



# 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/Altófen 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.<sup>1</sup> 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?

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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.<sup>2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> Recently, Eleonóra Géra published two books about everyday life, family life, and marriage in Buda in the first decades of the eighteenth century.<sup>4</sup> 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).<sup>5</sup> I complement this data with information from other kinds of sources.<sup>6</sup>

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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.<sup>7</sup> 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.<sup>8</sup> 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.<sup>9</sup> 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.<sup>10</sup> 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),<sup>11</sup> 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 18<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>12</sup>

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.<sup>13</sup>

Once they were over 40 years of age, widows and widowers tended to choose a partner in the same marital status,<sup>14</sup> 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.<sup>15</sup> According to Péter, the reason for this was that they became capable of maintaining their own household at this age.<sup>16</sup> 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.<sup>17</sup> 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.<sup>18</sup>

The data suggests that a widow had her last chance to remarry<sup>19</sup> 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.<sup>20</sup>



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).<sup>21</sup> 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.<sup>22</sup> 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.<sup>23</sup> 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.<sup>24</sup>

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 omnis 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

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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.<sup>25</sup> 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 bis daß kind selbsten fehic ihr Stuckh Brodt zu gewinnen*). According to the protocol, the girl later got her vineyards back, when she married.<sup>26</sup>

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.<sup>27</sup> As shown by Schlumbohm, whose findings correspond with ours,<sup>28</sup> 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 <sup>29</sup>	3 <sup>30</sup>	3 <sup>31</sup>

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.”<sup>32</sup>

### *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.<sup>33</sup> The legal practice resembles the practice in Buda and Lower Austria.<sup>34</sup>

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).<sup>35</sup> 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.<sup>36</sup> 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

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32 “Gewiß ist es, daß wann Er mit seinen Weib und Kinde, wie ein anderer ehrlicher Mann zu thun pfeget, leben und wüthschaffen 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.<sup>37</sup> 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.<sup>38</sup> 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."),<sup>39</sup> and he added that the child would be an equal heir with its future stepsiblings.<sup>40</sup> A widower also needed to remarry if he had several and/or young children.<sup>41</sup> 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.<sup>42</sup> Jacob Hauswürth married Catharina Auschizin presumably because of his six children, three of whom three were still little.<sup>43</sup> 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.<sup>44</sup>

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.<sup>45</sup>

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.<sup>46</sup> 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.<sup>47</sup>

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 stepdaughters<sup>48</sup> and to ensure them proper dowry: a cow and a bed with five

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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.”<sup>49</sup> 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.”<sup>50</sup> 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.”<sup>51</sup> She also stated that the council should distribute her wealth fairly among her husband and his stepchildren.<sup>52</sup>

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.”<sup>53</sup> 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 erwießene Treüe und Aufrichtigkeit, dann über meine Wirtschaft 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”).<sup>54</sup> 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,<sup>55</sup> 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.<sup>56</sup> 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

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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.<sup>57</sup> 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.<sup>58</sup> 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.<sup>59</sup> 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.<sup>60</sup> 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 arbeite, 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.”<sup>61</sup>

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.<sup>62</sup>

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.<sup>63</sup> 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.<sup>64</sup>

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

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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.”<sup>68</sup> 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.”<sup>69</sup> 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.<sup>70</sup>)

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 “Thme nicht als eine Stief Mutter, sondern als eine rechtmässige Mutter sein, Treü erwiesen, ihme ehrlich erzagen, soll darum 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.<sup>71</sup>

### *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.<sup>72</sup> He studied there, and he wanted to become a locksmith.<sup>73</sup> He was 30 years old when he arrived in Buda, where he got married with amazing speed (after only a few months).<sup>74</sup> 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,”<sup>75</sup> 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

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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.<sup>76</sup> The widow, Margaretha, was most probably much older than Lautenbach, since we know that she was already married in 1732.<sup>77</sup> Margaretha's first husband, Johann Renner, had been a nail-smith (*Naglschmidt*) who had earned citizenship in 1738.<sup>78</sup> 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.<sup>79</sup> It is worth noting that Margaretha was already a widow in 1754, so she probably managed her husband's profession until she married Lautenbach.<sup>80</sup>

The marriage did not last long, because Lautenbach re-married the following year, bringing an end to a short period of widowhood.<sup>81</sup> His new spouse, Anna Maria Windtnerin, was also a widow, and she was ten years older than he.<sup>82</sup> 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.<sup>83</sup> 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 practice<sup>84</sup> (and quite often reflected the intentions of both the children and their stepparent).<sup>85</sup> 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).<sup>86</sup> 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.<sup>87</sup>

Their union was long, successful, and productive. They obtained two other vineyards in 1760,<sup>88</sup> and Lautenbach finally was granted citizenship in 1763.<sup>89</sup> 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.<sup>90</sup> 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.<sup>91</sup>

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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 Muhl*, on March 18, 1772. BFL V.1.b Nr. 533.

His second wife, Anna Maria, died in 1768.<sup>92</sup> 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.<sup>93</sup> 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.<sup>94</sup>

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.<sup>95</sup>

Soon after Rosalia's funeral, Lautenbach married for the fourth and last time.<sup>96</sup> 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.<sup>97</sup> 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,”<sup>98</sup> 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.<sup>99</sup> In 1783, he left Buda and lived with his wife, and he died two years later.<sup>100</sup> 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.”<sup>101</sup>

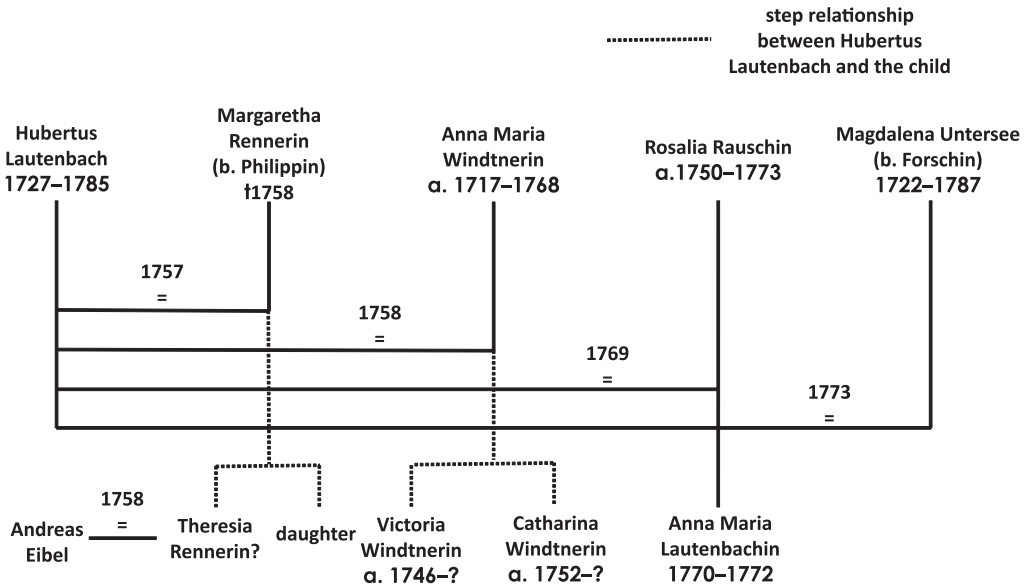


Table 1. Hubertus Lautenbach and his marriages

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 Schweichartn [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 standt 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,<sup>102</sup> 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.<sup>103</sup> 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.<sup>104</sup> 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."<sup>105</sup> 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.<sup>106</sup> 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 Bltazer 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.<sup>107</sup> 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.<sup>108</sup> 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.<sup>109</sup> 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.<sup>110</sup> 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.<sup>111</sup> 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."<sup>112</sup>

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.<sup>113</sup> Thanks to this marriage, she got a half-brother, with whom she grew up. They

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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.<sup>114</sup> 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.<sup>115</sup> 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).<sup>116</sup> Gregor, however, died shortly after the wedding.<sup>117</sup> 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,<sup>118</sup> 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.<sup>119</sup>

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.<sup>120</sup> 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 Bräutigam 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.



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

### *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

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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 Theil 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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