

Pázmány Péter Catholic University Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Doctoral School of History, Head of School: Dr Sándor Óze DSc
Workshop for Social and Lifestyle History, Head of Workshop: Prof Dr József Ö. Kovács DSc

ESZTER MÁRTA BAROS-GYIMÓTHY

**ONE TOWN, TWO RELIGIONS – PROCESS OF THE REGISTERS IN THE
LUTHERAN AND CATHOLIC CONGREGATIONS OF CSETNEK (1683–
1807) WITH FAMILY RECONSTRUCTION METHOD**

THESES OF DOCTORAL (PHD) DISSERTATION

Supervisor:
Dr Zsuzsanna J. Újváry PhD, Associate Professor

Fadd – Dunakeszi, 2022

I. Preliminaries of the research, raising the problems

In the history of Hungary, the 18th century brought more peaceful years after the constant theatre of war and tense political centuries. The spontaneous population movements, which started even before the turn of the century, and the later settlements resulted in radical and long-term changes in the social composition and history of Hungary. Examining families before official statistics is a very difficult task. Most of the surviving sources were prepared for economic reasons, with taxation and military purposes; therefore, they typically contained information on the heads of families who paid services and taxes. Exceptions are the Status Animars, kept by the churches, and the baptism, marriage and burial registers, in which the entire population of the congregation, all social strata, are represented. Their data provide demographic indicators of the local population belonging to a church. The aim of this dissertation is to shed light on the demographic behaviour of families belonging to the Lutheran and Catholic parishes of Csetnek in the 18th century.

With the help of the surviving early registers, I have tried to shed light on the demographic indicators and behaviour of the local population at the “moment”, century, of social change: what customs and norms the migrants may have taken with themselves. The common lesson of the Hungarian family reconstruction studies published so far is that the quality of the 18th century - or earlier - church sources is not ideal due to the incomplete birth registration, and the validity of the calculated indicators is questionable. When choosing the registers, I decided to use the sources of Csetnek as, considering the number of records, I believed that the church leaders had recorded the church events with proper attention.

Consequently, my questions at the beginning of the research were about the quality of birth registration in Csetnek and the demographic characteristics of the community behind the registrations: What can we learn about the demographic behaviour of congregations from the records of early registers? What is the relationship between the people of the two parishes? Are there differences between the marriage customs and norms of the two congregations? What can we learn about the fertility of families in the 18th-century Csetnek?

II. Sources of the topic and research method

The recording of religious events began more widely in Hungary in the second half of the 18th century, but the quality of birth registration improved significantly over time, typically by the 19th century. The selected Lutheran registers of Csetnek survived from the early 1680s, and the individual data series on population movements started at relatively the same time: A register of baptisms was kept from 1683, a register of marriages was kept from 1692, and, uncommonly, data on buried religious people were

recorded from 1684. While processing the copies¹ in the Microfilm Collection of the Hungarian National Archives, I discovered that nearly 50 years of baptismal records were missing, which I managed to retrieve at the State Archives in Kassa.² The local archivists also drew my attention to the Roman Catholic registers of Csetnek, which started in 1735, and of which no copies are available in the national archives. Despite the high number of church records processed up to 1807 - nearly 17,000 Lutheran and almost 4,000 Catholic ones -, it became clear during the research that, in everyday life, the registers of both congregations were kept incompletely and that it was not only the death of pastors or the change of pastors that led to the failure of registration. In addition, the details of the events recorded were inaccurate: Missing surnames or places of residence made the identification difficult and uncertain.

In addition to the birth registers of Csetnek, which formed the basis of the research, I also used Lutheran and Catholic records of neighbouring settlements, such as Rozsnyó or Ochtina. The minutes, municipal and economic documents³ of the field town of Csetnek, kept in the State Archives of Rozsnyó, the documents of *Urbaria et Conscriptiones*, kept in the Hungarian National Archives, in section U, photographs of important sources of several centuries to be found in the selected archives⁴ of photographs of Gömör County, the national censuses carried out,⁵ as well as the canonical visitations and the list of ordinations kept in the Lutheran Central Archives were essential to get acquainted with the oppidum and the population of the region.

In the absence of today's census statistics, church-oriented registers seemed to be a suitable way of measuring the characteristics of demographic behaviour of several generations in the long term, prior to official statistics. The believers had their babies baptised, got married in the church and buried their dead in accordance with church regulations. From the recorded life events, using the family reconstruction method of historical demography, we can get an idea of the demographic behaviour of the traditional societies that belonged to the church and remained in place, and how these have changed or remained unchanged over time.

Pierre Goubert, a historian, and Louis Henry, a demographer, and his team of researchers developed a method for processing entries in the French civil registers. By applying the labour-intensive method, social changes can be studied at the micro level, at the level of individuals, families and small communities, so that, for example,

¹ Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára (továbbiakban MNL OL) X 9481 C1589

² Štatny archív v Košiciach (továbbiakban ŠA KE) Zbierka cirkevných matiek 826–829.

³ Ministerstvo vnútra Slovenskej republiky Štatny archív v Košiciach Pracovisko Archív Rožňava (továbbiakban MVSR SAKE AR) Mestečko Štítnik II Protokol Tomus 1730–1762., MVSR SAKE AR Mestečko Štítnik III Protokol Tomus 1734–1796., MVSR SAKE AR Mestečko Štítnik Fasc I. 1635–1667., MVSR SAKE AR Mestečko Štítnik Fasc II. 1605–1806., MVSR SAKE AR Mestečko Štítnik Fasc III. 1665–1794., MVSR SAKE AR Mestečko Štítnik Kniha Vydavko 1635–1741.

⁴ MNL OL U 64

⁵ MNL OL N 78; MNL OL N 79

national and local economic changes, weather, epidemics and the responses thereto have become cognisable and measurable since the early modern period. Historical demographers construct demographic biographies of individual residents, and then, calculate fine indicators using modern age demographic calculations. Therefore, they seek and answer important research questions such as the average age at marriage, the length of birth intervals, age-specific and total fertility, infant mortality, and the variations and regularities of these. In Hungary, the Henry-family-reconstruction method was made more widely known in *The description of the Methods of Family Reconstruction Analysis*, written by Rudolf Andorka; and I have also taken the studies and works of Gyula Benda as an example for the application of the method.

As a first step, I entered all the elements of the birth records one by one into an Excel file. By the end of 1807, the clergymen of Csetnek had recorded 2,364 marriages, 8,334 baptisms and 6,885 burials. The Catholic registers recorded 612 marriages, 2,042 christenings and 1,390 burials for posterity between 1735 and 1807.

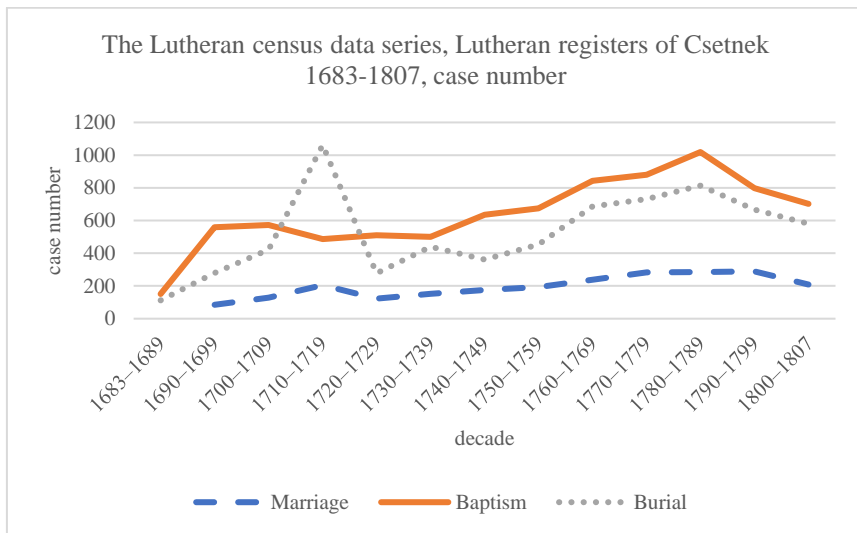
This was followed by the non-nominative processing of the data. From the compiled marriage, baptism and death time series, it is possible at this stage to analyse the data according to several aspects. For example, natural reproduction, which can be calculated from the difference between births and deaths; 9-year moving averages for each population movement, which give long-term trends after smoothing out outliers; monthly variations in marriages, which also show whether the church's rules on marriage are being observed or ignored; the marital status of those entering marriage, grouping marriages by family status and place of residence; the sex breakdown of newborns; monthly variations in deaths; changes in the number of infant deaths, etc. The tables and graphs compiled made it possible to compare the behavioural characteristics of the municipalities in Csetnek with those already published in the national literature.

In the third phase of the study, as a first step of nominative processing, I compiled data on the husband and wife, starting from the marriage records, and 2,474 Lutheran and 669 Catholic family records, listing the birth, marriage and burial dates of the couple's children. The steps adopted by the method, such as accepting the age declared or announced, estimating the date of marriage and the end of marriage, etc., were applied in my research.

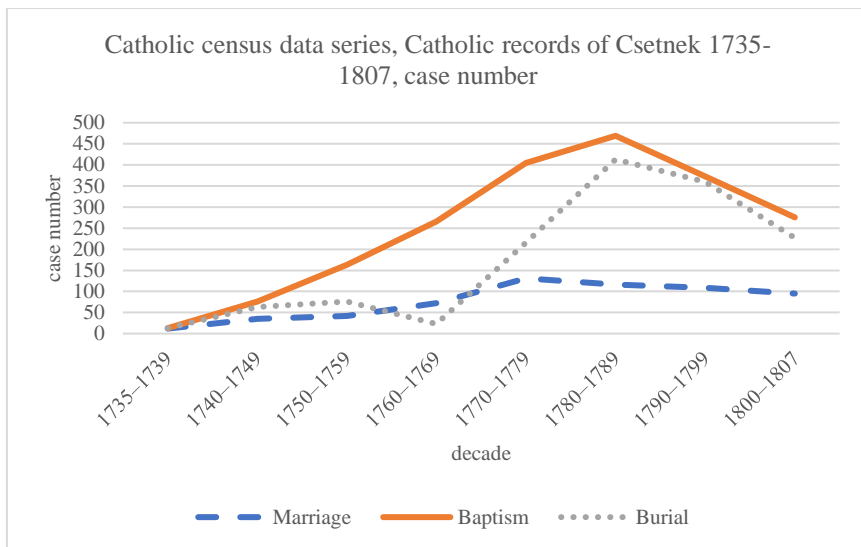
I considered it important to present in the dissertation, in addition to the indicators, individual life stories because, behind the numbers and the records, the followings also came to life: The mother who could not feed her baby with breast milk, the spinsters who went to the altar, the parents who lost their children, the widows who chose a father for their orphans, as well as the life of the county geometra, Keresztély Reisz, who lived in the settlement for a few years and about whom some data that had been unknown was discovered.

III. Main findings of the thesis

It has become clear already during the source processing that due to the shortcomings of the birth records, the indicators and results calculated following the method did not always show a true picture. At the same time, the demographic behaviour that emerged from the research fits in several details with the already published national patterns.



The Csetnek data series followed the familiar domestic path in the 18th century. In the early part of the period under study, the Black Death of 1710 caused many victims among the evangelicals. The congregation could not make up for the loss of numbers - based on baptism and marriage records - until the Black Death reappeared in 1739. From the 1740s onwards, with more favourable mortality conditions, the natural increase in the population could be significant - this was interrupted in Csetnek by the worsening mortality from the 1780s onwards; the epidemic increased, and there was a succession of adverse weather conditions throughout the country, which led to poor harvests, famine and deteriorating health conditions among the population. In the last decades of the 18th century, the number of marriages in Csetnek decreased, and with it the number of births. Although the Catholic sources do not preserve traces of the last Black Death of the century, in 1738-174, the curves of the parish from the 1770s onwards follow a similar path.



First marriages were more common in front of the altars, but remarriage was also accepted. The rate of widowhood rose mainly after epidemics affecting adults, such as the plague. On average, unmarried women became wives for the first time at the age of 20, but the Protestant norm allowed girls as young as 16 to marry. Both Protestant and Catholic young men were expected to start a family after the age of 24. The seasonality of the marriage ceremonies was in line with the churches' norms, with most ceremonies in both churches taking place between the time of the Epiphany and Ash Wednesday, and in November, due to the busy summer months and full pantries. But in early spring, typically due to the custom of remarriage, there was also a small peak in marriages. The daily breakdown of weddings also reflects the observance of church regulations, although evangelicals in the first half of the 18th century preferred the old custom of Sunday rather than the prescribed Monday or Tuesday. For three years, in the spirit of repentance after the plague of 1710, Tuesday marriages prevailed, but it was not until the plague of 1739 and the person of the minister who was then in charge that a radical change took place. From the 1740s onwards, Protestant couples predominantly held their weddings on Tuesdays. Most Catholic couples walked down the aisle on Sundays.

Territorially and religiously exogamous marriage was an accepted and supported practice in the churches, which was significantly contributed to by the special labour requirements of the mining and metalworking industries, which had been highly developed for centuries, and the status of Csetnek as a field town. The nobles, the citizens of the field towns, tried to choose for their children a partner of equal rank - and presumably at least of equal wealth.

The first children were born 20 months after marriage, which was one of the lower rates of the time. In terms of the sex ratio of newborns, the Csetnek congregations also followed the biological pattern of having more boys than girls. In Csetnek, too, the principle of social authority prevailed in the choice of a godparent, as several Catholic families asked a respectable Lutheran resident to be their godparent. It was not uncommon for Protestant families to have 4-6 godparents, while Catholic parish priests typically registered 2 godparents.

Burial records rarely include the cause deaths, so I have consulted the registers of the surrounding settlements to identify the epidemics that caused the most deaths, apart from the plague. The life and daily life of families was strongly influenced by the high infant and young child mortality rates of the period; the former figure of 128‰ certainly does not reflect the true extent of the plague. Young children aged 1-4 years were the most at risk, while girls and boys in Csetnek aged 5 and over had a very good chance of surviving to adulthood.

The central question of the research method used is the fertility of women and families. The values of the 399 Lutheran and 140 Catholic family sheets, which meet the strict criteria for nominative testing, reflect that the fertility of the Lutheran congregation was lower than that of the Catholics; families may have had some form of birth restriction, as indicated by the TFRs of between 5,000 and 6,000. The first interval value of 20 months rose to and remained above 30 months from the second child. On average, the women gave birth for the last time at the age of 32-33 years, which is very much below the age of last childbirth in the 18th century.

The results should be interpreted with caution because of the shortcomings already found during the source processing. I believe that, by extending the time frame of the research, the processing of the probably more thoroughly and accurately kept 19th century registers would in many respects help to shed light on the behaviour of the earlier period and to interpret the values obtained. In the course of processing the civil registers, I was able to find new fragments of information on the lives of several individuals who were well-known in the region, county or country.

IV. Publication activity on the topic

Presentations:

Csetnek oppidum népességtörténete a 17. század végén. PPKE BTK Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, (2005. május) Piliscsaba

Házasságkötési szokások Csetneken a XVIII. századi evangélikus és katolikus anyakönyvek tükrében. PPKE-BTK Történettudományi Doktori Iskolájának Társadalom- és Életmódtörténeti Műhelye, (2013. november) Piliscsaba

Vallás – pestis – túlélés. A csetneki 1710-es pestisjárvány után bekövetkezett viselkedésbeli változások. Felekezeti és társadalmi identitás, Miskolci Egyetem Bölcsészettudományi Kar Történettudományi Intézete, (2014. december) Miskolc

"Item praevaricationes sexti praecepti" Paráznák és gyermekeik a 18. századi csetneki evangélikus anyakönyvekben. II. Magyarország története a kora újkortól a legújabb korig, SZTE Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, (2015. május) Szeged

Egy város, két vallás - Vegyes házasságú családok a 18. századi csetneki evangélikus és katolikus anyakönyvek lapjain. Tavaszi Szél konferencia, Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége, (2016. április) Budapest

Asszony lesz a lányból. A csetneki evangélikus és katolikus nők házasságkötési életkora. Nők a családban, nők a társadalomban a kora újkori Magyarországon, ELTE-BTK Doktori Iskola, ELTE BTK Nőtörténeti Kutatóközpont, MTA Nőtörténeti Albizottsága, (2016. október) Budapest

Özvegyesség - új egység. Újraházasodók nyomai a csetneki anyakönyvekben. Az érzelmek története, Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület, (2017. augusztus), Gyöngyös

Testi, lelki nyugalomért - Özvegyemberek házassági szokásai a 18. századi Csetneken. X. Történettudományi Találkozó, Vásárhelyi Történelmi Kör, (2017. augusztus), Hódmezővásárhely

Enyém - tiéd - miénk. Mozaikcsaládok a 18. századi Csetneken. Életmód-történeti pillanatképek II. konferencia, PPKE BTK Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, (2018. január) Budapest

A halandóság egy 18. századi mezővárosban. XI. Nemzetközi, XVIII. Országos Interdiszciplináris Grastyán Konferencia, PTE BTK-TTK, (2018. április) Pécs

Csecsemő- és gyermekhalandóság a 18. századi Csetneken. Magyarország története a kora újkortól a legújabb korig, Hódmezővásárhelyi Emlékpont, SZTE Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola, (2018. június), Hódmezővásárhely

Nota bene - sorsok tükre az anyakönyvekben. XI. Történettudományi Találkozó, Vásárhelyi Történelmi Kör, (2018. július) Hódmezővásárhely

Az elegyes házasságok demográfiája. A család egykor és ma 5. SZTE BTK Néprajz és Kulturális Antropológiai Tanszéke, MTA-SZTE Vallási Kultúrakutató Csoport, OR-ZSE Kaufman Dávid Zsidó Kultúrakutató Csoport, (2018. december) Szeged

„Egy jövevény gömöri puskaporos.” Szökött gömöri jobbágyok az alföldi anyakönyvekben. Társadalom- és életmód-történeti konferencia, PPKE BTK Történelemtudományi Doktori Iskola (2019. január), Budapest

Gyermekáldás a 18. századi Csetneken. XII. Történettudományi Találkozó, Vásárhelyi Történelmi Kör, (2019. július) Hódmezővásárhely

Bűnbánó magatartás a pestis után. XIII. Történettudományi Találkozó, Vásárhelyi Történelmi Kör, (2020. augusztus) Hódmezővásárhely

Jegyesek határon innen és túlról. A 18. századi csetneki házasságkötések lokális vetülete. Határ, határhelyzet, határátlépés, Hajnal István Kör Társadalomtörténeti Egyesület, (2020. augusztus) Pécs

„...mivel bűnnek büntetése, igaz poenitentiátartást kíván” Az 1710. és az 1739. évi pestisjárványok és hatásaik a csetneki evangélikus anyakönyvekben”. Válságtörténetek: kihívások, tapasztalatok, új irányok, Sic Itur ad Astra Műhely, (2020. október) Budapest

Lányok, asszonyok. Női sorsok és szerepek az anyakönyvek tükrében. Magyar történeti nőalakok és szakrális párhuzamaik, Kortárs Női Reflexiók Fóruma, Anima Mundi Kutatóintézet, (2021. május) Budapest

Publications:

Csetnek oppidum népességtörténete a 17. század végén. In: Mindennapi élet a török árnyékában. Kora újkori társadalom- és életmódtörténet, szerk. J. ÚJVÁRY Zsuzsanna, PPKE–BTK, Piliscsaba, 2008. 155–165.

Házasságkötési szokások Csetneken az evangélikus és a katolikus anyakönyvek tükrében, 1730–1807. In: Társadalom- és életmód-történeti kalandozások térben és időben, szerk. J. ÚJVÁRY Zsuzsanna, PPKE–BTK, Piliscsaba, 2014. 153–199.

„*Item praevaricationes sexti praecepti*” *Paráznák és gyermekeik a 18. századi csetneki evangélikus anyakönyvekben* In: Tanulmányok a magyar történelemből a kora újkortól a legújabb korig II., szerk. DÖBÖR András – ZEMAN Ferenc, Közép-Európai Monográfiák 14. Egyesület Közép-Európa Kutatására, Szeged, 2015. 27–37.

Egy város, két vallás - Vegyes házasságú családok a 18. századi csetneki evangélikus és katolikus anyakönyvek lapjain. In: Tavasz Szél 2016 IV. kötet, szerk. Dr. KERESZTES Gábor, Tanulmánykötet Doktoranduszok Országos Szövetsége, Budapest, 2016. 339–350.

A halandóság egy 18. századi mezővárosban. In: XVIII. és XIX. Országos Grastyán Interdiszciplináris Konferencia előadásai, szerk. Rab Virág – Somogyi Bianka – Tuboly-Vincze Gabriella – Varga Tímea, PTE Grastyán Endre Szakkollégiuma, Pécs, 2019. 31–44.

Az elegyes házasságok demográfija. In: A család egykor és ma 5., szerk. Barna Gábor – Kiss Endre, MTA-SZTE Vallási Kultúra kutató Csoport, Szeged, 2019. 291–305.

Özvegy nők és új családjaik egy 18. századi gömöri mezővárosban. Történelmi Szemle 2019 4. szám, 633–655.

„*Bizony az Úr ajándéka a gyermek*” *A csetneki családok termékenységi vizsgálatainak első eredményei.* In: „A múltat kutatni, írni és láttatni – Ez által szolgálni a hazát” Tisztelgő kötet J. Újváry Zsuzsanna 25. Pázmányos oktatói éve előtt, szerk. Bíró Bence – Miski Péter – Törtei Renáta, Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem – Szent István Társulat, Budapest – Piliscsaba, 2020. 319–345.

Özvegysorsok a XVIII. században. Múlt-kor Történelmi Magazin, 2020 tél. 99–103.

Enyém - tiéd - miénk. Mozaikcsaládok a 18. századi Csetneken. In: Társadalom- és életmód-történeti kalandozások térben és időben, szerk. J. Újváry Zsuzsanna, Szent István Társulat, Budapest, 2020. 55–83.

„...mivel bűnnek büntetése, igaz poenitentiatartást kíván” *Az 1710. és az 1739. évi pestisjárványok és hatásaik a csetneki evangélikus anyakönyvekben.* Sic Itur ad Astra, (2021) 111–126.