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## Abstracts

### Bognár, Szabina: The study of heritage practices at the turn of the century: data collections of Miklós Mattyasovszky and János Baross

The study presents two heritage customaries from the turn of the century as part of Hungarian folk law research. Miklós Mattyasovszky, from 1902 ministerial official, studied the statewide prevalence and the possibilities for the introduction of the German-type descent heritage law (törzsöröklés – Anerbrecht), based on German regulations and surveys (the project was initiated by the Ministry of Justice and was conducted within the framework of heritage law codification). He published his results in his 1904 book. Parallel to Mattyasovszky's surveys, János Baross also started data collection within the framework and with professional support from the Hungarian Economic Society (OMGE). Baross published only partial results (1905). Mattyasovszky's analysis was based on 642 county court and notarial reports, while Baross's analysis was compiled of data acquired from more than three thousand municipal and district-notaries. The two collections provide the most complete source for the examination of turn of the century peasant heritage practices.

### Dominkovits, Péter: Familiaris services – county tenure of office The career of a 17<sup>th</sup> century Sopron county sub-prefect, Bálint Récsey of Gálosháza

The family relation network between aristocratic familiaris circles and the body of county office holders is not a new subject in Hungarian history writing. The Récsey family of Gálosháza, as known from sources, was from the 1540's on in the service of the Nádasdys, one of the most powerful aristocratic families of the West-Transdanubia region. During the 16th century, when the Récseys were among the few wealthy property holders (possessionati) of the municipality and possessed estates in the Sopron county Füles, they primarily rendered their dominus military service but didn't hold county offices. In spite of this, Bálint Récsey of Gálosháza was Sopron county's sub-prefect from 4th October 1629 until his death early 1637. As a leading familiaris of neighbouring Vas county's Lord Lieutenant Pál Nádasdy, he embodied an office-holder type: a person by whose activity an aristocrat's will might prevail in the county administration and jurisdiction. The period of his activity coincided with those decades when several powerful aristocratic families (Batthyány, Esterházy, Nádasdy) of the region strove to appoint persons from their familiaris circles to the sub-prefect's position.

Erdélyi, Gabriella: „Causa scientiae”  
The anatomy of a 16<sup>th</sup> century witness interrogation record

The study seeks answer for a question that is basically one of source criticism: Did those witnesses who were ordered to appear before the ecclesiastical court in the 1518 Körmend monastery case speak honestly and freely, or under pressure? The question cannot be evaded, since background power relations were extremely one-sided: the witness interrogation record was the product of an investigation in which Tamás Bakócz, archbishop of Esztergom, stood against those Hungarian Augustine monks who were removed by him a year earlier with reference to their lifestyle regarded as unworthy for monks. For such reasons it is definitely worthwhile to examine more thoroughly what made witnesses unanimously condemn the monks – which coincided with the interests of the stronger party. Our methodology goes as follows: we seek for similarities and differences between reality and narrative, foremost by the analysis of form and content of the stories (that we regard as products of remembrance and group communication) told about the monks.

Kármán, Gábor: Wooden plate and stoneware mug  
Hungarians and Wallachians – observations  
of a Swedish diplomat from the 17<sup>th</sup> century

A Swedish diplomat, Claes Rålamb travelled to Constantinople through Hungary, Transsylvania and Wallachia in the years 1657–58 and he described his journey in a diary (preserved in two versions) and several letters. Rålamb's accounts on his travel are generally considered to be unusually impartial. This seems to be true for his comments on the „Turks”, meanwhile studying his notes about people living on the border of the Ottoman Empire shows that he readily made generalized statements about whole ethnic groups derived from individual cases.

The analysis of several cultural categories (eating and drinking, clothing, vehicles and accommodations, natural and cultural sceneries, courtesy and representation) shows that he perceived the people living in this area as backward and sometimes even offensive. Although he came from another European periphery, with his Western-European system of norms he represents the cultural turn which took place in Sweden in the middle of the 17th century and is usually described as an accelerating integration to Europe.

Koltai, András: The Court Career of a Hungarian Aristocrat  
in the Middle of the 17th Century  
Adam Batthyány in Vienna (1630–1659)

The study follows the career of Count Adam Batthyány (1610-1659) in the courts of Emperors Ferdinand II and III. The survey of his story helps to explore the organization and operation of the court society, as well as the chances and connections of Hungarian aristocrats in the court, investigating how this system of connections worked and changed in the course of personal turning points and political metamorphoses. Adam Batthyány inherited large estates in Western Hungary from his Protestant parents. He lost his father when he was 15. The mentality of the Hungarian catholic aristocracy and the baroque culture of the imperial court impressed him so much, that he converted to Catholicism in 1629 and served from 1630 as a chamberlain *Kammerherr* of Ferdinand II. Marrying Aurora Formentini, a court dame *Frauenzimmer* of the Archduchesses in 1632, he established further important connections. With this background he became 1633 captain general of the district of Transdanubia (Dunántúl) and the borders against Kanizsa in Hungary. His military tasks and the need of the personal government of his estates obliged him however, to settle in Hungary and to spend less and less time in Vienna. In the 1630s the newlyweds were still regular participants of the court life, but in the 1640s and 1650s Adam Batthyány traveled only one or two times in a year to Vienna for some weeks and he spent a significant part even of this time with other Hungarian aristocrats. With these characteristics the career of Adam Batthyány seems to show similarity to the court attendance of other Hungarian Aristocrats, who usually also used their service in the imperial court to launch their military or administrative career in Hungary.

Kovács, Gábor I.: „Thoroughbred” and „assimilated” Hungarians,  
„Christian allogenes” and „Jews” in dualist Hungary’s middle schools

This paper adds source critical comments to those of Viktor Karády’s writings in which the author defines the proportions of bigger ethnical aggregates in Hungarian middle schools between 1883 and 1915 by relying on data drawn from statistics on language competence. This study first reveals the practice of language competence data collection and data provision concerning middle schools in dualist times, then presents the broader circle of language competence data collection and analyses the data base down to the level of concrete data-providing schools and by this, finally arrives at the conclusion that Karády’s conclusions do not bear closer examination. The expression „thoroughbred” (törzsökös) Hungarian that the author uses is unclear. If we vaguely identify the term as „Hungarians of not assimilant origins”

then this group cannot be identical with students speaking only Hungarian. And, in close connection with this, those students with Hungarian mother tongue who have knowledge of other languages spoken in Hungary cannot be on the whole identified with the assimilated allogenes. Having arrived at this conclusion, the statement that in dualist times Hungarians were strongly underrepresented in middle schools – that provided new generations of the intelligentsia – cannot be stated as evidence.

H. Németh, István: Bourgeois or noble?  
The problem of noble-rank city inhabitants –  
as mirrored by the activity of the Upper-Hungarian city union

Noble inhabitants of cities make up two groups: those who acquired nobility as city bourgeois (noble bourgeois) and those nobles who, by diverse means, gained possession of houses of the city (city bourgeois). The status of the city bourgeois in free royal cities was always questionable and their presence a constant source of conflict. Although during the 16th century a law was successfully introduced to formulate the local taxation of city nobles, the influence of the county still grew within cities. Moreover, noble house possession went along with much heavier consequences for free royal cities, for these belonged not under the city's but under royal reversionary jurisdiction. Counties, on the other hand, were not successful in controlling the noble bourgeoisie – an in-between situation some of its members attempted to profit from. However, in their attempts the noble bourgeois rather protected their own interests instead of – hypothetically – denying their bourgeois identity and turning against their cities. Towards the end of the century, counties in some cases succeeded in imposing tax on the noble bourgeois and even obliged them to rise during Rákóczi's War of Independence (1703-1711). The noble bourgeois, however, generally acknowledged the city and not the county as a responsible authority. All in all, it would be mistaken to think that if a bourgeois gained noble rank, he would give up his bourgeois activity.

Szabó, Péter: „For there is hope for a tree. . .”  
Pollarding in Hungary

This essay examines tree pollarding in Hungary. Pollarding is the practice of cutting the branches of a tree two or three metres above the ground in order to prevent animals from grazing the young shoots. Pollard trees are a conspicuous and majestic feature of the landscape all over Europe. Although Hungary possesses a fair number of ancient pollards, no study has yet undertaken the task of examining the history of tree pollarding.

Three types of sources are studied. Firstly, medieval written material is considered. Secondly, pictorial sources are introduced, some medieval, but mostly sixteenth-century. Thirdly, standing trees and place-name evidence is included in the discussion, which represent the archaeological aspect of the problem.

Based on all three source types, it is demonstrated that tree pollarding was practiced in medieval Hungary. The Latin word for a bolling (*truncus*) can be found in many perambulations, and its Hungarian equivalents (*tőke* and *törzsök*) are also identified. The essay is rounded up by a case-study on the village of Pusztaszentiván (Co. Pest, 30 km east of Budapest) that features standing pollard ashes and a characteristic place-name.

### Tóth, Gábor: Structures of a Theory and a Theory of Structures

Jenő Szűcs was a medievalist, not a political scientist and thinker, although politics did form an organic part of his work. As a historian, he was convinced that „everything in history can be explained by deep structural causes” because „behind the ‘events’ there are certain structures that are essential in the long term.” In spite of this, his *opusculum famosum*, *The Three Historical Regions of Europe: An Outline*, has usually been hailed and interpreted as a document of East-European political dissent under the communist regime. This essay re-reads the text in terms of its theoretical-epistemological context to reconstruct a unique vision of historical processes that can be found behind its appealing surface. I argue that, notwithstanding the fact that his text is intoxicated with terms like *structure*, *pattern*, etc., Szűcs is misunderstood as a historian of orderly structures and unifying processes. Rather, as my re-reading of his various works reveals, he sought to restore the epistemological dignity of disorderly and destructive phenomena that, in his view, had a lasting positive influence on the formation of Europe. The appearance of an implicit *strat-uralist* approach in his oeuvre suggests that *The Three Historical Regions of Europe* ought not to be simply regarded as a political manifesto of a great historian and that it is time to acknowledge its theoretical import for the study of medieval history in general.