in the Netherlands," 343–83.

3 Roderick Phillips discusses the unknown rate and types of separation. Phillips, *Putting asunder*, 314–60.

couples sought to resolve their marital conflicts with legal tools and also founded lawful new families by remarriage.

One would be wrong however to assume that lawful divorce meant the same things in different periods, as the definition of “lawful” was disputed even in the nineteenth century. Nowadays, it is clear that the state is the agent which defines the legal process and the reasoning that facilitates the break-up of marriages in court. Two centuries earlier, however, even if in many Western countries state power had already endorsed its claim to regulate divorce, because of the spiritual nature of the institution, the Church and various religious communities also played an important part, neither necessarily supporting or directly hindering the government in its efforts to assert its authority in this sphere of life. In places where the state was centralized enough to pass civil law codes or divorce laws which extended to all citizens and thus could enforce its authority through the civil courts, the transition took less time and was fraught with fewer ambiguities, in contrast with regions in which less powerful states exerted little or no influence on marital law and thus the institution of marriage retained its religious profile, which meant that the conditions and practices of divorce also remained different.

Throughout the nineteenth century, in territories in the eastern half of the continent, such as Hungary (which until 1867 was part of the Habsburg Empire and from 1867 the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy), the regulation of divorce was not unified. This was in part a consequence of the fact that most Eastern European nations lived under foreign powers and thus insisted on their traditions and religious confessions as a means of promoting political unity and nation building. In the territory referred to as the “countries of the Hungarian crown,” the minority communities living alongside the Hungarians (Croats, Romanians, Slovaks, Germans, Ruthenians, Serbs, and Jews) together formed the absolute majority. The distribution of minorities was further colored by the distribution of faiths. Though the majority of the population belonged to the dominant Roman Catholic denomination, the proportion of Protestants (Calvinists, Lutherans, and Unitarians), Orthodox, Greek Catholics, and Jews remained significant. The different denominations, which often included different ethnic groups even within the same confession, had different attitudes to the question of making and breaking-up marriages and to the ways of adjudicating divorces. Finally, the growing number of religiously mixed marriages further complicated the application of different church regulations. The emerging Hungarian state therefore aimed to implement uniform regulation. It managed to extend its control over marital affairs at the end of the nineteenth century, when a

civil marriage law was passed in 1894 and put in effect at the beginning of the following year. This law created the legal framework for secular marriage, which thus was established in Hungary much later than it was in Western Europe.⁴

This essay studies the legal conditions that facilitated the formation of stepfamilies following divorce in Hungary in the long nineteenth century. The belated development of secular marital law and its judicial procedure and the use of secular courts in this multiethnic and multi-religious environment will only be studied in the Jewish religious community. This choice is due to the fact that this religious community was most deeply affected by the spread of state control over marriages, so the process in the case of Jewish marriages can be more easily grasped with regards to underlying motivations and aims, constraints, possibilities, and consequences. This example will also shed light on some of the problems which arise when historians use sources produced by courts and state offices: divorce files, marriage and birth certificates, census data, and religious and demographic statistics can be better evaluated in the context of the prevalence, formation, and dynamics of stepfamilies created by divorces and remarriages.

Until the end of the eighteenth century, Jews in Central Europe lived for the most part on the peripheries of Christian societies. Thus, they were more drastically affected by the endeavors to centralize the judicial branches of governments and tear down the legal barriers between estates and other social (ethnic, religious) groups. While legislators accepted all Christian definitions of marriage and, in the process of separating couples, tried to tolerate a wide array of religious beliefs, in the case of making and ending Jewish marriages, they had very superficial knowledge of religious regulations, and even if they were ready to look into them in more depth, they were not able or willing to heed them and act accordingly. The ways to form and dissolve Jewish marriages were determined by the *halacha*, which has been a foundation of Jewish communal identity for centuries and was based on the Talmudic tradition of the Torah, the commentaries in which included both authoritative and individual decisions. Divorce took place by the writ of divorce (*get*), which was handed to the wife by the husband with the assistance of the rabbis and rabbinic court (*beth din*).

4 1894: Statute XXXI. *Magyar Törvénytár, 1894–1895. évi törvények*, 174–93. The best survey of the evolution of matrimonial law in Hungary is the general part of the ministerial justification of the proposed law: *Az 1892. évi február hó 18-ára hirdetett Országgyűlés Főrendi Házának irományai*, 201–64. With respect to birth of the Hungarian family law: Loutfi, “Legal Ambiguity and the ‘European Norm,’” 507–21.

This was a highly formal religious ritual and a private legal act.⁵ In the nineteenth century, due to the differences between civil and religious regulations in this field and their temporary balance, a kind of legal dualism developed, with secular and religious marriage laws and practices coexisting. In addition to the legal centralization pushed by the state, the extension of civil marital law also facilitated Jewish emancipation and their social integration on national scales, a process, however, which met with resistance on both sides, as it was laden with contradictions and interruptions.

Some better-known examples offer a grasp of the complexities of this long *durée* process. In France, it had already been proposed in the second half of the eighteenth century that Jewish marital affairs be handled by civil courts. Legislation was finally passed by the French National Assembly, which emancipated the Sefards and Ashkenazi Jews in 1790–1791 and then passed the regulation of divorce in 1792. The implementation of the French divorce act among Jews, however, may have remained ambivalent, as in 1807 the Jewish High Court (*Grand Sanhedrin*) convened by Napoleon had to confirm that civil marital law had priority over denominational ones.⁶ In Prussia, two decades the civil law code was passed in 1794, it had to be stated that the Jewish ritual writ of divorce (*get*) was not a constituent part of the legal ending of a marriage, and divorce could be adjudicated solely before civil courts which applies civil law and did not take Jewish dogmas into consideration.⁷ In the first half of the nineteenth century, the Rabbinic Court of London had the right to judge divorce cases of the whole Jewish community living in the British Empire, while Christian citizens could only divorce under special circumstances according to the specific acts of parliament. This practice continued even after the Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act took effect in 1857, until the Registrar-General finally annulled ritual divorces in 1866.⁸ Finally, in some regions, the state could not interfere with the Jewish religious “traditions” in the nineteenth century. In Russia, the government of the czar could not bring Jewish marriages and

5 Lajos Blau discusses the traditional ritual process in detail. Blau, *Die jüdische Ehescheidung und der jüdische Scheidebrief*.

6 Blom, “Civil Courts and Jewish Divorce,” 40–60. She also discusses the notion of “legal centralization” originating from Alexis de Tocqueville: Blom, “Implications of Jewish divorces,” 5–9. Berkovitz, “The Napoleonic Sanhedrin,” 11–34. Atlan, *Les Juifs et le divorce*, 103–10, and *passim* also discusses the contemporary collision of civil and religious laws.

7 For the 26th–27th §§ of the decree passed on March 11, 1812 concerning the civil status of Jews who lived in the Prussian state, see Mannkopf, *Allgemeines Landrecht für die Preussischen Staaten*, 88.

8 Pfeffer, “From One End of the Earth to the Other,” 110–15.

divorces under the control of the state until the outbreak of the Bolshevik revolution.⁹

Joseph II and the Problem of Jewish Divorce

In the Habsburg Empire, the marriage patent (*Ehepatent*) of Emperor Joseph II pronounced marriage a civil contract and transferred marriage suits to civil courts. It thus played a pioneering role in the state regulation of marriage and divorces in Europe. In 1786, the Austrian government officially extended the marriage patent to the Jewry.¹⁰ The 1786 Jewish marriage patent or, more precisely, the supplement concerning the Jewry of the 1783 marriage patent was part of the abovementioned centralizing efforts. The “nationalization” of the field of marriage rights was part of the lasting process of the codification of civilian rights in the Habsburg Empire, which concluded with the passage of the Austrian Code of Civil Law (*Allgemeines Bürgerliches Gesetzbuch*) in 1811.¹¹ The limitation of the jurisdiction of Jewish rabbinic forums was part of the jurisdictional and church political reforms of Joseph II. Accordingly, the patent passed in the summer of 1783 deprived the Rabbinic jurisdiction of its civilian character.¹² The legislators at the emperor’s court, however, did not clarify precisely enough whether the questions that might arise regarding Jewish marriage belonged to the civil legal cases (like Christian marriage suits), and if so, how exactly the points of the *Ehepatent* should be applied to address them. The civil courts were confused so in the spring of 1785, the problem of Jewish marriages was brought to the imperial government.¹³

With regard to the measures implemented by Joseph II, he may have been seeking to “civilize” (i.e. encourage the cultural and civil assimilation of) the large Jewish population. The Habsburg Empire was home to one of the biggest

9 Freeze, *Jewish Marriage and Divorce in Imperial Russia*, 131–200.

10 On the development of marriage law in Hungary and Jewish divorces in Budapest (Pest-Buda), see Nagy, “*Éngesztelhetetlen gyűlölet*,” 103–75. The contemporary issue of the decree of May 3, 1786: 543. Patent vom 3-ten May 1786. *Justizgesetzsammlung* 42–43. Published along with the proposal submitted to the State Council: Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten zur Geschichte der Juden in Wien*, 541–46.

11 Korkisch, “Die Entstehung des österreichischen Allgemeinen Bürgerlichen Gesetzbuches,” 263–94.

12 The court decree dated August 25, 1783. *Handbuch aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph des II*, 544.

13 The opinions of the state authorities differed. In the end, the State Council (*Staatsrat*) ordered the Legal Committee of the Court (*Kompilationshofkommission*) to prepare a detailed proposal. Cf. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 528–30. ÖStA, AVA, Oberste Justizstelle, Bücher. Ratsprotokoll der Kompilationshofkommission (Band 35, 1783–1785), 487–90.

Jewish communities in Europe. With the first partition of Poland, followed by the annexation of Galicia in 1772, a large Jewish population numbering approximately 200,000 people joined the already significant Jewish population in the Bohemian-Moravian provinces and the countries of the Hungarian crown. The change could not only be measured in the numbers; the appearance of Galician Jews, who for the most part were poor and held strictly to their traditions, caused a kind of “culture shock” in the Empire.¹⁴ The administrative integration of Galicia and the social inclusion of its Jewish population were important motives in the general regulation of Jewish marriages, so in 1785, the Viennese court summoned the highly respected Jewish theologian, Ezekiel Landau, chief rabbi of Prague, and his Galician colleague, Loebel Bernstein, to give their opinions on the marriage patent.¹⁵

While both chief rabbis challenged the applicability of the *Ehepatent* to Jewish marriages, the Legal Committee of the Court (*Kompilationshofkommission*), which convened after long negotiations in December, 1785, made it definitive that the Jewish customs and practices were irrelevant from the point of view of marriage rights. According to the wording of the proposal, “in all civil legal affairs, no consideration should be given to the, until now, special laws of the Jews, which are founded merely on the constitution of their now destroyed state; they should be adjudged according to the general laws of the country in which they reside.” (*In allen bürgerlichen Handlungen auf die bishörigen besonderen Gesetze der Juden, welche sich blos auf die Verfassung ihres nunmehr zerstörten Staats gründeten, keine Rücksicht zu nehmen, sondern sie nach den allgemeinen Gesetzen desjenigen Landes zu beurtheilen seyen, wo sie sich aufhalten.*)¹⁶ And though the members of the committee differed as to

14 McCagg, *A History of Habsburg Jews*, 109–15. Kurdi, “Galícia és a galíciai zsidóság a 18. század végén,” 68–70.

15 ÖStA, AVA, Hofkanzlei. Allgemeine Reihe. Akten. IV. T. 8. (Ehen der Juden, Galizien, Karton 1548.) 1785, without number. The document mentions the call for providing an opinion. Furthermore, it is not by chance that the Legal Committee of the court, which was about to discuss the problem of Jewish marriages, was increased with the addition of two Galician officers of the Austrian-Bohemian Court Chancellery. Nor was it merely coincidental that the Chancellery sent the plan of the new arrangements (*das gallizische neue Juden System*) to the committee as a preliminary proposal for the decision. ÖStA, AVA, Oberste Justizstelle, Bücher. Ratsprotokoll der Kompilationshofkommission (Band 35., 1783–1785) 577–81.

16 For the proposal of the Legal Committee of the Court, see ÖStA AVA Hofkanzlei. Allgemeine Reihe. Akten. IV. T. 8. (Ehen der Juden, Galizien, Karton 1548.) 1785. without number. The skeptic report of the chief rabbis, Ezekiel Landau and Loebel, can be found in this file. The memoirs of Landau have also been published in print: Alexander Kisch, *Das mosaisch-talmudische Eherecht von Rabbi Ezechiel Landau, weiland Oberrabbiner von Prag, auf Verlangen Kaiser Josefs des Zweiten gegen Anwendung des kaiserlichen Ehepatentes vom 16. Januar 1783 auf die Juden erstattetes Gutachten* (Leipzig: M. W. Kauffmann Verlag, 1900).

how the religious regulations should be taken into an account, they agreed that the Jewish marriage suits had to be heard in the civil courts, and if possible, they had to be adjudicated on the basis of the same principles as the Christian cases. Accordingly, in March, 1786, Joseph II decided to have the effect of the marriage patent extended to the Jewry, without the courts' consideration of the "religious ceremonies." Legislators set aside the usual justifications given for divorce among "non-Catholics" and made the dissolution of the marriage bond dependent simply on the mutual agreement of the parties. This corresponded to prevailing practice among the Jewish communities. The supplement of the patent was put forth with this addition on May 3, 1786.¹⁷

However, as it was expectable, process of putting the marriage patent into effect met strong resistance with the Jews, which clung to tradition tooth and nail. The officer of the Legal Committee of the Court, Johann Bernhard von Horten, made cautionary statement concerning the complexities of the forced uniform legislation during the discussions of the proposed patent: "The less the different classes of the subjects perform similar activities, the less benefit can be hoped from the unified acts that refer to these activities." (*Je weniger gegentheils zwischen verschiedenen Klassen der Unterthanen gewisse Handlungen gemeinschaftlich vorgenommen werden; um so weniger Nutzen sey auch von der Gleichförmigkeit der Gesetze, die sich auf diese Handlungen beziehen, zu erwarten.*) The Galician governorate (*Gubernium*) had to warn the Jews who sought to bypass the civilian courts and divorce and remarry of the risk of being prosecuted for bigamy at the beginning of 1788, and the governorate forbade rabbis from helping conduct these kinds of divorces and required them to submit the writ of divorce.¹⁸

Finally, after the death of Joseph II, the Viennese government had to back down and attenuate the regulations of the patent in response to the complaints of the Jewish delegations that appeared at the court. The councilors to the new ruler, Leopold II, firmly refused that the Jewish marriage suits should again be heard at rabbinic and not at civil courts, but they had to concede on some of the regulations of divorce procedures. Therefore, according to the order issued in the spring of 1791, the handing of the writ of divorce became an essential part of the legal procedure, and the unilateral breaking of the marriage bond

17 For the proposal of the Legal Committee of the Court at the State Council in spring, 1786, see Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, I, 541–46.

18 *Handbuch aller unter der Regierung des Kaisers Joseph des II.* 15. Band, 703–4 contains the order dated January 17, 1788. On the circumstances of the edition of the regulation, see Dolliner, "Allgemeine Bemerkungen," 319–20.

was also authorized in cases in which it could be demonstrated that the wife had committed adultery.¹⁹ These regulations practically translated Jewish traditions into the language of modern law while at the same time acknowledging not their contexts and complexities. While the special compromise did not resolve all the issues, it set the stage for the paragraphs concerning Jewish marriages of the 1811 of the Austrian Code of Civil Law and created a transparent legal environment for at least a century in the Austrian Empire.²⁰ In the eastern half of the empire, the development of marriage rights took a different turn, and this created new constraints and possibilities and implied different consequences.

The Jews and the Denominational System of Marriage Law in Hungary

The developments sketched above affected Hungary only indirectly. The country enjoyed independence in its legal life within the Habsburg Empire, which the reign of Joseph II broke only partially and only for a short period of time. The patents issued by the ruler, which were not in conflict with the feudal “constitution” (the laws legislated by the diets and the customs expressed in the “lawful practices”) could only be promulgated by the Hungarian authorities. Thus, the marriage patent of Joseph II was only put into effect in Hungary in 1786, and the supplement concerning the Jewry was never promulgated. Although in the of spring 1790 claims were made to hold Jewish marriage suits in the civil courts, in the midst of the political turbulence accompanying the change of rulers, the central authorities ordered the Hungarian and Transylvanian provincial government to leave the former practice (hearing these cases in the Jewish courts) in effect.²¹

19 On the petition of the delegation of the Jews of Prague, see Singer, “Zur Geschichte der Juden in Böhmen,” 213–17, 226–28, 233–34, 237–39. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, II, 13–17. For the proposal in the topic, see ÖStA AVA Hofkanzlei. Allgemeine Reihe. Akten. IV. T. 8. (Ehen der Juden, Böhmen, Karton 1545.) 88/1791. The published decree: 130. Hofdecret vom 21-ten März 1791. *Justizgesetzsammlung*, 17–18.

20 For the proposal of the court committee reviewing the draft of the civil law code dated April 16, 1800 on Jewish marriages, see ÖStA AVA Hofkanzlei. Allgemeine Reihe. Akten. IV. T. 8. (Ehen der Juden, Böhmen, Karton 1545.) without number. Pribram, *Urkunden und Akten*, II, 71–76 contains the later proposal and the decision in the case. For the order on the same issue for Galicia, see 510. Patent vom 28-ten October 1800. *Justizgesetzsammlung*, 85–86. On the background of the issue, see Dolliner, “Allgemeine Bemerkungen,” 321–22.

21 Concerning the divorce of Ladislaus Novak (originally Moyses Neuländer), who converted to the Lutheran faith, the Jewish divorce patent was sent from Vienna at the end of the 1789, but because of the death of Joseph II, it was never published: ÖStA AVA Oberste Justizstelle, Bücher. Ratsprotokoll der Kompilationshofkommission (Band 36, 1786–1790) 717–18, 779–81. MNL OL A.39. 12390/1789,

After the death of Joseph II, at the diet held in 1791–1792, at which the Hungarian estates formed a united political front with the Churches (the rights of which had been significantly cut by Josephinism), restored the centuries-old rights of the latter, which included putting marriage suits back under the jurisdiction of the Catholic and Orthodox courts. (The *Ehepatent* was only left in effect with regard to marriages between Hungarian protestants.) As the Jewry, which was only tolerated by public law and had no political representation, thus was ruled out, the *Diaeta* did not address the question of Jewish marriages. In consequence, unlike in the Austrian provinces, Jewish divorce suits continued to be held in the traditional way, in other words in the bosom of the independent Jewish synagogues. In the first half of the nineteenth century, Jewish marriage cases were only seldom heard at civil courts, and typically only when one of the two spouses had converted to Christianity, a spouse was engaged in some kind of tactical strategizing, or there were some unresolved property issues.²²

This only changed half a century later, after the defeat of the 1848–1849 Hungarian Revolution and War of Independence, when in 1853 the Austrian Code of Civil Law was promulgated in Hungary. This code only remained in force for a longer period of time in Transylvania, which until 1867 formed a separate crown province. The Law Code was in force in Transylvania until 1895, when the Hungarian marriage law was introduced. In Hungary, in the narrower sense (excluding Transylvania), at the beginning of the 1860s, when the former, traditional feudal rights and juridical system was restored, the question of Jewish marriage suits and jurisdiction again was raised. In the end, at the initiative of the Hungarian Supreme Court, the Curia, the Court Chancellery, issued a provisional regulation in 1863 which was more or less in accordance with the points of the Austrian Code of Civil Law. The difference was that the regulation of the Chancellery, in addition to allowing divorce in cases when a writ of divorce was submitted, there was mutual agreement between the parties, or it could be shown to the satisfaction of the court that the wife had committed adultery, also allowed unilateral separation in cases of “cruel desertion,” a “disordered life” that threatened the wealth of the spouse or the morals of the

12885/1789, 591/1790, 3766/1790. The Hungarian Chancellery had already received the patent concerning a Jewish marriage case in Máramaros County in 1785, but in the uncertain legal environment, the king ordered to act in accordance with the previous practices for the time being: MNL OL A.39. 13932/1786, 1872/1787.

²² Some cases from the files of the Chancellery: MNL OL A.39. 8545/1806, 5928/1816, 11484/1816, 3859/1833, 6156/1833. On the marriage conflict between Rufold Wodianer and Rozina Koppel, who turned to the council of the town of Pest in 1831, see: Bácskai, *A vállalkozók előjuttarai*, 185–87.

family, “dangerous endeavors” against life or good health, “especially sensitive, recurrent aggravations,” and “bodily bruises that threaten with contagion.” The fact that this dubious order, which was issued without the assistance of the legislative powers and was not ratified by the ruler, still served as a reference point in adjudging Jewish marriage suits until the marriage law came into effect is a reflection of the contemporary disinterest in the question of Jewish marriage.²³

Jewish marriage suits received somewhat more attention, after the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, in the implementation of the program of Hungarian state formation and nation building. The liberal Hungarian politicians saw potential allies in the rapidly Hungarianizing Jewry, which was largely concentrated in towns and cities. In order to foster this envisioned alliance, however, they had to overcome social differences which were products of religious difference, which meant working to change distinctive customs and practices. When it came to marriage rights, these customs included the practice of dissolving of marriages simply with presentation of a writ of divorce without the assistance of a “qualified” rabbi or the authorization of the royal courts, a practice which was, from the perspective of civil law, technically illegal. As this practice remained common and as there was an increasing number of civil suits and prosecutions, the Hungarian ministry took measures to impede ritual marriages and divorces in 1878. In 1881, it submitted a bill concerning marriages between Christians and Jews, which were unrecognized and essentially forbidden by the denominational system and which for the most part were held abroad (mostly in Austria).²⁴ The proposal inflamed anti-Semitic voices, according to which it went too far as an effort to put members of the Jewish community on equal legal footing with Christian society, while it also strengthened voices among the liberal community, in whose assessment it did not go far enough. The failure of the proposal years later in fact only added further momentum to efforts to arrive at a legal definition of marriage as a civil institution that would apply to all citizens (this eventually happened in 1895, the same year in which the law was passed making Judaism legally equal to the other so-called received religions in Hungary). The failure of the proposal notwithstanding, however,

23 Files of the order of the Chancellery: MNL OL D.189. Magyar Királyi Udvari Kancellária, általános iratok 15940/1863.

24 The decree no. 17619 of the Ministry of Religion and Education dated September 27, 1878. *Magyarországi rendeletek tára 1878*, 774–83. The final proposal of the act: *Az 1878. évi október hó 17-re hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának irományai*, vol. 23, 193–206. The standard was the Austrian institution of the civil “emergency-marriage” (*Not-Zivilehe*) established in 1870, with the difference that, in the Austrian Empire, civil marriages could only be concluded between people who had no Church affiliations.

the Jewish communities in Hungary were under much stronger pressure to make marriage a civil institution (and thus put the practices involved in marriage and divorce practices under the jurisdiction of the civil courts) than Jews in the Austrian half of the Monarchy. The most important site in which this pressure was applied and these changes were encouraged was the royal courts of law.

Conflicts around the Get

Though in the denominational system of marriage rights, Hungarian courts of law theoretically dealt with the citizens of different denominations, both husbands and wives, according to their religious traditions, in the marriage suits (Protestant and Jewish) heard at the royal courts of law, a rather peculiar practice prevailed which broke with the norms and procedures of the denominations. Some of the conflicts surrounding Jewish marriages and divorces (apart from the rejection of the jurisdiction of the state courts by the spouses) originated in the aforementioned practice, which paid no attention to Jewish law (*halacha*) or the feasibility of the ritual obligations. This may seem peculiar, as the order of the Chancellery issued in 1863 regulating the conclusion and break-up of Jewish marriages was founded on the Austrian Code of Civil Law (which was essentially tolerant) and would have allowed for the emergence of a judicial practice to a large extent in alignment with Jewish religious regulations.

The explanation for this legal practice has to be sought in the conflicts concerning the central motif, as it were, of Jewish divorce, which was the handing of the ritual writ of divorce. In cases of mutual agreement, the imperial-royal courts that dealt with these kinds of cases on the basis of the Austrian Law Code did not dissolve the bond of marriage. Rather, they only authorized the handing over of the *Scheidebrief*, which formed the essential part of the civilian procedure.²⁵ The Hungarian courts of law, which were restored in the 1860s, also followed this practice for a time. For instance, the Court of Law of the Town of Pest announced the dissolution of the marriage of butcher József Neumann and his wife, Regina Rosenbaum, in vain; their marriage endured, as the parties did not appear for the handing over of the writ of divorce by the deadline.²⁶ The court of law of the neighboring town of Óbuda only provided assistance with

25 In the case of the Jewish divorce suits, the early regulations of the Austrian Code of Civil Law can be consulted: Budapest Főváros Levéltára (BFL) IV.1120.a. Budai Cs. Kir. Országos Törvényszék, polgári perek 1856. III. 123, 1856. III. 163, 1859. III. 82, 1859. III. 88, 1860. III. 80, 1860. III. 81, 1860. III. 87.

26 BFL IV.1343.f. Pesti Visszaállított Városi Törvényszék, válóperek 1867. V. 11.

the issue of the *get*: after mediations by the rabbinate, if the parties still sought to dissolve the marriage, the court simply approved the ritual act (and in the majority of the cases, no sources offering any sign of significant negotiations of any kind have survived).²⁷ However, even at the time, on some occasions the divorce verdict did not simply note that the writ of divorce had been offered and received, but also made this mandatory for the parties. By the mid-1870s, this had become a rule in standard judicial practice.²⁸ Thus, the court did not pay any attention to what took place outside the courtroom. If the parties did not exchange the writ of divorce by the given deadline (usually fifteen days), the divorce came into force, and instead of the writ of divorce–sounded the invented legal formulation–the judgment itself served as proof of the breaking up of the marriage.

In the Hungarian capital of Pest-Buda, sources reveal that, in the critical period, civilian courts not only proceeded in an inconsistent and illegal when dealing with Jewish divorce cases, but the ambivalence in the phrasing of the verdicts and the negligence shown for the expectations and regulations of the religious communities at first were tied to a clearly defined circle of cases. The judgments of the Court of Law of the Town of Pest in the 1860s suggest that the definitive formula used in the judgements was preferred in part in an effort to come to the assistance of Jewish wives from disadvantageous backgrounds who were compelled to seek the assistance of the courts because they were unable to reach mutual agreements with their spouses concerning divorce. In cases of divorce between Jewish spouses, the husband handed the writ of divorce to the wife. Moreover, in a case in which the wife was accused of having committed adultery, the writ could be issued unilaterally (this was not the case if the husband was accused of adultery). If the husband refused to cooperate or blackmailed his wife or simply disappeared, the wife was powerless. In accordance with the laws of the Jewish community, she was given the status of “tied” (*agunah*), which meant that she was unable to enter into a new marriage. Many Jewish women

27 Cf. BFL V.48.b. Óbuda Mezőváros Törvényszéke iratai 273/1862, 1155/1864, 1026/1865, 1328/1866, 1380/1866, 2556/1867, 1818/1868, 2407/1869, 2833/1869, 2866/1870, 2889/1870, 2979/1871.

28 The decision of June 19, 1866: BFL IV.1343.f. 1866. V. 1. For another decision with similar wording dated December 13, 1866: BFL IV.1343.f. 1866. V. 9. In 1884, the Royal Court of Law still made the handing over of the writ of divorce a condition for the divorce to enter into legal force, but by then, the Curia did not refuse to break from standard the legal practice and dissolve the decision of the court of the first degree and order a definitive final decision by the court of law: Sztéhlo, *A házassági elválás joga*, 81–82.

who found themselves in this situation in Pest used civil law to put pressure on their husbands through the civil courts.²⁹

The Christian judges were aware, of course, that what these wives sought to do violated Jewish religious regulations. The uncertain legal environment, however, created an opportunity for the judges to do as they saw fit, and the seriousness and merits of the complaints that were submitted gave them motivation to do so, as did the difficult fates faced by the people who were submitting the complaints. Accordingly, as the legal practice concerning the handing over of the writ of divorce would have drastically limited their ability to do anything to protect the women in these cases, the courts addressed the situation by using a rather inventive interpretation of the 1863 decree of the Chancellery; they started to use the reasons given by the decree as justifications for legal separation (crime, abandonment, a disorderly lifestyle, life-endangering acts, abuse, aggravation) as adequate justifications for the dissolution of a marriage. Moreover, increasingly commonly, the courts of law dissolved Jewish marriages using the justification typically used in Christian divorce suits, namely “inveterate hatred.” According to Jewish law, none of these reasons constituted legitimate grounds for divorce, nor did they entitle a spouse to hand over the writ of divorce, which is why the courts decided to use a formula for the judgments which explicitly required the handing over of the writ of divorce.

This connection between the practices of the courts (specifically, the ways in which the courts interpreted the Chancellery’s decree relatively freely and made it easier for Jewish women to divorce their husbands) and the circumstances faced by Jewish spouses seeking a divorce is perhaps clearer if one considers the cases known from Pest-Buda. The Court of Law of the Town of Pest dissolved the marriage of Antónia Schwarcz and Samu Grünberger on the grounds of “inveterate hatred,” and it order the issue of the writ of divorce. The court arrived at this decision because of an assault committed by the husband against his wife. He had hit his wife in front of the rabbi hard enough to draw blood. Some months earlier, the court of Pest characterized the abuse and life-threatening “physical approaches” committed by Antal Abeles against his wife,

29 On the disadvantageous, unilateral character of Jewish divorces for women, see: Adelman, *Women and Jewish Marriage Negotiations*; Dubin, “Jewish Women, Marriage Law, and Emancipation,” 68–70; Dynner, “Those Who Stayed,” 303–7. The problem had also been well known among Christian legislators for a long time by then. At the meetings of the *Kompillationshofkommission*, during the discussion of the Jewish Marriage Patent, the necessity of defending women came up a number of times: Cf. ÖStA AVA Hofkanzlei. Allgemeine Reihe. Akten. IV. T. 8. (Ehen der Juden, Galizien, Karton 1548.) 1785. without number.

Franciska Neumann, as sensitive aggravation. At the end of 1867, the supreme court changed the justification to “inveterate hatred,” and put the first-instance decision into force. In the divorce suit between Mária Stern and Simon Moser, the court of law dissolved the marriage on grounds of aggravation, or more specifically, because the husband had beaten his pregnant wife so severely that the woman had miscarried, and when she was home sick, he had abandoned her. As the respondent hesitated to hand over the writ of divorce, the court of law mandated that the judgment also serve as a writ. Mór Breier, a hat-maker, also refused to hand over the *get*, in spite of the fact that the mediation certificate given by the assigned rabbi offered a vivid account of the sufferings of his wife Emilia Baruch (Bachrach) and their children. His refusal to cooperate, which lasted for years, was probably broken when, in February 1870, the town court decided to dissolve the marriage because of unfaithful abandonment, though Breier had not actually gone missing. In autumn 1870, Eliza Kanitz, a member of an influential Jewish family in Pest and wife of merchant Gyula Hertzka, managed to secure a divorce on the grounds of aggravation. Her husband, who the sources indicate was ruined and impotent, was put in an asylum.

Interestingly, in time, a Jewish spouse seeking a divorce from an unwilling partner could prevail on the civil courts without necessarily having to demonstrate that she or he had endured the kinds of aggravations or afflictions that arise in a marriage that has become plagued with conflict. While the court of law did not find the evidence provided by Zsófia Mannheimer adequate as support for her claim that she had endured aggravation, in the end, the Curia ruled against her husband, the lawyer Dr. Ignác Mannheimer. It changed the verdict of the court of first-instance in the summer of 1871 and granted the divorce, noting that earlier the husband had expressed in a contract his willingness to hand over the writ of divorce. The abandoned wife of the physician Izsák Simon also did not base her request for a divorce on the claim that her marriage was unbearable. She lived as an *agunah* for seventeen years and then converted to Christianity, and only then did she sue for divorce. The court in this case issued the divorce on the grounds of faithless desertion in the spring of 1869. Eleonóra Singer petitioned for divorce in 1872. Her husband, Han Veit, had vanished into thin air. As had been true in the case of Mrs. Simon Izsák, under the circumstances, it was quite impossible to hand over the writ of divorce. The court not only had no hesitations about granting the woman’s request, it even referred specifically in its ruling (which was issued towards the end of 1874) to the fact that “in the 22nd point of the highest decree, which serves as the law for divorces in the case

of marriages between Jews, cruel abandonment is listed among the grounds for divorce.” In order to avoid misunderstanding, the regional high court made the ruling more precise by specifying that “the parties to the suit are permitted to remarry.”³⁰

As these examples make clear, in some cases, the petitioners succeeded in having the *get* handed over, but in some, they did not. At first, in the 1860s, the courts of law tried to put pressure on hesitant husbands to hand over the writ of divorce, but later, they did not insist on this act, which they were unable to enforce anyway. But the women, who found themselves in difficult situations and probably had few other available means at their disposal, still trusted their fates to the civil court. It is hardly surprising that, until the marriage law was passed, at the Royal Court of Budapest and the town courts (which were its legal predecessor), two thirds of the cases of divorce between Jewish spouses were brought by the wives, while in the case of the divorce suits involving Christians, the proportion of female petitioners was somewhat lower than that of male petitioners. The *agunah* problem was addressed in part by the 1895 legislation, which made it possible for a Jewish woman who had been abandoned by her Jewish husband to enter into a civil marriage, but nonetheless, far more Jewish wives petitioned for divorce than Jewish husbands (the proportion of female petitioners between 1895 and 1914 was 58 percent).³¹

The practice of the civil courts, which essentially disregarded the Jewish regulations, meant that, for some time, these courts were unable to guarantee the most important legal effect of a divorce, the possibility of remarriage. Until 1895, there was no civil alternative to religious ceremonies, and very few rabbis were willing to wed a divorced woman or man without her or his writ of divorce. Given the practice of the courts described above and the practice of members of the Jewish communities of getting divorces which, because they were only matters of religious authority and ritual, were illegal in the eyes of the state, from the 1870s onwards, conflicts between the Hungarian courts, the couple in question, and rabbis caught in the middle were a constant cause of concern

30 The following is a list of the divorce suits referred to: BFL IV.1343.f. 1866. V. 1, 1866. V. 9, 1867. V. 18, 1867. V. 21, 1868. V. 16, 1870. V. 23. BFL VII.2.c. Budapesti Királyi Törvényszék, peres iratok 1872. V. 41. BFL IV. 1343.f. 1870. V. 35. It was important for women to seem innocent of causing conflict. Cecília Weisz offered strong arguments in support of her actions when she was faced with serious accusations, but in vain. Her request for divorce from the physician Vilmos Sagl was refused by the court: BFL IV.1343.f. 1867. V. 22. Sztehló, *A házassági elválás joga*, 84–86 offers further examples of these kinds of judicial customs in the 1880s.

31 Nagy, “*Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet*,” 314.

and conflict. These conflicts included tensions which arose in cases of criminal cases involving allegations of bigamy, annulments of Jewish divorces, “violent” attempts by rabbis to reconcile spouses, and cases of forgery involving writs of divorce. In the early 1890s, going against decades of practice, the government even went so far as to acknowledge the illegal (concluded without the rabbi in charge) ritual marriage of Regina Weisz, a woman from Hódmezővásárhely, even though Weisz, though legally separated, had not been granted a writ of divorce. The government only rescinded its decision in response to the indignation prevalent in Neologue public opinion and the critical remarks made by rabbis and legal experts.³²

The situation changed after 1895. Jewish ex-wives and ex-husbands who had not been given a writ of divorce could enter a new marriage following their civil divorce suit. They of course had to accept sanctions by the religious authorities of the Jewish community, as well as the disapproval of their community, and in some cases (again as a way of punishing women who went against the norm), the stigmatization of their children (who from the perspective of religious dogma were illegitimate) as *mamzer*. Despite this, with increasing social integration and secularization, these kinds of threats and tribulations were less and less effective as means of persuading people not to defy religious tradition. The process unfortunately becomes difficult to study after the turn of the century, as the conflicts around the handing of the *get* were irrelevant from the point of view of civil law, and the court records therefore contain no mention of them. The change, however, was tangible. As Mihály Guttmann, the rabbi of Csongrád, complained in 1913, “The questions concerning the property rights of people who are married are not regulated by the rabbinate anymore, but are being brought to the civil court. People do not negotiate with the dayan, but with a lawyer.”³³ Although the number of Jewish men and women who married in front of civil ministers without any assistance or contribution from a rabbi was probably low, the tendency is unmistakable: the strict religious traditions which had formed part of everyday life and had been essentially mandatory for every member of the community in the mid-nineteenth century gradually became less important with the spread (in law and social practice) of marriage

32 Ibid., 163–75.

33 G[uttmann], *A Sulchan Aruch és a magyar zsidóság*, 15.

as a civil institution, at least among Jews who were in the process of assimilating, and within one century, they had become little more than “legal folk customs.”³⁴

Social Consequences

The lasting conflict between state law and denominational law and the social impact of this conflict, which included the ways in which it affected families in space and time, varied in the different Jewish communities in Hungary, which, moreover, were increasingly divided from the mid-nineteenth century onward and followed different movements, in part because of their different approaches to religious tradition. While the rapidly Hungarianizing members of the Neologue communities accepted the supremacy of state law, Orthodox Jews, who clung more assertively to their traditions, took whatever measures possible not to take note of the latter. In reality, of course, the division lines were not so straightforward, and in a given situation, considering the anticipated pros and cons, the married parties decided themselves whether or not to turn to the civil and/or religious forums in order to reach their goals. Nonetheless, some specificities merit emphasis, as they shed light on opposition to the expansion of the state law and the personal decisions and strategies which indicate acceptance of the law, as well as the spatial and temporal dimensions of these changes.

In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the statistical administrative offices in both halves of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had begun to provide more or less reliable demographic data on births, marriages, and deaths. The registers of births, marriages, and deaths kept among the Jewish communities were admittedly less consistent and comprehensive than the records kept among Christians (in part because there was some resistance to the practice itself, which initially had been a Catholic practice which was adopted by the state and pushed on the Jewish citizenry), but they nonetheless indicated larger trends and tendencies, and statisticians who dealt with this data drew attention to the high rate of Jewish children born out of wedlock. In the Austrian Empire at the end of the century, two thirds of Jewish newborns were registered as illegitimate, and the illegitimacy rate was even higher among Jews in eastern territories, where it came to 75 percent of the total. As Jakob Thon, statistician

34 In 1896, the first year in which the civil marriage law was in effect, there were only two civil marriages in the Budapest, and in both cases, a Church ceremony was impossible because there was no writ of divorce. Frisch, “Az egyházpolitika jegyében,” 209. By the turn of the century, however, civil marriages were characterized as matter of course in the periodical *Magyar-Zsidó Szemle* (18: 1901): 3–4. (No title)

who dealt with data concerning Jewish communities, note, “the ratio of natural children is actually very low among the Jewry.” This difference, however, could be characterized as misleading, as children who were born of couples united in ritual (not civil) ceremonies were considered illegitimate, even though they were legitimate according to Jewish law. According to Thon, in Galicia and Bukovina, two thirds of Jewish marriages were ritual marriages, which meant that they were not recognized by the laws of the state.³⁵

The situation was similar in Hungary, even if not to the same degree. Hungarian statisticians drew attention to fluctuations in the Jewish marriage numbers and the unreliability of the statistics: “The wedding rate among Israelites, however, until now cannot be considered a reflection of the reality.”³⁶ For a marriage between two Jews to be considered valid, originally there was no need for the involvement of a rabbi, a wedding ceremony at the synagogue, or the addition of a new entry in the register. However, as was the case in the other half of the Monarchy, the state considered technically irregular marriages illegal. Despite this, illegal weddings remained common even decades later. According to a complaint by an unnamed rabbi from Sáros County published in 1889 in the Neologue periodical *Magyar-Zsidó Szemle* (Hungarian-Jewish Review), only approximately one third of the local marriages were declared officially, and “the unannounced weddings were held by uninvited people in secret,” and children born of these marriages were to be registered as illegitimate. With respect to the 1889–1891 demographic statistics, statistician Dávid Kohn refers both to the high rate of unregistered Jewish marriages and the high ratio of illegitimate children in the “upper counties” and in Máramaros County, and he notes that “this phenomenon no doubt can mostly be attributed to administrative reasons, and not moral.”³⁷ The northeastern areas bordering Galicia and Bukovina appear again and again in the different reports; at the beginning of the 1890s, for instance, one third of all Jewish childbirths were illegitimate in Bereg County and half were illegitimate in Máramaros. Previously, the situation has not seemed

35 Hugelmann, “Die Ehelösungen in Oesterreich,” 9; Seutemann, “Die Legitimationen unehelicher Kinder,” 18–24; Thon, *Die Juden in Oesterreich*, 20–21, 27–28. For an overview, see: Keil, “Recte Lax, False Kritz,” 30.

36 Keleti, “Magyarország népesedési mozgalmá,” 20–21. Earlier it was precisely in connection with the relative scarcity of Jewish marriages concerning that the inaccuracy of the denominational marriage records was brought up. Konek, *Az Ausztriai Birodalom*, 77.

37 *Magyar-Zsidó Szemle* 6 (1889): 28–29 (No title); Kohn, “Zsidó népmozgalmi statisztika,” 39–40.

so catastrophic simply because the synagogues and the parents had not bothered with the registers, which the state, after all, was trying to force on them.³⁸

Thus, as noted by contemporaries, the frequency of illegitimate births was not a consequence of some kind of sexual non-conformism, but rather was to some extent a matter of resistance to the threatening extension of the civil marriage law, which was perceived as a challenge to the traditional Jewish lifestyle. The “geography” of illegitimate childbirths reveals that this resistance was more stubborn in the eastern provinces of the monarchy, where the majority of the Orthodox population lived, than it was in the West, among the Jewish communities which were gradually assimilating and becoming part of the emerging bourgeoisie. Thon specifically mentions Bohemia, Moravia, and Vienna as places where Jewish couples usually married in accordance with the laws of the state, and thus the rate of illegitimate childbirths was a considerably lower. In fin-de-siècle Hungary, compared to the situation in the northeastern counties, the conditions in Transdanubia, the western part of Upper Hungary, and Budapest were more consolidated. The state endeavors to regulate Jewish marriages accordingly were successful in regions (mostly major towns and their agglomerations) and among social groups (merchants, artisans, officials, and intellectuals) which prospered, had significant wealth, and had strong ties to members of the Christian society.

Although the temporal dimension of the phenomenon and the wide diversity of personal decisions cannot be emphasized enough, we can nonetheless assume that there were some trends and tendencies in the breakup of Jewish marriages. The number of Jewish divorces at the turn-off the century in the Austrian Empire was only about 100 a year, and even a decade later, this number had only doubled, despite the attempt of the Austrian Code of Civil Law to build the ritual act (i.e. the handing over of the writ of divorce) into the civil procedure. In Hungary, though the number of Jewish inhabitants was significantly lower than in the other half of the Monarchy and the marriage law did not take note of the writ of divorce, twice as many Jewish divorces were pronounced. The urban concentration of the Hungarian Israelite population and the traditionalism of the masses of eastern Jews, which was more relevant to the Austrian half of the empire, may explain these surprising numbers. This is confirmed by the fact that more (50 percent more) Jewish divorces were registered in Vienna than in Galicia

38 *A Magyar Korona Országainak 1890. és 1891. évi népmozgalma*, 62–63. *A Magyar Korona Országainak 1892. és 1893. évi népmozgalma*, 32–33.

and Bukovina combined, even though the Jewish population of the imperial city was only one sixth or one seventh of the Jewish population of these two provinces. The different divorce rates, furthermore, cannot be attributed to the well-known specificities of married behavior in towns and in the countryside, as in the neighboring Russia, where denominational practices remained fully in force, the rate of Jewish divorces was very high. It is thus likely that, in the case of the Galician Jewry, if one could take ritual divorces into consideration when compiling statistics, a very different pattern would have emerged than the pattern suggested by the Austrian statistics, a pattern which would not strengthen the nostalgic image of undisturbed Jewish family life in the countryside.³⁹

The example of Budapest, the Hungarian capital, clearly shows how important the role played by the rapidly developing towns was in the social integration and acculturation of the absorbed Jewish population, including married Jewish couples. According to statistics from the beginning of the century, the ratio of divorces among members of the community of Budapest, which from this point of view was particularly active, was two to three times higher than in the countryside.⁴⁰ The town–countryside difference would probably be even bigger, even striking, if divorces among couples living in the bigger towns in the countryside which also had significant Jewish populations were also taken into consideration, alongside Budapest (the official statistics do not allow similar calculations). The markedly different rates emphasized above nonetheless do not reflect the allegedly typical stability of Jewish family life in the countryside. Rather, they indicate differences in attitudes towards the use of the civil legal institution, which was met with some suspicion in urban areas but was more vigorously rejected in rural communities.

Sporadic contemporary reports produced in the second half of the nineteenth century on the behavior of married Jewish couples also support this

39 Austrian divorce demographic statistics were published from 1884 onwards: Die Ergebnisse der Civilrechtspflege, 108–20. The further volumes of the series under the same name were published up to 1909, after which the divorce statistics were published in the following handbook: *Oesterreichisches Statistisches Handbuch*. 19. Jahrgang 1910, 30–31. Its further volumes under the same name were published until 1913. One important source on Hungarian divorce statistics from 1900 onwards is *Magyar Statisztikai Évkönyv*, 9. évfolyam, 390–95. The number and trends of Jewish divorces can be traced in the same series until the outbreak of World War I. For the divorce rates of the Jewry in the western part of Russia, see Freeze, “*Jewish Marriage and Divorce*,” 146–59. Dynner, “*Those Who Stayed*,” 305 contends that Freeze has misunderstood the divorce rates among urban Jews because he Freeze fails to take into consideration the fact that divorces among Jews from rural communities took place in towns. For the divorce rates of the Polish provinces of the Russian Empire between 1867 and 1886, see *Department of Commerce and Labor*, 501.

40 Nagy, “*Engesztelhetetlen gyűlölet*,” 62–63, and 493.

interpretation. In 1863, after the regulation of Jewish marriages, the Hungarian authorities called for the opinion of Wolf (Aloys) Meisel, chief rabbi of Pest. Meisel did not deny that there were local difficulties, but he claimed that the situation in rural areas was comparatively hopeless:

He could not stop giving colorful descriptions of the sorrowful situation of the marriage cases of those who belonged to his faith and of the risky abuses and disorders, which came from all directions overarching and which threatened the overall interests of society. According to him, it is not rare that marriages are held with the full omission of Church services, and the ceremonies are conducted by civilians and in secret, and moreover, he is not even informed of childbirths for the sake of having the circumcision done. This is so common that he cannot take any responsibility for the validity of the records. He also pointed out that if the circumstances in Pest, in the center of the country, are as bad as they are, one must consider how bad they are in rural areas.⁴¹

It is certainly true that, while the rabbis who lived in the capital tried to adhere to the order of the Court Chancellery that was meant to put an end to the abuses, their colleagues in rural communities barely took note of it. This became clear in 1878, when the authorities launched a case against a Jewish couple, Henrik Brecher and Mária Weisz, who only divorced ritually, and their rabbi, Albert Stern, the rabbi of Újpest, who assisted at both their remarriages. As was soon uncovered, this was not the first time Stern had offered assistance in cases of “bigamy.” In the 1870s, he repeatedly wedded men and women who had gotten divorced without the recognition of a court of law. His colleagues in the capital, Sámuel Brill from Pest and Márkus Hirsch from Óbuda, testified that in similar cases, they followed the regulations of the Chancellery. During the case, it turned out that another well-known rabbi from Pest, Sándor Kohn, had already called Stern’s attention to the unlawfulness of his activity. Stern, however, offered such a convincing defense that he got off in the end only with a fine. He noted that, in the Jewish communities in the rural parts of the country (he supported his statement with certificates of rabbis from Esztergom, Buda, Kaposvár, Nagykanizsa, Pécs, Sziklós, and Sátorajújhely), ritual divorces were considered common. At the sentencing, the proceeding Royal Court of Law of Budapest identified as an extenuating circumstance “the doubts which have emerged in most part of the country concerning the validity of the laws,

41 MNL OL D.189. 15940/1863.

doubts which have been demonstrated by letters submitted by the defendant, in consequence of which the illegitimate divorces which form subject of this case are tacitly being done and are norms in most part of the country.”⁴²

The waves of the Brecher-case, which again raised the question of Jewish marriages and civil law, went as far as the diet. In the spring of 1880, Pál Mandel, a member of the parliament, made an address at the budget discussion of the House of Commons in which he emphasized the differences between the civil marriage regime in the capital and civil marriage in the rural parts of the country:

In Budapest, for instance, the regulations of the Chancellery are being followed. In the countryside, almost everywhere, because of the origin and form of the regulation, they claim that it is illegitimate and, moreover, they do not accept it and proceed according to old Jewish law. According to the understanding in Budapest, the marriage suits conducted without respect for the regulation are void, while in rural areas, the same holds true for the marriage suits in Budapest, but the other way around.⁴³

Mandel was of Jewish faith himself, and he was a scholar of law and a lawyer by profession. Moreover, he represented an eastern Hungarian electoral district, the citizens of Nyírbátor, which was potentially affected by the problem, and therefore he was certainly not speaking from a position of ignorance nor as someone indifferent to the topic at hand, but rather had reached his conclusion on the basis of his own experience.

One does not find similar communications suggesting the prevalence or the suppression of Jewish ritual divorces after the marriage law came into force, as with the introduction of civil marriage and divorce, “religious acts” lost their legal importance. The changes in the rate of illegitimate children in Budapest

42 The files of the prosecution in the Brecher case have not survived. The antecedents and the early stage of the prosecution are summarized in *Pester Lloyd*, 29 (no. 29) January, 1878. On the defense of the rabbi of Újpest, see Albert Stern, *Védbeszéd, melyet a budapesti k. fenyítő törvényszék előtt, 1878. jan. 28-án mint vádlott a zsidó rituális válás ügyében tartott* (N. p.: 1878). The decision of the court of first instance did not bring the case to an end, as during the appeal at the Royal Court of Budapest, the defendant was sentenced to one year of imprisonment, and only the Curia saved the rabbi by confirming the decision of the court of the first degree. The case was also continuously followed in the Austrian press: “Bigamie.” *Die Neuzeit* 1. Februar 1878. Nr. 5. 35. “Ein Ehescheidungs-Prozeß,” *Neuigkeits Welt-Blatt* 5. Februar 1878. Nr. 29. [9.] “Auflösung der Juden-Ehen. Eine oberstgerichtliche Entscheidung,” *Neuigkeits Welt-Blatt* 18. Oktober 1878. Nr. 241. [9.] “Zur Ehetrennungs-Praxis in Ungarn,” *Gerichtshalle* 18. September 1879. Nr. 75. 362–63.

43 *Az 1878. évi október 17-ére hirdetett országgyűlés képviselőházának naplója*, 12. kötet, 41–44.

and the rural parts of the country, as synchronic processes, suggest, however, that Jewish resistance to the expansion of state law dragged on for decades. While in Budapest, the illegitimacy rate steadily decrease around the turning of the century (and thus followed the general trend), the illegitimacy rate in rural areas surprisingly kept rising until the outbreak of World War I. Indeed, it rose so much that between 1911 and 1915, the rate of statistically demonstrated illegitimate Jewish births was higher (11.3)⁴⁴ in rural areas than it was among Jewish newborns in the metropolis (10.4), which had a population of almost a million inhabitants! It is worth noting again that this change does not indicate an actual increase in the number of illegitimate children, but rather whos an increase in the number of Jewish couples who were included in the civil registries and who, from the point of view of state law, had entered illegal marriages. Presumably, a further symptom of this change came in the wake of the war, when, in accordance with the terms of the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost its northeastern territories, where the overwhelming majority of the traditional, eastern Jewish communities lived. The rate of illegitimacy in the rural parts of the country fell dramatically in the period from 1925 to 1932 (2.1), while in the capital, the rate only dropped by half (4.7). It is safe to assume that the change in ritual divorces followed the same tendencies.⁴⁵

Conclusions

As ritual marriages and divorces in most cases left no written evidence behind and never came to the attention of state officials, judges, or statistical officers, historians are essentially unable to trace the formation of stepfamilies through these practices (including stepfamilies which formed after a spouse was widowed and then remarried, but only through a ritual marriage, not a civil marriage). Divorce, however, was probably not a negligible factor in the formation of families even in the period before the long nineteenth century, as divorce rates among the eastern Jewry were extremely high in the long nineteenth century, and even the frequency of divorces among the “civilized” Jewry in Hungary

44 This figure and each of the subsequent figures cited represent the number of children born out of wedlock per 1,000 Jewish inhabitants of the community in question.

45 According to the data of Dezső Laky, the raw illegitimate Jewish child birth index in the countryside shows the following trend: between 1896 and 1900, 3.6 and 2.4; between 1901 and 1905, 2.9 and 2.7; between 1906 and 1910, 1.2 and 3.1, and between 1911 and 1915, 1.9 and 3. Laky, *A törvénytelen gyermekek*, 242.

permanently exceeded that among Christians. It again can only be assumed that this transitional period, which was full of legal conflicts and administrative confusion, came to an end sooner among Jews who lived in towns (in the case of Jews living in Budapest, it had probably come to an end by the beginning of the twentieth century) and decades later in the Jewish communities of the countryside. Indeed, as it was the Jewish communities in the Hungarian countryside which were almost completely destroyed in the Holocaust, these practices may only have come to an end with the annihilation of these communities.

One could contend that this is only a minor issue of relevance only to the history of a smaller ethnic group, or rather a religious group, and it did not affect the conduct of the Christian majority when it came to marriage and divorce. This may be partially true, but one should keep in mind that in Eastern Europe, the size (proportional and absolute) of the Jewish population was not negligible (in Hungary the 911,227 Jewish citizens who were registered in 1910 formed 5 percent of the population),⁴⁶ and therefore the problem cannot be dismissed as irrelevant. Conflicts concerning Church norms were part of everyday life, and the customs of Christian communities and the expanding state law influenced attitudes and practices concerning marriage, divorce, and family life in other cases as well. One need merely consider the tough resistance of the Catholic church, which in Hungary formed the majority of the population and had the most political influence, to the introduction of the civil institution of divorce, in the wake of which many Catholic husbands and wives preferred, after their marriages had fallen apart, to live with new partners in relationships which were illegitimate in the eyes of both the state and the Church rather than actually use the new civil institution to break their marriages. Though the parties in question may have considered their unlawful relationships real marriages and may have raised the children born of these unions whom they were compelled to introduce into the registers as illegitimate. As they did not seek divorce in the civil courts, they could do little more than wait for the uncertain, legally risky situation to come to an end when the spouse with whom they were still legally married died. Instances of “cohabitation,” which became increasingly common over the course of the nineteenth century, and in particular this special type of relationship (a relationship between a couple which could never enjoy the recognition of the Church or the state because the bond of marriage had not been dissolved) remain largely invisible to the historian because of a lack

46 *A Magyar Szent Korona Országainak 1910. évi népszámlálása*, 162–65.

of sources, similarly to the unregistered ritual Jewish marriages, divorces, and remarriages.

In the case of the Jewry, it is particularly clear how the expanding state and its offices (the government, the courts, the statistics bureaus) started to wield power over the definition of family. Rabbis and the communities in question no longer defined what sorts of partnerships could legally be considered “families” (and what sorts could not), as this role had been wrested from them by the state. The state decided which “bonds” would be regarded as marriages, and the state keep records of these bonds. And it was the state, furthermore, which then decided, whether a child would be considered legitimate or not. Only a marriage which had been entered in accordance with the laws of the state could be broken up legally, and if they sought to remarry, men and women who had gotten divorced had to remarry in accordance with the laws of the state if they wanted to found a new family and ensure that any children born of their new union would be regarded as legitimate. Ritual marriages were considered “cohabitation,” and the children born of them were illegitimate. Ritual divorces were regarded as non-existent by the state, and ritual remarriages again were merely considered instances of “cohabitation.” If a Jewish couple entered a marriage which, from the point of view of state law, was legal but the husband and wife then divorced according to religious ritual, they were behaving in a manner that did not conform to and was not recognized by civil law, and this entailed various risks (including questions pertaining to marital properties, alimony, and the enforceability of inheritance claims). If one of the two spouses were then to enter a new marriage, this was considered a crime. The situation was complicated by the fact that, until the introduction of the institution of civil marriage, a “ritual marriage” was recognized by the state as a “Church” marriage if it were done in a manner that corresponded with the laws in force. With the introduction of civil marriage and the consequent legal irrelevance of “Church” acts, the state took control over the formation of families for good. What is very clear in all this is simply the process whereby the “modern family” came into being.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The Economy of Medieval Hungary. Edited by József Laszlovszky, Balázs Nagy, Péter Szabó, and András Vadas. East Central and Eastern Europe in the Middle Ages, 450–1450 49. Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2018. 736 pp.

As the subtitle to the introduction to this book reveals, this volume is about history, sources, research, and methodology. The introduction, which is almost 40 pages long, was written by the four editors, and as it makes clear, this book is not a conventional economic history. It is a book which owes its creation to particular, country-specific conditions and a very unusual personal and institutional constellation. Books which are so well integrated and which, from the perspective of the contributions of which they consist, are so coordinated and interrelated (the various contributions often intertwine in an interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary manner), do not just come into being. There's a special story, a special will behind it. Well-received economic histories of the past, such as those by Henri Pirenne, Adriaan Verhulst, and Michael McCormick, were almost always written by individuals. Especially in the humanities, this is still common today, and the national funding of scholarly work often only makes individual research possible. However, a field such as economic history has to be examined today in an interdisciplinary manner. Only then can a work offer scholarly "added value." The editors and authors of the book have taken on the comparatively more arduous approach of coming from different disciplines to work jointly. Such a path requires coordination, communication, and determination. It also requires a great deal of energy, otherwise failure is inevitable. But the project on which this book was based itself had solid foundations. The Hungarian National Scholarly Research Fund (OTKA) provided support for a project entitled "Medieval Hungarian Economic History in the Light of Archaeology and Material Culture," the members of which were active from 2005 to 2008. The project leader, the late András Kubinyi (who passed away in 2007), was particularly effective as a leader. He was a teacher and colleague of many of the people who contributed to this book. His energy and persuasiveness as a scholar has shaped an entire generation. His interdisciplinary approach was groundbreaking and probably made this book, like its Hungarian predecessor, possible. The conditions of such a joint venture were not necessarily favorable. The editors present the development of the discipline in individual stages since

the seventeenth century, and they touch on caesuras such as 1918, differences in national histories, different languages spoken in the area under study, the scarcity of sources due to the Ottoman conquest, etc.

The book is divided into five major sections: Structures; Human–Nature Interactions in Production; Money, Incomes and Management; Spheres of Production; Trade Relations, and 25 persons contributed. The articles were cleverly chosen and the structure is logical. The concept works. Precise analyses are used to offer a broad overview of the subject, and contributions have important overlaps. The overall picture presented by the book touches on far more than economic history. The contributions offer insights into the history of economy, production, and material culture, and they make significant use of the disciplines of agricultural and environmental history, historical ecology, social history, constitutional history, historical demography, settlement history, migration history, and more.

The method adopted merits emphasis. For instance, it is notable that the author's biographies ("Notes on Contributors") are given at the beginning of the book, and not towards the end, as is customary. The contributors include historians, medievalists, economic historians, environmental historians, archeologists, archeo-zoologists, a numismatist, archivists, environmental scientists, and historical ecologists. They come not only from different disciplines, but also from different institutions, universities, academies, and archives. The significance of the Central European University in the creation of this work cannot be overestimated. One strength of the book is that the contributors are all specialists in their fields, but many of them work in an interdisciplinary manner. They have come together to form teams and have either already worked on an issue in an interdisciplinary manner or formed a team for the book project in order to combine their knowledge. The concept of integrating disciplinary contributions with interdisciplinary ones works. With this innovative approach, new standards have been set, not only nationally, but internationally. The work shows perspectives on how national research can be continued and how international networking can be achieved. The present volume makes it considerably easier for the reader to draw international comparisons, since it is now available in English. Many articles have already been published in English or German. Now, however, the Hungarian research has a completely different value, because it is not presented as part of (and contributes to) an overall picture. The book already offers some context by taking into consideration the international secondary literature, which is no longer as unbalanced as it used to

be. Now the outstanding Hungarian research can also be used on a large scale by the international community. It is no exaggeration to say that comparable results have not yet been achieved at the “national” or country level. This is what makes the volume so important and valuable. Moreover, though it was written by specialists for specialists, it will still be of interest to a wider readership. The authors have managed to write articles which will be of interest to specialists, students, and beginners. The illustrations, which complement the text well, also contribute to the appeal of the book. In summary, the editors have compiled a showcase for Hungarian research on economic history understood in the broadest sense. The contributors raise insightful and interesting questions, and the book offers an overview of the secondary literature, the relevant methods, and the sources on the respective themes. Together with the rich illustrations, this makes the work a useful handbook which will be of interest to a wide audience.

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Das Wiener Fürstentreffen von 1515: Beiträge zur Geschichte der Habsburgisch-Jagiellonischen Doppelvermählung. Edited by Bogusław Dybaś and István Tringli. Budapest: Research Centre for the Humanities, Hungarian Academy of Sciences, 2019. 479 pp.

The book under review is a collection of articles based on the presentations held at a conference entitled “The Congress of Vienna 1515: Middle Europe between Habsburgs and Jagiellons,” which was held in Vienna on April 15–17, 2015. The conference was organized as part of a cooperative effort among Austria, Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia. Renowned experts from these countries participated in the conference, and this book is the product of their research and their presentations. It consists of 17 articles which touch in some way on the 1515 Congress of Vienna. The articles are coherent and strictly focus on the main topic of the book. It was thus possible to bring scholars from a range of backgrounds together and offer deep analyses of the questions at hand, many of which are not overly familiar in the secondary literature. I will not analyze all the articles separately, but rather will focus on the major problems discussed.

The main issue which was discussed is the political situation of this part of Europe, which was shaped by the competing political interests of the Habsburgs and the Jagiellons, which gave political meaning to the Congress and urgency to relations between the Papacy and Central Europe. The contributors to the book offer thorough descriptions and analyses of the standpoints of the countries that participated in that Congress. This furthers an understanding of the complicated situation in Europe at the time. Krzysztof Baczkowski, an outstanding Polish historian and an expert in Polish-Hungarians relations, challenges the negative assessment in Polish historiography of the consequences of the Congress for Poland in his article. According to Baczkowski, the Congress was a tremendous triumph of Polish diplomacy and the key to Polish stabilization in sixteenth century, which has been characterized in Polish historiography as a “golden age.” Pál Fodor and Géza Dávid analyze relations between Hungary and Turkey at the beginning of sixteenth century, and they identify three factors that were crucial to Hungary’s political situation: the idea of a fight against Turkey, which was, they claim, merely an empty slogan used to justify personal politics in each country; the changing standpoint of Poland and Venice after their defeats at the hands of Turkey at the end of fifteenth century, which prompted them to adopt much more conciliatory policies towards the Ottoman Empire; the standpoint

of Turkey, which tried to make use of tensions among the Christian countries of Europe. Jacek Wijaczka examines the rivalry between the Habsburgs and Jagiellons and tries to determine why the Jagiellons were unable to hold onto power in Hungary and Bohemia. Janusz Smolucha describes the Papacy's standpoint towards the Middle and Eastern Europe at the time of the Congress. Antonín Kalous examines the sources in Bohemia's archives which are relevant in some way to the Congress. Manfred Holleger and István Tringli analyze the political plans of Maximilian Habsburg and Vladislaus II.

Alongside the articles focused on political issues, some of the contributions show how the Congress was seen by its participants. Tibor Neumann offers a list of the people who took part in the Congress. As it was a private event, only people who were trusted by the king were invited. This made it possible to reconstruct the positions of nobles at the king's court. Neumann examines whether or not, during the reign of Vladislaus (who is characterized in the secondary literature in Hungary as having been a very weak king), one could speak about a king's party or about people trusted by the king. According Neumann, one could. The article offers a lot of new, important information to our knowledge of the Congress, Vladislaus II, and his court.

Some of the contributions offer analyses of the 1515 Congress of Vienna from the perspectives of the elite of the host cities. In my opinion, this is an important standpoint from which to consider the events of the Congress, and the inclusion of this viewpoint enriches the collection. Judit Majorossy describes how the Congress was perceived by the elite of Pressburg (Pozsony in Hungarian, today Bratislava, Slovakia) and how it influenced their lives. She also presents information concerning the incomes and expenditures of the city in connection with the Congress. She concludes that the elite of Pressburg saw no significant difference between this Congress and other important events which took place in the town. Juraj Sedivy analyzes so-called *memorium*, forms of the commemoration and representation used by the town's elites. Bence Péterfi looks at interrelationships between politics and diplomacy, and he offers a new point of view from which to consider the problem of real politics. He examines the rhetoric of the 1491 Treaty of Pressburg and explains how it was understood in reality. Political rhetoric and the reality turned out to be totally different.

Several contributors discuss the cultural transfer of the Congress and the dual-marriage which took place during this event (Piotr Tafilowski, Christian Gastgeber, Ivan Gerat, and Elisabeth Klecker). Tafilowski examines images of the Ottoman Turks in European literature at the time. Christian Gastgeber

compares two reports from the meeting written by Johannes Cuspinian and Riccardo Bartolini, and Ivan Gerat compares how the events of the Congress were depicted in the woodcut made by Albrecht Dürer and the painting in St. Elisabeth cathedral in Košice. Elisabeth Klecker considers the importance of connections between the University of Vienna and the Congress, and she identifies two people who played important roles, Johannes Cuspinian and Joachim Vadian. Some of the contributors consider the consequences of the Congress. Orsolya Réthelyi, for instance, describes the court lives of Maria of Habsburg and Anna Jagiellon after the Congress and before their marriages.

In conclusion, this impressive collection of conference papers improves our knowledge of the Congress of Vienna. It brings unfamiliar and important problems to the fore and provides analyses which show the Congress of Vienna from different points of view: international politics, the perspective of the burghers of the host cities, the roles of the host cities, the cultural context of the Congress, and cultural transfers. According to the introduction, the aim of the collection was to provide thorough analyses of the circumstances of the Congress, the dynastic plans of the Habsburgs, and the political, social, and cultural contexts in the countries which participated. This goal has been admirably achieved.

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Život u srednjovjekovnom Splitu: Svakodnevnica obrtnika u 14. i 15. stoljeću [Life in Medieval Split: Everyday Life of Craftsmen in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries]. By Tonija Andrić. Biblioteka Hrvatska povjesnica, Monografije i studije, III/79. Zagreb–Split: Croatian Institute of History, Department of History at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences in Split, 2018. 329 pp.

This volume constitutes a valuable contribution to the study of an urban social group which has essentially been neglected in recent scholarship on society in communities on the eastern Adriatic. While there has been a great deal of intense research on this region lately, historians have tended to focus more on the nobility and the wealthy citizenry, particularly merchants. The last monographs dealing especially with crafts and craftsmen as a social group were published in 1951 (Dragan Roller) and 1979 (Josip Lučić), and they both deal exclusively with Dubrovnik, while for other Dalmatian cities, one finds only subsections on crafts(men) in overall histories of the cities, e.g. for Zadar (Nada Klaić/Ivo Petricioli 1976) and Šibenik (Josip Kolanović 1995). The only recent exception, alongside Andrić's book, has been several articles on the craftsmen of Rab by Meri Kunčić, and Kunčić is expected soon to synthesize her findings into a monograph. Some attention has also been given by art historians to specific artisans, such as painters (Emil Hilje), goldsmiths (Marijana Kovačević), stonemasons (Emil Hilje, Ana Plosnić Škarić) and sculptors (Igor Fisković), and in the last decade, several studies were written on apprentices as part of studies on youth (Tonija Andrić, Florence Sabine Fabijanec, Marija Karbić, Zoran Ladić). Therefore, this book, which is based primarily on an immense number of non-published notarial documents preserved in the State Archive of Zadar, marks a milestone in the social history of Dalmatian craftsmen. It also fills in a big gap in the social and economic history of late Medieval Split.

The time range covered is limited by the fact that, despite the relatively significant number of Medieval narrative sources (the most important of which is the thirteenth-century Chronicle of Thomas the Archdeacon), notarial documents in Split are only preserved from the 1340s, in contrast with Trogir, Dubrovnik, and Zadar. After presenting crucial information on urbanism in Medieval Split (pp.5–17), in which some more precise maps would have made a welcome addition, in the chapter on social structure (pp.19–83), Andrić presents existing historiographic projections on the demographic and

ethnic composition of Split in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. She is inclined to use a cautious estimate of the population of Split at the turn of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000), which probably dropped to 3,500 at the beginning of the fifteenth century.

In her estimate of the ethnic composition of the population of the city which did not belong to the nobility, she accepts the method of using the origin of the surname as the basis for ethnic affiliation. According to this method, in the second half of the fourteenth century (1368–1369) and in the middle of the fifteenth (1443–1453), the great majority of the non-noble population was of Slavic origin (90.47 percent and 90.76 percent, respectively). This method, although not entirely reliable, is still better than taking only given names into account, only 51.72 percent of which were Slavic. If one considers only the craftsmen in the city, more than 80 percent were from Split or the surrounding district by origin (87.87 percent and 85.54 percent respectively).

In the fifteenth century, there were more artisan immigrants from other communes and from Italy, while the number of artisans from the hinterland was at the lowest, since the immigrants from the hinterland usually entered the circle of servants and non-qualified laborers. Andrić is prudent to note that the legal division between non-noble citizens (*cives*) and inhabitants (*habitatores*), which is often taken as the division between richer merchants and intellectuals (such as notaries, physicians, and teachers) on the one hand and members of the poorer artisan class on the other, did not apply to artisans, since part of the craftsman population belonged to the communal citizenry, for which one of the main conditions was possession of one's own house. These people were mostly artisans whose trades were among the more artistic crafts (painters, stonemasons, and goldsmiths) or artisans who practiced crafts which required more advanced technology and higher investments, such as boat repairing, fabric-dyeing, and cloth-making. Along with traders, they could lead lives which in many ways resembled the lives of members of the nobility. For instance, they were not unlikely to have luxurious homes, elegant garb, and good food. As examples of one such artisan, Andrić examines the cases of *aromatarius* Lappus Zanobii and famous master stonecutter Juraj Dalmatinac (George of Mathew *Dalmata*). Their larger incomes made it easier for them to invest in land, which along with trade, would provide even better income. However, most artisans were *habitatores*, who lived solely off their physical labor, although they could

also supplement this income by buying or renting a small piece of land. All artisans were involved in trade and sold the products they made, although only a minority could export their products.

In the chapter on economic activity (pp.85–149), Andrić takes into account all types of business activities in which artisans engaged, including business with land, houses, and other real estate, as well as activities in trade and seamanship. She analyzes all the artisans of Split, regardless of their social status as citizens or inhabitants, focusing on the economic aspects of their activities more broadly understood, instead of narrowly limiting her study to their crafts (the work they did with their own hands) as their main sources of income. Still, she rightfully pays more attention to the group of lesser artisans (usually in the status of *habitatores*), since they not only formed the majority in sheer numbers, but they have also been somewhat neglected in the secondary literature. Her discussion does not include activities like the aforementioned intellectual pursuits or millers and innkeepers (sometimes also treated as crafts in the historiography), nor for that matter does she include servants. She estimates that roughly one fourth of the population of the city were craftsmen (27.08 percent of roughly 3,500 inhabitants). If this number is added to the number of people who were engaged in service activities, sailors and small merchants, the total would come to more than half of the population. Craftsmen involved in leather production (45.14 percent) constituted the largest group of artisans, followed by craftsmen working in carpentry (16.57 percent), textile production (15.42 percent), and the more artistic crafts (10 percent). Andrić analyses each group of crafts, and she also considers the organization of confraternities and training of apprentices (151–202), skillfully combining quantitative analysis of data from various types of notarial sources (business and private documents) with examples from the lives and careers of particular artisans.

The most interesting part of the book is perhaps the part on the everyday lives of craftsmen (pp.203–74), which provides for us the first presentation in the secondary literature on housing, clothing, jewelry, alimentation, marriage, and the marital lives and positions of women (who often contributed a great deal to the income of a family). Most craftsmen lived in the new Medieval part of the city (outside of Diocletian's palace, the so-called *civitas vetus*, but within the new Medieval walls), but not in the suburbs, which were populated predominantly by hired fieldworkers. According to data from wills, on average, only one child per family survived into adulthood, a figure which matches

results found in the secondary literature on late Medieval towns in the region (Zdenka Janeković Römer, Katalin Szende, Marija Karbić). Altogether, this book breaks the long silence on the lives and labors of the numerically largest part of Dalmatian communal society. It will undoubtedly become a model for similar research on other cities.

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Erdélyi országgyűlések a 16–17. században [Transylvanian Assemblies in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries]. By Teréz Oborni. Budapest: Országház Kiadó, 2018. 424 pp.

Teréz Oborni's work on the assemblies which were held during the period of the independent Transylvanian principality, published as the latest addition to the series on parliamentary history by Országház Publishers, provides a detailed summary of the findings of the secondary literature, along with maps and valuable source and textual illustrations, as well as contributions from her own archival research. Oborni has done a broadly conceived study of the history of the Transylvanian assemblies using methods and sources relevant to institutional, legal, and political history. She pays special attention to shifts in the complex relationships between the two great powers, the Habsburg Monarchy and the Ottoman Empire, which to a large extent determined the fate of the principality. According to her, the balance of power between the princes and the estates of Transylvania was subject to change in response to shifts in diplomatic relations between Transylvania and the two great powers.

In the first chapter, Oborni offers an overview of the distinctive conditions of constitutional law and social structure in Transylvania, which determined the state of affairs in the principality, situated in the eastern part of the Kingdom of Hungary, beginning with the end of the Middle Ages. She points out that the so-called "voivodes" (chief officers appointed by the Hungarian king) obtained power over the three Transylvanian estates, the so-called "natio" (the nobility, most of which was Hungarian, the Székelys, and the Saxons). The estates were united by their shared need to protect their privileges from the voivodes and the necessity of defending the region from the Turks, which became one of the foundation stones of the Transylvanian principality's future. Oborni deals with the diplomatic aspirations of 1530–1540 in depth, which were aimed at reconstituting the country, which had been split into two and then three parts (after 1541) due to the so-called dual royal election, which took place after the Battle of Mohács (1526). These aspirations were doomed to failure owing to the political and military situation. The state which came into being on the soil of the historical Transylvania and the surrounding eastern Hungarian counties (the so-called Parts, or Partium), which could be seen as a sort of "Eastern Hungarian Kingdom," arose under the governance of the son of John Szapolyai, Queen Izabella, and, mainly, the governor, György Fráter, the Bishop of Várad.

In the 1540s and 1550s, the Transylvanian parliaments played a vital role in the creation of the state and in passing legislation and writing the new constitution of the principality. During this process, the estates and Queen Isabella attempted, by and large successfully, to preserve the traditional Hungarian institutional structure. The constitutional legal status and the borders of Transylvania and Partium remained uncertain until the Treaty of Speyer, which was signed in 1571 by Maximilian II and John Sigismund Szapolyai, when John Sigismund assumed the title of “reigning prince of Transylvania and Parts of Hungary” and renounced the title of “elected king.”

The second chapter gives a chronological overview of the legislative work leading to the Treaty of Speyer and the creation of the necessary diplomatic preconditions. However, the Ottoman Empire, which had officially recognized the Transylvanian estates’ right to elect the prince without restriction (*libera electio*) in 1567, still treated Transylvania’s rulers as vassals of the Porte and always required negotiations regarding the person of the future prince beforehand. The Habsburg kings went on to consider the Transylvanian territory as an inseparable part of the Holy Crown of Hungary, and they referred to its leaders as voivodes, thus expressing its subordination to the Habsburg House.

In the third chapter, Oborni explains the problem of strong princely power as opposed to the weak estates, considering the period between the symbolic date of 1571 and 1690, the end of the independent Transylvanian Principality and the beginning of its the integration into the Habsburg Monarchy. She notes that the Transylvanian Principality could be considered a constitutional monarchy led by a prince, within the framework of which the orders possessed certain political rights in theory, though in practice they could not assert them sufficiently, especially during the princely elections or in times of political crisis.

The huge fiscal and familial landed properties and other fiscal incomes contributed to the overwhelming superiority of the power of the rulers. The unicameral Transylvanian parliament represented an undeveloped system, which was typical of the easternmost parts of the continent. The three *natio*s sent their delegates to the diets, and some higher officials of the government, the members of the Princely Council and the High Court, certain bishops, and church vicars participated on invitation (they were the so-called *regalists*). The Catholic clergy, which lost its significance due to the Reformation, did not form an independent order in Transylvania, in contrast with developments in Hungary and Western Europe. The first list on the parliamentary presence of towns situated in the

Székely Land and in the Hungarian counties dates back to 1658, but at that time, in contrast with the towns in Hungary, the Transylvanian towns did not join forces to protect their interests. The essentially horizontal division of the estates at the diet was shattered by the strengthening of the princely power in the government and legislative sphere through the so-called council order (*tanácsí rend*), consisting of the chief officers of the prince and the high-ranking members of the Princely Council. Though the latter could have evolved into an upper house following the bicameral system's pattern of development, it was never institutionalized. Oborni refutes the widespread view in Romanian historiography according to which Romanians were deliberately excluded from the exercise of political rights. They did not form a separate order, as Romanians appeared in Transylvania sporadically and slowly, and they settled down only later and thus could not obtain the same privileges as Saxons or Székelys. Furthermore, the secular Romanian elite integrated into the Hungarian nobility, which was open both from a social and an ethnical point of view.

In the fourth chapter, Oborni states that the estates occasionally concluded or renewed the so-called unions to preserve Transylvanian unity and protect their privileges against the princes. In doing so, the three orders mutually guaranteed the preservation of one another's prerogatives and privileges, and for the first time in 1588, they set the conditions on the basis of which the ruler was to be elected.

The fifth chapter offers an analysis of the day-to-day operation of the diet and its legislative work, even though no detailed minutes or verbatim records of the meetings were drawn up. A diet was convoked once or twice a year in peacetime and four or five times during moments of political crisis. The reigning prince's role as legislator was far greater than that of the estates, who used these occasions to remedy local grievances, since, due to the lack of information and without authorization, they could not intervene in more serious political issues. Financial, military, and foreign affairs were almost entirely within the sovereign's competence. The strongest trump card in the hands of the estates in Western and Central Europe was voting the tax in opposition to the interests of the ruler, however, the Transylvanian diet voted the different taxes obediently throughout the era with only a few exceptions.

Oborni's new volume analyzes the institution of the Transylvanian assemblies from a multifold perspective, drawing on sources from political, diplomatic, and legal history. She dispels several misconceptions and offers more subtle understandings of particular aspects of this history with a

source-based approach. She also draws on new findings in the secondary literature on Transylvanian social history, mostly prosopography, which, in the future, may open new paths for the study of the Transylvanian social history of politics.

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Házasság Budán: Családtörténetek a török kiűzése után újjászülető (fő) városból 1686–1726 [Marriage in Buda: Family Histories in the (Capital) City Reborn After the Expulsion of the Turks]. By Eleonóra Géra. Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2019. 291 pp.

The new monograph by Eleonóra Géra, which was published as part of the series of publications of the “Momentum” Family History Research Group, examines the structures of families in Buda at the turn of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Géra focuses on a period of several decades which were rife with conflict, crisis, and strife because of the series of military conflicts and economic and natural disasters (including the struggles to recapture the city from the Ottoman Turks, floods caused by the Danube River, epidemics of plague, and the general sense of uncertainty which followed the outbreak of the War of Independence led by Ferenc II Rákóczi). The community on which she focuses consisted of burghers (i.e. people with the rights of denizens of a free city) who for the most part were German-speaking, and she examines families formed through marriage, family networks, and the different and shifting family constructs which arose under these circumstances.

In the course of the various “turns” which were introduced into the historiography in the 1970s and 1980s (the social turn, the spatial turn, and the cultural turn), research which sought to reconstruct the prevailing forms of cohabitation in the early modern era (research which was structured around the study of patterns and models based on the operational terms “family,” “marriage,” and “household”) rewrote or at least modified the thesis statement of John Hajnal concerning family and household models (which was based on the West-East paradigm) and the ideas of Otto Brunner concerning the “large-household family” (*grosse Haushaltsfamilie*). But beginning in the 1990s, interpretations concerning the internal functioning of the family began to change significantly, in no small part because of the influence of approaches to the study of cultural history which dealt with the division of labor and emotional life within the early modern family. Eleonóra Géra’s book, which can be read as a study of the history of crisis, a social and women’s history, and a social-anthropological analysis, makes a substantial methodological contribution to the latter interpretative framework. In her reconstruction of the agents and mechanisms of the resilient strategies which structured the matrix created by the narrower family networks and the broader community of the city of Buda, she does not strive to arrive at or create a theory. Her method begins to become clear

in the course of her narrative, which presents the shorter and longer stories that she reconstructed using an ensemble of empirical sources of various genres and styles and also of varying degrees, at the time they were created, of public access (the record books of city council meetings, council correspondence, juridical documents, last wills and testaments, inventories of bequests, etc.).

The first seven chapters of the book (which form a larger section) examine the various ritual forms of cohabitation based on marriage, including the selection of a potential spouse, engagement, and the planning and organization of the wedding and the wedding feast. This is followed by a discussion of motives for remarriage and the economic concerns and challenges. The presentation of the various forms of married life comes to a close with a discussion of cases of conflict which arose between husband and wife in the course of a marriage and often led to legal separation (situations such as domestic violence, adultery, or fornication). The second larger thematic section presents the circumstances and possible variations of widowhood. One finds descriptions of widows with small children of their own or with stepchildren, as well as widows who were members of the burgher class or guilds and who were capable of living independently. One also finds descriptions of the varying fates of children who had been orphaned and lived under the care of a stepparent or guardian or, in some cases, siblings who had reached the age of adulthood. There is a separate chapter on the various networks which unquestionably provided a form of physical and ethical protection. I am thinking of networks which were based on blood relations and the horizontal bond among siblings, brothers-in-law, and sisters-in-law and which to some degree could be said to have constituted the whole of the urban society. These networks also were shaped by a sense of belonging to a shared ethnic group, a shared confession, and a given part of the city. The third larger section of the book contains numerous and varied case studies of positive statements made (for the most part out of a sense of solidarity among women or Christian mercifulness) about individuals who found themselves in difficult circumstances through no fault of their own, such as maidens (young, unmarried women) left without any real protection or shelter in the tumultuous life of the city, single, poor widows, destitute orphans, and children who had been adopted based on a verbal agreement only. This section also addresses the fates of groups which, for various reasons, ended up on the periphery of city society (these stories are first and foremost the stories of women and children). We read diverse tales of the fates of children born outside any family constellation or from common law marriages, as well as stories of men who were in dysfunctional marriages

and ended up in bigamous relationships, their abandoned wives, people who, because of flood, fire, or some other disaster, ended up destitute, the residents of the city hospital and almshouse, and the nameless souls who lived respectable lives as impoverished denizens of the city or as vagabonds who were looked on with suspicion.

Géra draws persuasive conclusions connected to the conceptual framework created first and foremost in the German scholarship on the history of the family (*Familienforschung*). The internal order that was established by the German-speaking families who settled in Buda in the time period under discussion in the book essentially followed the models which these families had brought with them. Thus, this order did not differ fundamentally from the models of order prevailing in the smaller and larger cities on the continent which belonged to German cultural influence. In the ideal marriage (around which the ideal family was structured), the spouses were bound by *eheliche Liebe*, or in other words, mutual respect, solidarity, and trust, which were interpreted as brotherly love in the Christian sense. This bond, which can be seen as an alliance based on common interest and which involved emotional ties on the spiritual level, made it possible for a married couple to preserve their wealth, maintain their families, and create some degree of continuity. This model of marriage is tied to the concept of the *frommes Haus*, which was seen as the greatest contentment to be found on this earth for the Christian man of the time. At the same time, in the life of the family, alongside relationships among blood relatives and relationships through marriage, the communal networks which created the tissue of society also played an important role. Anyone who was capable, over the course of his or her life, of maintaining his or her honor and reputation could count on receiving help, in the event of the death of a direct blood relative, from the network designated by the term *Ehrengesellschaft*. Géra convincingly draws a line between the constructions and models of marriage before the middle of the eighteenth century and the constructions and models of marriage which came to prevail after this. In other words, she identifies the process in the course of which the emotional bond known as *eheliche Liebe* transformed into the arguably milder *hingebende Liebe*, or “devoted love.” While in the period of crisis on which Géra focuses, the income earned by a head of household in the burger community through his primary employment was not, for various reasons, enough to maintain the family and it was necessary for husband, wife, children, and other relatives living with them to work as an ensemble, because of the influence of the ideological trends which began to emerge in the 1750s (Protestant pietism, the Enlightenment) the place

and the roles of women and men within the family began to acquire significantly different meanings.

The book contains an appendix with a section of entries and notes in German and Latin from the records of the meetings of the city council, which both illustrate the different forms of cohabitation and give the source-centered historical narrative authority and credibility. With this attractively designed book, Eleonóra Géra has made a particularly substantial contribution to the secondary literature on the urban, social, and women's history of Hungary in the early modern era. The stories she provides will add nuance from several perspectives to views and conclusions in the scholarship on the family, marriage, and women's roles, and they will also give new impetus to consider interpreting and reinterpreting the relevant sources.

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Egy tudós hazafi Bécsben: Görög Demeter és könyvtára [A Learned Patriot in Vienna: Demeter Görög and His Library]. By Edina Zvara. Budapest: Országos Széchényi Könyvtár–Gondolat Kiadó, 2016. 506 pp.

Edina Zvara, an expert with almost unmatched knowledge of the holdings of the Esterházy library in Kismarton, the history of libraries, culture, and the sciences in Hungary in the Enlightenment in general, and the (early) modern library collections in the Carpathian Basin, has undertaken another ambitious enterprise to offer an overview and summary of the career of a prominent figure of the Hungarian Enlightenment. Zvara has created a narrative of the life and work of Demeter Görög (1760–1833), a figure whose contributions to literature and book culture in Hungary merit comparison with the contributions of Miklós Révai (1750–1807) and Ferenc Kazinczy (1759–1831). The biographical portrait she has provided of Görög, who is only rarely mentioned in the secondary literature, is based primarily on accounts of contemporaries and a methodologically consistent analysis of the items from Görög's library found in Kismarton. With this focus on the career of a single prominent figure, Zvara has created a very colorful cultural history tableau, which offers us a portrait of an age and of cultural and scientific life in Hungary in the dynamic period at the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth.

The first half of the book offers a nuanced picture of Görög's life and personality. Zvara uses an array of carefully chosen citations from the writings of contemporaries and also several primary sources (some of which are new in the secondary literature), and of course she draws on the existing scholarship to present the different stages of Görög's life (beginning with his birth in Hajdúdorog) and the various things he accomplished, as a patron of the arts and sciences, in each of these stages. Zvara offers a sketch of Görög's life which touches on his very focused, deliberate, and thorough studies, his humility with regards to the sciences, and his admirable work as someone who labored to cultivate and further the arts and sciences. Coupled with his engaging, diplomatic personality, Görög seems almost to have been predestined to achieve the goals he set for himself. At the prompting of his patron András Bacsinszky (1732–1809), a Greek Catholic bishop in the city of Munkács (today Mukachevo, Ukraine), the young Görög became a part of the Kollonich family early on, where for many years (1787–1795) he was László's tutor, and in the course of his travels through Europe, he became his devoted companion. In 1795, when the Hungarian Jacobin movement was suppressed, Görög was again given a flattering and

prestigious opportunity. He became the tutor of Antal Pál (1786–1866), the son of Miklós Esterházy II (1765–1833), in Kismarton. After teaching for seven years, he was given an even more prestigious position. In 1802, he was given the office of head imperial educator in the Habsburg court in Vienna. First, he oversaw and guided the education of Archduke Joseph, and then he played a similar role in the rearing of heir to the throne Ferdinand and, later, Archduke Franz Karl, a role in which he remained until 1824. He was able, while moving in these circles in Vienna, to establish relationships with influential individuals, of which he was able to make good use for the rest of his life. He found talented patrons who provided support for his various organs of the press and also for poor but talented poets, and who also helped him coordinate (both financially and politically) the various initiatives he launched in support of culture and his homeland. He was thus able, together with some of his colleagues, to publish *A Hadi és Más Nevezetes Történetek* [War stories and other remarkable tales] from 1789 until 1791 and then its continuation, the Viennese *Magyar Hírmondó* [Hungarian Bulletin], from 1792 until 1803. He was able to have high-quality engravings made of the county maps used in *Atlas Hungaricus* and to plan other maps of the country and the world. This network also provided him vital assistance in the composition of an ampelographic work entitled *Azon sokféle szőlőfajoknak lejtroma* [A catalogue of the many kinds of grapes], which was published in Vienna in 1829, and he was able to collect varieties of grapes from all over the world and cultivate them on his estate in Grinzing.

In every era of history, the polymath as a figure would have been an impossibility without the support of repositories of knowledge. Demeter Görög had a library of several thousand books at his disposal, a significant share of which Zvara has managed to identify by using an inventory concerning additions from 1820 and the discoveries she made through her research to construct the holdings. The most detailed chapter of the book offers an analysis of the library holdings that Zvara was able to identify and a discussion of the importance of these works from the perspective of cultural history and the history of the sciences. We are given a good overview of Görög's library, including its books and manuscripts. In connection with the books, Zvara also offers an interesting examination of thematic focuses, in the course of which she discusses the reconstructed book catalogue included in the appendix, several items from which she mentions in the main section of the book, thus making the dry bibliographical information more interesting to the reader by putting it

in context. The first section comes to an end with an afterword, the sources cited and secondary literature, and a list of images.

The second half of the book consists of the documents listed in the appendix. Among the sources, which will be of great use to scholars interested in pursuing further research on the subject, one finds, for instance, Görög's letter of nobility, his last will and testament, his death certificate, poems that were dedicated to him, an array of prose works (by authors such as Mihály Csokonai Vitéz, Dániel Berzsenyi, and the aforementioned Miklós Révai), contractual texts concerning his responsibilities as a tutor, and various letters and communications written to or by him. This is followed by a list of the items removed from the reconstructed book list of the "scholarly patriot," the items which do not figure in the list but which Zvara has managed to identify, and other writings connected to printed matter which was published under Görög's editorship. The detailed indexes (two kinds of person and place indexes, an index of bibliographical information, and index of book owners) make the book complete.

Edina Zvara's book will be of particular interest to readers who seek further insight into the processes and mechanisms through which the arts and sciences were made to flourish in the Hungarian Enlightenment. A monograph which focuses with such admirable thoroughness on the career and life of a single individual, after all, offers far more than a mere discussion of his life's work. It offers the reader a typical "biography" of the whole era. The engaging presentation of the complex and intertwining network of relationships which evolved among patrons of the arts and sciences gives us insights into the intricate cultural-political labyrinth of a moment in history when interest in culture and the sciences and, in particular, in Hungarian culture and the sciences in Hungary burgeoned. Zvara merits particular praise for having painted a tableau of Görög's intellectual horizon and his pedagogical, journalistic, cartographical, viticultural, and other scientific and scholarly pursuits by using the items from this prominent polymath's arsenal of knowledge (i.e. the individual works in his library) as the fundamental points of reference.

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Landscapes of Disease: Malaria in Modern Greece. By Katerina Gardikas. Budapest and New York: Central European University Press, 2018. 348 pp.

In a time of ecological crisis, it is high time for historians to start writing histories that present how changes in the landscapes, social hierarchies, and state power cause and hasten or slow the spread of disease. It is similarly important to leave room in historical narratives for the needs and adaptation capacity of non-human species, even if these species are perceived as enemies of humans. Katerina Gardikas has the background knowledge to undertake such a venture alone. She has been active in medical history for decades, mostly publishing in Greek, but she has also published articles in English in the *Journal of Contemporary History* and in several collections of studies. She is a historian by training who has retired as associate professor in History and Archeology at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, one of the largest universities of Europe.

The history of the effects of malaria on human beings and human society is a complex narrative of how humans, Plasmodia (a group of unicellular eukaryotes living as parasites), and various mosquito species have interacted. The statement, “it is safe to infer that that the association between frequencies of β -thalassemia and of malaria are non-random” (p.74) manifests and underlines the importance of the approach Gardikas has adopted. The statistical non-randomness that Gardikas has found means that the frequency of malaria is such a deep structure in the past of human populations in the territory of Greece that it impacted the genetic outlook of humans. *Landscapes of Disease*, thus, is a narrative that presents nature and culture as intertwined and inseparable.

The first chapter provides the backdrop for Gardikas’s approach, as it presents the state-of the-art and history of the research on the evolution and life cycle of the two types of Plasmodium that are most relevant and deadly in the Mediterranean region, vivax and falciparum.

The three chapters that follow focus on geographical differences, social and military history, and cultural history, respectively. In fact, all aspects are present in each part. The chapters are distinguished more by the writing strategies used in them.

The nearly book-long second chapter consists of seven case studies which describe different geographical patterns during the modern era. Gardikas partially borrows her understanding of landscape from another Greek historian, George Dertilis, though her definition is one that should be kept in mind:

“landscapes are understood not merely in a physical sense but also as a ‘human-environmental interactive sphere, transforming over time;’” landscapes are shaped both conceptually and ecologically by the cultural interaction among humans and by evolutionary transformations that also involve other species, and constitute places upon which past events have been described, sometimes subtly, on the land.” (p.47) These cases are based on early twentieth-century surveys for which local medical doctors provided information. Gardikas included places that have been notorious for the relatively high incidence of malaria for millennia and that were also sites where land reclamation and drainage were extensive in modern times, along with a newly colonized hilly area and a town. Gardikas stresses that averages often mask high local incidence of malaria, and that even general rules, such as elevation, do not always mean that the malaria situation is easy to control. Alternation between drought and rainy weather also had different impacts, depending on vectors such as species present and wind. Her sensitivity to the importance of human ecological nuance comes to the fore as she explains how dry weather, which has traditionally been considered healthier than wet periods, becomes conducive to the spread of malaria once flocks of sheep create dust that brings vector mosquitoes to sites that otherwise would have been out of reach for them. In fact, Gardikas’s key finding is the omnipresence of instability and her observation that we need to do away with the blanket approach to malaria and its history.

The chapter on the impact of social aspects, such as urban-rural relations, the presence of a military, and the agrarian economy, is just as extensively researched as the one on topography. In this part, the descriptions which Gardikas cites on the extent and persistence of human suffering caused by malaria are striking. “Kardamitis counted about 200–300 *Anopheles* [mosquitos – the reviewer] on average in merely one corner in each of the newly constructed houses and estimated that each home contained more than 2,000 *Anopheles*.. He then examined spleens and blood plates on his portable microscope and found mixed infections of all three types of malaria parasites in all fifty of the cases examined.” (p.154) The third chapter examines the contradictory situation in which, on the one hand, institutions and facets of the modern state in Greece provide far more information and opportunity for the study of local malaria patterns in a historical perspective, while on the other, the post-independence state failed to tackle malaria throughout the nineteenth century. This was partially due to the reliance on medicine instead of anti-mosquito measures. Dramatic political failures and warfare turned the ongoing crisis into disaster. This happened due

to the presence of British and French armies during World War I and to an even larger extent in World War II. Yet the presence of medical personnel and the increased availability of medicine had a positive influence in certain localities. The late wartime and post-war efforts that the UNRRA relief agency initiated were important steps forward, even if this primarily meant the application of DDT.

The fourth chapter discusses the cultural history of medicine, including the distribution and administration of quinine in the nineteenth century. Gardikas asserts that “patients’ inclination to seek medical attention may be associated with the degree of medicalization and the social construction of their own physical condition and that of their children.” (p.273) She stresses that the cultural and social history of malaria in the nineteenth century malaria is inseparable from the history of the gradual shift from miasmatic to germ theory in medical science. Although Gardikas is interested in finding out if regular quinine intake reduced β -thalassemia or sickle-cell anemia, which are forms of genetic resistance to malaria, she could not reach a definitive answer to this question, though she is inclined to say that it did.

As far as shortcomings are concerned, the number of cases and examples overshadows the contours of arguments in the two longer chapters. The reader would feel less overwhelmed if subchapters were indicated in the table of contents. However, *Landscapes of Disease* is an important step towards an approach to the study of history that takes other species and the physical environment into account. Gardikas is as confident with factors influencing vector species and Plasmodia types as she is with localities, surveyors, and data sets. In the last chapter, for instance, the focus on the social and geographical distribution and global circulation of quinine, coupled with a clear understanding of the role of medical doctors and other actor-networks in the process, offers ample proof of her ability to bridge social history, the history of medicine, and the history of commodities. The book is a fine contribution to the History of Medicine series of CEU Press.

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A Contested Borderland: Competing Russian and Romanian Visions of Bessarabia in the Late Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Century. By Andrei Cușco. Budapest—New York: CEU Press, 2017. 327 pp.

Andrei Cușco has broken new ground in international scholarship with his book on the prehistory of today's Moldavia's troubled identities, although he disclaims the role of pioneer. Moreover, he is attentive to multiple perspectives, from both the "hard" and "soft" sides of history, in accordance with Terry Martin's synthetic approach to imperialism, which he cites as his guiding principle. Aside from the competing visions in the title, Chapters 1 and 5 in particular also give a glimpse into the national affinities—or rather, the lack thereof—among contemporary Bessarabians, and also into cultural initiatives on the ground and roads not taken. To my mind, this dual scope is one of the main assets of the book.

On the former, his major claim is about the asymmetry between the Russian and Romanian visions. Imperial and nation-state projects, Cușco argues, had different ways of imagining and appropriating frontier regions. He also contends, however, and persuasively shows that both intellectual imaginaries drew massively from Western Orientalizing discourses. While apologists for Russian rule mobilized metaphors of the exotic, the pristine, and the backward when depicting Bessarabia, Romanian authors equipped themselves with Russophobic tropes of French (and, I should add, Polish) provenience. In another common element, both projects treated locals as mere props for their discursive construction of the Bessarabian space.

Regarding the intellectual horizons of said locals, Cușco recurrently makes the connection between the low levels of ethnic mobilization as late as the eve of World War I and the virtual absence of a home-grown intelligentsia in the province. Ordinary Bessarabian peasants were more responsive to calls for loyalty to the czar than they were with calls for ethnic solidarity with Romania, all the more so, since they felt better-off economically than their peers on the other side of the Prut River.

If Cușco falls short of his goal to write an "intellectual history of the Bessarabian problem," that is because of the fragmented structure of the book. Instead of laying out a more or less even and continuous timeline, he directs his attention to a few key or typical episodes. He makes an exposition of his lines of inquiry and summarizes many of his findings in a first chapter which is succinct and commendable, except for a lengthy aside on the nationalism of Romantic poet Mihai Eminescu. Then he combines two loosely connected subjects in

Chapter 2—the Bessarabian crisis of 1878 and the Russian administration of the Budjak region—to rush ahead to the year 1912 in Chapter 3.

Romanian reactions to the transfer of the three southern Bessarabian counties in exchange for northern Dobruđja, imposed on Romania at the Berlin Congress, as well as Mihai Kogălniceanu's role in turning public opinion around on this question are given more detailed coverage here than in Constantin Iordachi's *Citizenship, Nation- and State-Building* [2002] or Barbara Jelavich's *Russia and the Formation of the Romanian National State 1821–1878* [1984], which, however, would have merited mention in this context. The attention given to the perception of Dobruđja is justified here and does not distract from the analysis.

In the second half of Chapter 2, Cușco interrogates the archives and brings to light protracted debates in the Russian imperial civil service over what he calls the Ismail anomaly, the curious fact that the three Southern Bessarabian counties were not fully incorporated into the Russian Empire, but were given special status and were governed by Russian bureaucrats under the Romanian legal code introduced before 1878. While some Russian officials slammed this unique status as a reckless example of bureaucratic sloppiness, others presented it as a sound and deliberate administrative experiment and a civilizing mission. As the polemics spanned over the four decades of Russian sovereignty, I would have been interested to see full justice done to this puzzling anomaly, with more space devoted to it.

In Chapter 3, Cușco jumps to the 1912 Russian celebrations of the hundred-year anniversary of the conquest of the province, one in a series of imperial jubilees in the *début de siècle*, which operated with family metaphors in a bid to strengthen bonds of affection for the dynasty among peoples living on the empire's peripheries. Cușco offers an overview of the context and interprets the rhetoric of the celebrations, and he also points out that the centenary brought the grief over Bessarabia and the specter of unbridled Russian expansionism back into the forefront of Romanian public discourse.

Chapter 4 returns to the Romanian side by engaging with the writings of three intellectuals of Bessarabian birth who made careers in Romania: Bogdan Petriceicu Hașdeu, Constantin Stere, and Dimitrie C. Moruzi. Somewhat unexpectedly for a reader unfamiliar with contemporary stereotypes in Romania, all three had to struggle with a stigma on account of their “Russian” background. This chapter is rather digressive, in particular the twenty-two pages on Hașdeu's thought, only the last three of which deal with his relationship to Russia and none with his stance on the Bessarabian question.

Covering the period between the 1905 revolution and Romania entering the war in 1916, Chapter 5 is again more balanced. Cuşco's emphasis, however, clearly lies in the first years of the war, when, on the one hand, the mobilization and war propaganda submitted the Russian population to a rapid process of nationalization and, on the other, the question of Bessarabia became a significant argument in Romanian political debates about whether the country should join the war and, if so, on which side. While the first question has been the subject of intense research recently, the latter context is mostly familiar from Lucian Boia's *Germanofilii* [2009], even though Cuşco concentrates on the opinions of Bessarabian-born intellectuals.

As a comprehensive history of the topic, on balance, the book is a mixed bag, which may work better as a collection of essays than as a monograph and leaves several decades unaddressed. At the same time, it contributes with precious insights to the recent literature on nationalizing empires and imperialist nation-states from the unique viewpoint of a borderland so far rather neglected in that respect. It is a compelling read both for students of nationality policies in the late Romanov Empire and of Romanian nationalism.

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Embers of Empire: Continuity and Rupture in the Habsburg Successor States after 1918. Edited by Paul Miller and Claire Morelon. New York–Oxford: Berghahn Books, 2018. 366 pp.

The disintegration of the Austro-Hungarian Empire has been characterized in national historiographies as a sort of “zero hour” and total triumph for the newly emerged or enlarged nation states in Central Europe. This volume focuses, in contrast, on the question of what survived this great rupture. As Morelon underlines in her introduction, attention is given to the afterlife of the Empire and its successor states. Her considerations are based on Pieter Judson’s observation that “nation and empire were not binary opposites in the context of the Habsburg Monarchy, and [...] the regime’s collapse in 1918 was due to the state’s transformation under the pressures of war conditions rather than any internal nationalist tensions.” The Empire’s institutions, thus, should be understood as institutions which functioned relatively efficiently and successfully up to their official end. The research in this volume is based on local case studies and the examination of different institutional “pillars” of the Empire. This perspective allows the book to go beyond the still dominant paradigms of the nationally biased narratives (without negating them) and also to take a step back from the “Habsburg Myth” in the spirit of Claudio Magris and what later generations made of his concept, occasionally tempted to blur “the line between analyzing the myth and actually sustaining it.” The editors obviously know about the current state of research (ghost borders, concepts of loyalty, history of institutions, etc.), but they do not waste too much time on questions of theory, as the central concepts of “transformation” and “transition” are neither defined nor even delimited from each other.

The first of four parts explores the grassroots level in order to examine “the transition in local contexts across the region” with a focus on processes of coping with contingency. Gábor Egry’s instructive chapter compares two former territories of the Hungarian crown: Slovakia and Transylvania, both regions with large ethnic and religious minorities. He bases his survey on the assumption that in the transformation process, local societies and individuals were confronted with a set of tasks which previously had been undertaken by the state. National demarcation became less important in such moments. Subsequently, Egry asks “how the different regions expressed themselves politically and socially in this early state-building period.” In order to arrive at possible answers to this question, one should consider whether “the region” isn’t rather the product of

a “patchwork of local transitions” and therefore another constructed identity to be positioned, eventually, against the centralizing powers. Co-editor Claire Morelon’s study on interwar Prague shifts the focus from the periphery to the center. Morelon explores different approaches to the interpretation of regime change in the capital city of Czechoslovakia. She describes the difficult process of national self-discovery and self-organization, which led to “a very high level of distrust” of the new administration among the population. As a result, the disappointment, which rapidly followed the national triumph, provided a basis for the crises of the 1930s. Iryna Vushko presents the biography of the Polish-Austrian, Galician born politician Leon Biliński, who held the position of Minister of Finance in imperial Austria and in “New Poland.” As a member of an established expert elite, he was needed in the new national state in order to help form the new administration, while as a “Kakanian” he remained “suspect of national defiance,” especially for Polish nationalists, who accused him of favoring the Empire and never fully endorsing the Polish Republic. Marta Filipová presents a comparison of different major exhibitions before and after 1918 in Austria-Hungary and then Czechoslovakia in the period between 1873 and 1928. She finds it problematic that, before the fall of the Empire, Czechs, Romanians, Hungarians, Slovaks, and Moravians were predominantly depicted as peasants in contrast to the “more developed” Germans, depictions which implied different levels of civilization among the inhabitants of the Empire. While this form of inner colonialism seems to have been overcome after 1918, Filipová finds some parallels between the particular strategies of representing the state: e.g. the metaphor of “a bridge between the East and the West” was used at the *Weltausstellung* of 1873 in Vienna and at the Brünner Expo in 1928. Nevertheless, we need to question whether such strategies of both internal and external representation, which can perhaps be found at nearly every place at any time and which do not feature specific aspects of the concrete transformation process, should be researched in this volume.

The second part of the volume, dedicated to the Habsburg Army, is introduced by Richard Bassett’s “Reflections on the Legacy of the Imperial and Royal army in the successor states.” His essay provides a rough and eloquent though erratic biographical tour through the history of the Habsburg Army and its aftermath until the 1940s. More or less expedient forays lead from the seventeenth century to the present. Hardly a single German word is spelled correctly (for instance on a single page, page 129, one finds “Austrian Bundeswehr,” in “grossen Stil,” and “Scharfes Befehl”). Irina Marin’s chapter

on the “K. (u.) k. Officers of Romanian Nationality before and after the Great War” is, in contrast, source-based and analytically instructive. She states that loyalty was an important factor for Habsburg’s Romanian soldiers. There was no contradiction between national awareness and imperial allegiance. The Romanian officers went on to live these values after 1918, even within the new national setting of “Greater Romania.” John Paul Newman demonstrates the reverse side of such an attitude by dedicating his survey to the afterlife of the Austrian-Hungarian Army in Croatia. Many members of the army lost everything with the collapse of the Empire, and their identification with the new south Slavic state was weak. This generated tensions between a humiliated minority “culture of defeat,” which was “isolated, marginalized, but nevertheless present in the successor states,” and larger “cultures of victory.” The “defeated” regained their historical “meaning” with the emergence of the radical right: within the Ustaša movement, they experienced a “remobilization.”

The third part of the book is dedicated to further “pillars” of the Empire: Church, dynasty, and aristocracy. First, Michael Carter-Sinclair explores the role of the Catholic Church in the Austrian transformation process into a democratic republic. In this context, the connection with Rome as the heart of the Catholic world constitutes an interesting, unique layer of loyalty in the interwar setting. While the Catholic Church in Austria was pragmatic with regards to the new political circumstances and even participated personally in the politics of the republic, it changed its attitude in 1927 and displayed “its true antidemocratic colors by sanctifying the overthrow of the Austrian Republic.” The comparison with similar situations in other European states of the era helps situate the Austrian development in the international sphere. Nevertheless, a brief glance at other ideologically driven actors and institutions would have been useful to classify the Catholic Church as one important but by no means the only antidemocratic actor in the interwar period. In his chapter on “Central European Nobles during and after the First World War,” Konstantinos Raptis demonstrates, through the example of Count Harrach, that the upper nobility was able to cope with the decline of the Danube Monarchy much better than the members of the service gentry or the petty gentry. Together with the bourgeoisie, the latter experienced a massive social and economic decline. Christopher Brennan dedicates his contribution to the afterlife of the last emperor and king Karl I/IV. His death in exile in 1922 “elicited polarized and emotional reactions” not least because his person was easier to target than his “hollowed” predecessor Franz Joseph. The figure of Karl apparently became “everything to everyone”: “a sinner to anti-Habsburg Pan-

Germans and the republican left [...]; a saint for unshakable imperial loyalists and Catholics; and a cipher for those who saw him as a feeble and unimpressive figure of no consequence, barely worthy of a footnote in history.” Brennan makes some overly apodictic judgements, but he nonetheless shows convincingly how quickly a ruler can become obsolete, in contrast to his empire.

The last part of the volume, entitled “Processing the Empire’s Passing,” focuses on the culture of remembrance and the historiography. Christoph Mick contrasts two once important war monuments in Vienna: a rather pacifistic one at the Central Cemetery and the Heroes’ memorial at Heroes’ Square. Both were intended to give meaning to the enormous human losses in the war, and both were marginalized in the Austrian culture of remembrance, especially after World War II. Co-Editor Paul Miller presents the culture of memory around the heir to the throne, Franz Ferdinand, assassinated in 1914. Miller intends to offer a portrait of the archduke, rather than focusing on the thoroughly researched culture of remembrance surrounding Franz Ferdinand. This task is more complex than it seems at first, as becomes clear from the characterization Miller gives: “Franz Ferdinand was neither a foolish nor frivolous man. He was obstinate, insolent, arrogant, and abrupt. But if the Archduke knew one thing, it was that the Empire he would someday rule was in dire need of reform, and war would only endanger, if not undo, that eventually. This was not a small thing.” This is, unfortunately, a quite well-known thing, too, so the epistemological value of Miller’s enterprise remains low. Regrettably, he mixes the findings of his research with moralistic elements. The reader remains clueless about what to do with generalizations such as this one: “After all, if Austria could hardly avoid the fact that one of their own started World War II, they were far less ready to accept responsibility for the mythicized Monarchy’s role in the first.”

In his afterword, Pieter Judson reminds us of the still dominant ideal of nations and nation states especially after 1918. As this ambitious and, all in all, very successful volume shows, however, new approaches in the study of history will offer new perspectives on the intricate afterlife of the Habsburg Empire. With a view to the irreversibility of the events of 1918, it remains a question whether the largely neglected notion of “adaption” will lead us further than the (hitherto nevertheless very fruitful) binary concepts of “continuity and rupture.”

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Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945. Edited by Adela Hîncu and Victor Karady. Budapest: Pasts Inc.–Central University Press, 2018. 526 pp.

Offering an understanding of the periphery from within the periphery while avoiding the pitfalls of exceptionalism and provincialism, the ambitious collection of essays edited by Hîncu and Karady joins a growing tide of research that situates the histories of state socialist social sciences primarily in the framework of postwar modernization, rather than trying to explain its characteristics as the result of political captivity or attempting to deny this political captivity. The volume provides a kaleidoscope of disciplinary histories (mostly) under state socialism from the East Central and Southeastern European regions, revisiting epistemic continuities and discontinuities usually in a single national context, with the covert or explicit argument that epistemic changes were not necessarily closely related to changes in the political climate.

The editors had a broad pool of contributions to choose from. They drew on the proceedings of a conference (Social Sciences since 1945 in East and West: Continuities, Discontinuities, Institutionalization, and Internationalization) and a workshop (Cold War Epistemics Revisited: Resistance and Legitimation in the Social Science) which were held at the Central European University in Budapest and put together an impressive selection of geographically focused studies. The volume contains nineteen case studies, among which Hungary is significantly overrepresented, as more than third of the chapters deal with the Hungarian context. From among the countries of the region, Poland, Romania, Yugoslavia, Czechoslovakia, and Bulgaria are also present, and there is one chapter about the postwar social sciences in Portugal and one about the postwar social sciences in Estonia.

The introduction to the volume copes well with the daunting task of integrating the chronologically, methodologically, and disciplinarily divergent contexts into a single theoretical framework, although this also means that some of the contributions can now be read as ideal typical representatives of the theoretical framework, while others can be easily placed on a scale of applicability, with necessary outliers. The editorial effort to guide the readers with chronologically-thematically organized sections does not work very effectively for reasons of proportionality: the last part brought together several studies from late socialism and the post-transitional period, compared to the separate sections dedicated to a span of only a few years or a decade. While

it is commendable that, true to its theoretical premises, post-transitional developments are also taken as processes emanating partly from global postwar conditions, the otherwise coherent line of the volume might have been better preserved with a final section dedicated to late socialism only.

The first section, entitled *Misalignments: Modernization, Sovietization and De-Stalinization*, has the most links to broader debates concerning chronologies and ruptures in regional histories, engaging with key concepts of local and regional postwar narratives. That said, perhaps the authors of the essays in this section had most opportunity to situate their topics in relation to well-established critical theoretical frameworks. Agata Zysiak's Polish case study, which focuses largely on the involvement and agency of a single scholar, sociologist and rector Józef Chalasiński, sheds light on the concept of a state socialist university which was democratized from the perspective of access to higher education at the expense of scholarly autonomy, ultimately emphasizing the limited effect of Stalinization and the considerable decrease in educational inequality. Zoltán Ginelli reaches similar conclusions with regard to Stalinization within the context of the human geography of Hungary. Ginelli's article, however, is even more explicit in pointing out interwar continuities, which themselves are the most persuasive evidence in support the deconstruction of the concept of *Gleichschaltung*, which is often equated with the Stalinization of certain disciplines in Hungarian secondary literature. He argues against pro-grand rupture accounts, which in his assessment are forms of political revisionism. The emergence of party history in Hungary is primarily discussed through archival sources, as Anna Birkás is one of the handful of Hungarian scholars who wishes to investigate their activities without immediately dismissing their entire knowledge production as propaganda. Zoltán Rostás's careful distinction between different rehabilitation practices and their repercussions in Romanian sociology revolves around the legacy of a single person, Dimitrie Gusti, similarly to Zysiak's argument. The last contributor in this section is Eva Laiferová, who proposes a more traditional periodization of Slovak sociology. Laiferová singles out Slovak sociology within the Czechoslovak context (the state was only federalized in 1969), which is a rather peculiar decision, a decision and which, unfortunately, she does not explain.

The second section is dedicated to the history of sociology in the long 1960s and 1970s. It contains the only thoroughly comparative (while also transnational) contribution, an article by Jarosław Kiliński, who focuses on sociology in Poland and Czechoslovakia. Kiliński paints a complex picture of Polish sociology, which

for a time acted as the main mediator between scholars on either side of the Iron Curtain. Although Matthias Duller's contribution gives the impression that he is also going to deliver a comparative account, the first parts of his study use the Austrian context as an argument to shift the focus from political intervention to disciplinary histories. His central figure is Rudi Supek, a towering figure of Yugoslav sociology, and Duller is up to the intellectually rewarding task of conceptualizing his case study against the backdrop of the activities of the Praxis school. Adela Hîncu's chapter about Romanian sociology offers new insights into institutional dynamics, though it is primarily preoccupied with a nuanced depiction of the different pressures under which epistemic continuities and subversions took place. Bruno Monteiro analyzes developments in Portugal, complicating the arena of agencies with the local influence of the Catholic Church and the long shadow of a colonial legacy and adding another peripheral (and also the only non-state socialist) perspective to the volume.

The third section consists of contributions on the transnational flow of ideas in the 1980s, when most of the countries of the region (with the exception of Romania) were on the road of gradual (though not linear) liberalization. Both Eszter Berényi and László Gábor Szűcs approach matters of transnational knowledge exchange through materials published in disciplinary journals, which reveal a great deal about the discursive strategies used by Hungarian scholars when they dealt with Western literature. However, more discussion going beyond the larger, ideological framework and the language of critique and offering an assessment of the science or cultural policies would have been welcome. Jan Levchenko's study on the Tartu semiotic school introduces a unique institutional setting which reminds the reader of the epistemic anxieties surrounding Marxist revisionism elsewhere in the bloc. The internationalization of the social sciences is an important theme for all the contributions in this section, though only Corina Doboş and Bogdan Iacob problematized these anxieties explicitly. Doboş concluded that the shared demographic concerns of the scholars of postindustrial societies helped bridge the East-West divide, addressing the viability of a more integrated postwar framework as opposed to a cemented division.

The last section features contributions pertaining to late socialist and post-transitional knowledge production. Ágnes Gagyí convincingly argues for the connectedness of Hungarian economic reformers to global processes, building her case study on the ideas and positioning of power groups that were first formulated in the *Pénzügykutatási Intézet* [Financial Research Institute].

Aliki Angelidou discusses the institutionalization of Bulgarian sociocultural anthropology, tracing long-standing rivalries between ethnography and folklore. Emese Cselényi's analysis of publication strategies aptly demonstrates how the local geography of sciences (center-periphery relations within a given national context) remained resilient to the changing political climate. Zsuzsa Hanna Bíró's investigation of the effects of French and German schools of thought in post-1989 Hungarian educational sociology points to the dominance of the latter, while admitting the moderate interest in theoretical issues among Hungarian scholars in general. Kinga Pétervári's study attempts to offer a historicized account of the legitimacies of different agents who were involved in quite recent Hungarian law-making, sketching up a *longue durée* history of expert-bureaucrat rivalries.

The greatest virtue of *Social Sciences in the Other Europe since 1945* lies in its disciplinary variety and its ability to provide clearly formulated theoretical insights in a field in which, admittedly, a lot of the groundwork needs to be done, mostly in the form of uncovering neglected epistemic legacies or in the reinterpretations of seemingly incoherent biographies. It is also important to emphasize that the contributions can be read against the canons of their respective national disciplinary communities. The anti-totalitarian zeal which they often evince situates them immediately in an ongoing domestic debate and the very memory of the investigated disciplines. This volume will be useful for scholars who are interested in state socialist knowledge production in the region and especially to historians of (social) sciences and intellectual historians.

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Vanguard of the Revolution: The Global Idea of the Communist Party.
By A. James McAdams. Princeton–Oxford: Princeton University Press,
2017. 564 pp.

Thirty years after the fall of the Berlin Wall and over a century since the Bolshevik Revolution, the first question concerning James McAdams' elaborate monograph *Vanguard of the Revolution* is whether there is a need of another "global history of communism." Over the past decade several monographs and a series of collaborative "handbooks" dealing with the topic have appeared with leading academic publishing houses. For readers unfamiliar with the history of communism, the Soviet Union, China, Cuba and the Cold War, McAdams certainly provides a potentially good introduction to the topic. In this sense, the book seems to be geared towards a target audience of undergraduate and graduate students. Though a weighty volume, it is eminently readable and has a clear and engaging narrative arc spreading over its thirteen chapters.

As outlined in the introductory chapter, McAdams' main objective is to tell a story of the communist party that was conceived for "revolution" but grew into a "global" institution only to meet its demise. In the twelve chapters that follow, the reader is presented with a lengthy reflection on some of the key events and developments in the history of communism through the double prism of the "communist party as an idea" and the "communist party as an organization." Thus the second chapter discusses the evolution of the idea and concept of the communist party from the publication of Marx' and Engels' *Communist Manifesto* to the eve of the First World War. It is essentially a summary of the history of the First and Second Internationals with a geographic focus on Western Europe. The third chapter in effect turns to Russia, Lenin, and the Bolshevik Revolution and in doing so showcases the emergence of the "revolutionary party."

In the fourth, fifth, and sixth chapters the book discusses how the idea of the party was diffused internationally through the lens of the Communist International in the early 1920s and how it subsequently materialized in the Soviet Union under Stalin and in China under Mao respectively. The seventh and eighth chapters deal consecutively with the period of "high Stalinism" and the expansion of socialist bloc in eastern Europe, followed by destalinization and the Khrushchev period. The ninth chapter in turn focuses on Cuba and the rise of Fidel Castro as a charismatic leader expounding a "case-in-reverse" where the party was essentially created only after the revolution. The tenth chapter returns to China under the throes of Maoism until the aftermath of

the Cultural Revolution and the rise of Deng Xiaoping. It builds upon the juxtaposition of the revolution as the work of radicals and the party as the haven of moderates.

Chapter eleven is perhaps the book's most diversified when it comes to presented cases elaborates on what McAdams calls the "Brezhnev consensus" comprising of an era of reform, suppression, and stabilization of communist regimes from the late 1960s to the early 1980s. Predictably, the twelfth chapter presents the story of communism's demise in eastern Europe and the Soviet Union with the ensuing collapse of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union portrayed as "anticlimactic." The final chapter ends with a brief discussion of some eastern European and Russian post-communist successor parties and the trajectory of the Chinese, Cuban, and North Korean regimes into the twenty-first century.

McAdams pitches the book and its arguments towards both general readers and scholars. However, for a historian of communism reading this monograph the question arises whether and to what extent McAdams really presents something qualitatively new. The cited literature hails from a fairly general and limited bibliography and where primary sources are referred to they are usually quite known documents and texts in English translation. Moreover, despite its promising title the reader does not really learn that much about the concept of the communist party (or rather parties). Instead of venturing into a historicized and sociological analysis of political organization, the book presents a rather superficial outline based on ideas formulated in selected texts authored by prominent communist activists and leaders such as Marx' and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, Lenin's *What Is to Be Done*, Stalin's *Short Course*, Mao's *Chinese Revolution and the Chinese Communist Party*, or Castro's *History Will Absolve Me*.

As a result, *Vanguard of the Revolution* reads more like a synthesis of Cold War-era scholarship on communism than a potentially new perspective on the history of communist parties around the globe. McAdams posits the communist party as the primary challenger to the "liberal-democratic" party in the twentieth century, extrapolating this antagonism into a threat against liberal democracy based ultimately upon some "vague prophecies" first formulated in the *Communist Manifesto*. A fair reading of Marx' and Engels' seminal text in its rightful historical context would however need to concede that it also addressed what are now seen as basic human rights' issues and, in doing so, contained a blueprint for the now accepted setup of modern liberal democratic states at a time when Slavery still existed in the United States.

Admittedly, McAdams is not wrong that the text does not provide much details about what the “communist party” or “revolution”—two core concepts of the book—would entail. Thus, the book’s first chapters are perhaps rightfully concerned with a quest to retrace the historical crystallization of the revolutionary communist party as concept and practice. One therefore has to wait until the fifth chapter to encounter a discussion about the “functioning of the party.” Unfortunately, this is also the point of the book where McAdams misses an opportunity to provide a new perspective. Acknowledging the primacy of the Soviet state and the fact that following the Great Terror Stalin had basically destroyed the concept of the party, the McAdams also shies away from delving any deeper into the party as such. From that point onwards, barring two chapters on China and one on Cuba, the book turns towards the more standardized and perhaps even canonical Cold-War narrative of the history of communism in Europe. More so, this narrative seems to have been refreshed with what is en vogue in contemporary political science since in retelling the history of postwar communism McAdams contrasts Stalinism with populism, attributing the latter not only to the peasantist Mao, but to Khrushchev and Tito as well.

The book’s “global” perspective equally suffers from the fact that communist parties and movements are overshadowed in the narrative by the communist states and regimes. Soviet foreign policy is substituted for what was an international communist movement albeit an increasingly divided one. At most, a few “deviating” cases of communist regimes serve as an example of a (domestic) exception to the rule. The book does not venture into the postwar inter-party relations or the international communist and workers party conferences. The Global South seems for the most part absent. Where China or Cuba do feature, their role in the global communist movement is simply ignored. It is certainly regrettable that the book does not explore the idea of a revolutionary party in opposition to military regimes in Latin America or in a range of post-colonial settings from war-torn Vietnam to apartheid South Africa and how this compared to the Soviet bloc cases.

Although the reader is presented with the familiar facts about the rise of opposition to communism in the wake of the Helsinki process, reformist tendencies or schisms with the communist movement are rather glossed over. Neither are relations with the rich variety of socialist, Trotskyite or Maoist parties in the postwar era touched upon. The book’s narrative ultimately ends with the same old point of gravity that is the demise of communism in eastern Europe and the Soviet space. While these events indeed impacted the remaining communist

parties and post-communist successor parties as they abandoned the very core ideas that had led to their birth in the twentieth century, it was hardly the end as such of parties that call themselves communist. Instead, McAdams' narrative's ending is a pivot to another warning about threats to liberal democracy based on the example of communism. While this is an understandable and perhaps even self-evident conclusion about the nature of authoritarianism and dictatorship, it would have been perhaps insightful to mention that there where communist parties operated within the framework of liberal democracies, these parties and their members were often at the forefront of struggles for more democracy and human rights. The latter was a missive ultimately outlined in Marx' and Engels' *Communist Manifesto*, and this provided the ideas that led millions of activists to join communist parties around the globe.

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