

## ABSTRACTS

### Bácskai, Vera: Hunt for Husbands and Dowries

The case study presents the story of an unusual marriage. Both parties, as well as their respective families, employ a diversity of practices breaching contemporary norms and etiquette. The aristocratic groom is motivated to win the hand of the daughter of the ennobled rich Greek merchant by the supposed wealth of her dowry. In the meantime, the mother of the girl is out to find the best husband for her barely grown-up, illegitimate child.

The story of the marriage is known from two versions of the girl's own narrative. The first version, a lengthy detailed letter to her father, was written shortly after the marriage, in which she, blaming her mother for what had happened, pleads for the promised annuity. The second version was written during the divorce and blames everything on the dowry-shark husband who had ripped off her father in the most deplorable manner. In this letter she chooses to remain silent about the role of the mother in the case.

The story is evidence how etiquette guides are very unreliable sources in assessing the norms of behaviour and values of the nobility (and possibly the bourgeoisie too) of fin-de-siècle Hungary.

### Granasztói, György: Household in Nagyszombat (1579–1711) Family and household in Europe before the demographical transition

In anthropological sense, 'household' used to be the cellular comparative unit of the urban structure of towns before the demographic transition. All those who lived under the same roof as the first man of a house were considered to belong to one household. This is the conclusion of the systematic analysis of a town's society based on tax registers or censuses prepared by townspeople. Since the registrars, to be able to assess taxes as precisely as possible, progressed from house to house asking several questions, the sixteenth-eighteenth-century tax registers of the town of Nagyszombat (present-day Trnava, Slovakia) function as quasi-surveys. Since essentially the same questions were repeated each time, we now have a unique source for the history of the town conceived at five different times (1579, 1612, 1634, 1656, 1711). These sources can be used not only to trace the stratification of the town's society, but a transformation of the use of the social space can be detected at the same time too.

The composition of urban households was diverse in Early Modern Europe. Understanding this is crucial for historians, since it makes learned conclusions

about characteristics of family structure possible. The fragmentary nature of the conclusions about family demographics is counterbalanced by the fact that the sources cover five different points in time. The analysis focuses on those individuals in the tax register, who were designated by the term *ibidem*. In modern terms, whereas the head of the household is considered 'primary occupant', *ibidem* simply means 'occupant'. Some of them paid taxes after themselves; some were levied taxes after their paid work.

In Nagyszombat, the majority of *ibidem*s usually lived in districts with higher house taxes. The difference in the size of households also represents social differences, which affected the way social space was structured. This function, however, changed significantly through the respective years. The in-depth analysis of the composition of large households concluded that the significance of more complex family nuclei cannot be ignored. This view dissents from earlier scholarship of urban history. Data from the crisis-ridden years of 1634 and 1656 suggest that the ties keeping together larger households were not strong and their cohesion was usually encouraged by economic prosperity rather than anything else. Parallel to this, in some cases it seems that larger households of primary occupants with Slavic surnames stayed together even in humbler financial circumstances. Due to the changes in the circumstances of the formation of large households, the transformation of consumer habits in the seventeenth century developed a new concentration of these households near the market square of the town. From the aspect of social history, one of the general conclusions of the analysis of households was that phenomena were not linear but interrelated.

### Kohut, Tamás: "As for morals, the hostels have now been put in order": Everyday Life in the Workers' Hostels of the Socialist Era

The Socialist state's policies to reform economy and society in Hungary triggered significant social macro-processes, especially the transformation of the employment structure, traditional peasant society, and migration within the country's borders. As a result of the economic policy dictated by the aims of industrialisation, as well as agricultural collectivisation, the number of people employed in industry increased. Parallel to this, a significant part of peasant societies were forced to abandon their traditional lifestyles and take up industrial work accessible only by commuting to remote workplaces. Approximately half of these commuters moved into workers' hostels.

Workers' hostels often failed to provide the most basic conveniences. In some cases they had neither hygiene facilities and running water, nor heating. This present study examines different aspects of everyday life in workers' hostels. My hypothesis is that the examination of everyday life in workers' hostels will

facilitate our understanding to what extent can the dominant macro-processes of the era, such as internal migration and commuting, be considered a situation of exigency.

### Nagy, Sándor: *Dirty Lawsuits: Family Conflict in the Maze of Law (1882–1893)*

This essay, as a peculiar continuation to Vera Bácskai's article, examines the legal aspect of a family conflict, which took place in both parts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy in the latter third of the nineteenth century. The story itself is that of the disintegration of the family of the Saxon-Hungarian soldier-baron who had seduced and married the daughter of a Viennese Greek merchant. It reports the efforts of the husband and his wife, disowned by her father, to secure her inheritance, and later on, the ruin of their marriage and the subsequent criminal case of adultery starting in Görz (Gorizia, Austria), continuing in Budapest, and culminating in a scandalous divorce case in Cluj. (Kolozsvár, Hungary)

The essay, however, focuses less on the actual story, and more on the relationships between different legal procedures, the choice of legal strategies and tactics of the family members, the underlying motivations, and the consequences of their decisions. The justification of this choice, which is also one of the most important conclusions of this essay, is that the source expected to help us reconstruct the conflict, the narratives of the participants and their witnesses presented in courts of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy conform these aforementioned strategies entirely.

According to the author, a case of pathological legal practice, in some respects, sheds more light on the operation of the contemporary legal system than 'normal' legal cases. In this case, family members consciously (ab)use the conflicting Austro-Hungarian (as well as Hungarian vs Transylvanian) laws and fully exploit the possibilities that these conflicts opened up for them in order to achieve their goals. This manoeuvring in the given legal context increase the importance of questions of adjective law, arising from the status of the subjects (citizenship/national status, place of residency, religion). At the same time it 'unpersonalised' the legal conflict for the participants, in that determining the tactics were entirely taken over by professional representatives and lawyers instead of the parties involved.

Analysis in this particular case stresses the intimate relationship between lawsuits and administrative procedures. The modality of the criminal lawsuit of adultery and the divorce case (examined in greater depth due to the nature of source material available) is fundamentally determined by the struggle for the inheritance. Ultimately, especially following the estrangement of the couple,

the legal conflict lost its 'rational' characteristics, ruined the social prestige of the families involved, and irreversibly destroyed all human bonds between the members of the family. Thus, no matter how resourceful individual legal practices were in this case, beyond a certain point (and one that is hard to define) the institutionalised administration of justice made the irreconcilable parties pay a high price.

The author also draws attention to a possible, and in this particular case seemingly relevant, explanation of pathological legal practice. A couple of decades earlier, a similarly intensive litigation took place for the inheritance in the family of our unscrupulously litigating baron's mother. This fact, corroborated by a contemporary comment, justifies the conclusion that the mother's decisions, which had eventually led to the strengthening of the family's status, may have provided her son with a pattern as to how to resolve his own conflicts by legal means.

### Nicolas Verdier: From the logic of fairness to the abstraction of measure. The change of measure and the perception of distance in France between the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century

The historicity of the report that our societies entertain with the space they occupy is rarely taken into account. The subject of this article is to give an overview of the particular moment of this historicity, offering an additional dimension to this "world that we have lost". The case studied here is that of the fastest mean of transport of the 18<sup>th</sup> century France: the horse Post.

It is a system of transport made of routes between different towns that work thanks to the existence of a large number of relays on the roads; that allow all travellers to always have fresh horses. Originally, this institution is only at the service of the monarchy, but its use spread widely in the society from the 17<sup>th</sup> century. This technical network will disappear upon the arrival of the rail. But, beyond this restricted case, this is the question of the report to the measure and to the technical and scientific representation of the space that will be treated. As a matter of fact, the 18<sup>th</sup> century is that of two major works of geographical knowledge: the Cassini map and the metric system, these two being intimately linked. The tension which will be evoked here is the slow acceptance; even the slow appropriation – even hybridization – of this knowledge valorises for a long time more the painfulness of displacement than the scientific measure.