

ASPECTS OF THE MARRIAGE AND THE WEDDING IN TRANSYLVANIA IN THE 16TH AND 17TH CENTURIES*

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Abstract: *Historical documents, Hungarian and Saxon diaries and chronicles, the notes on the old Romanian book, give us high information regarding the legality and ceremony of a marriage, the scenery of a wedding in Transylvania between the 17th – 19th centuries. Both the civil authorities (central and local) and the ecclesiastical one, have stated laws by which they managed the institution of marriage.*

Keywords: *Transylvania, marriage, wedding, ceremony of christening, notes on the old Romanian book*

Rezumat: *Documentele istorice, jurnalele și cronicile maghiare și săsești, însemnările de pe cartea românească veche, ne oferă informații bogate în ceea ce privește legalitatea și oficierea unei căsătorii, a cadrului de desfășurare a unei nunți din Transilvania secolelor XVI-XVII. Atât autoritățile civile (centrale și locale) cât și cele bisericești, au statuat legi, prin care au reglementat instituția căsătoriei.*

Cuvinte cheie: *Transilvania, căsătorie, nuntă, botez, însemnări pe cartea românească veche*

While the Protestant and the Orthodox religions are identical in the field of principles, both considering marriage as being divisible, monogamous and forbidding extramarital relations, some differences arose in connection with the wedding ceremony and the divorce issues. Some innovations were thus introduced to the Eastern rite: an early announcement of marriage, to prevent any hindrance and the making of the vows. Another novelty if compared to the Orthodox church, consists in a different calculation of the relationship degrees church, and the prohibition of some marriages, as those between brothers and sisters-in-law.

However, frequent misunderstandings regarding the legality of marriage occurred, but the removal of some aspects connected with the legality of a marriage was difficult to achieve. Thus, in a cause debated in 1680 by the Maramureș Congregation, the defendant mentioned that "not even the divine law considered the in-law relationship an impediment to a marriage but on the contrary, the marriage between brothers and sisters - in-law is a custom". The document is important by the fact that 150 years after the onset of the new regulations introduced by the Reform and shared by the civil law, marriages between

people having close degrees of kinship was still a reality. (Cziple 1916, 59)

The transition from adolescence to early youth had also changed over the centuries. The print *Îndreptarea Legii* (Târgoviște, 1652), presented certain facts that had already become traditions. Referring to the proper age of marriage, it mentioned the following: "Blessed is the engagement and the wedding when the man is fourteen years old and the woman is twelve, but if any engagements and ties, or cross or kisses are made before the man was fourteen and the woman twelve, then these engagements are not holy, neither recognized". They didn't accept great differences of age between the future husband and wife, such as "a husband in his fifties and a wife of twelve or fifteen years old, or a wife of fifty and a husband of twenty". Although the wedding could be celebrated from the age of fourteen to sixteen, the newlyweds couldn't become part of the adult world due to it. For example "the stewardship" (the custody) was not cancelled until the youths had not turned 25, when they "could ask for their own things, for what belonged to them and was in the steward care and only then the steward was set free of stewardship". (*Îndreptarea Legii* 1652 1962, 192–195). The notes on the old Romanian book give some details on the age at which marriages were celebrated, which complied with the religious principles. Nicolae Angel wrote on a page on "Ceaslov" printed in Blaj (1786) that he was born in 1771, he married when he was 25 years old, in 1796. (Mârza 1977, 365). The engagement and the marriage ages admitted in 1652, did not

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differ from those of 1817. (Codul Calimah).

The Saxon's towns statutes in Transylvania set up several rules about the proper age of starting a family "it will be considered a real marriage if the lads have reached sexual maturity, and the virgins are able to cohabit with a man". (Sutschek 1997, 185)

With the Romanians, the habit of abducting the future wife was spread just the same amongst the richest and the poorest. Although the central or the local civil laws and the church regulations were severe on this matter, with harsh penalties, this custom is rooted mainly in the lower strata of the population. Moreover, since the first half of the 16th century, the statute laws had tried to stifle this phenomenon. The Diet of Turda, in 1543 imposed penalties to the Romanians who would kidnap a girl to make her enter into marriage. (Prodan a 1967, 384) An item approved by the Diet of Transylvania in 1635, prohibited the "land lords" to cease hindering the serf girls to marry (there were taken into account especially the Romanians). A fine of 100 florins was established as a punishment for those found guilty. This prohibition of getting married might explain to some extent the frequent kidnappings of girls. (Barițiu a 1889, 135) Constituțiile Aprobate stated the death penalty for the Romanians who kidnapped girls or women and refused to marry them. (Constituțiile Aprobate ale Transilvaniei 1998, 232) With a fine of 200 florins were to be punished the priests and the archbishops who officiated the marriage of any "man with two wives" or with an "abducted person". In case of relapse they would be deprived of their jobs. (Constituțiile Aprobate ale Transilvaniei 1998, 59)

On the domain of Făgăraș (1508) a marriage without the parental consent was punishable by a fine of two florins. Rape was punished with a fine of 13 florins. This might decrease if the man agreed to marry the girl. But if the girl refused the proposal, the man paid a fine of only four florins. (Prodan a 1967, 372) In the villages on the Chioar domain, if the girls and married women's elopement happened with their own agreement (in the latter case they left homes) the fine was of two florins. The fine was six times higher if the kidnapping didn't have the girl or woman's consent. The same amount of fines was also levied on the Baia Mare domain (Prodan a 1967, 373) In the Romanian villages from Abrud area, the man who took a girl by force was impaled. However, if the girl said she loved him, each had to pay a fine of one florin. If a man took another man's wife, but with her consent, they considered that she had left

her own home and a third of the goods that she deserved would be taken by the master. (Prodan a 1967, 374) The copyist Popa Iosif recorded on one of the pages of a Slavonic book what happened to four fellows, accused of horse theft and women's kidnapping "four men who stole horses and ran away with women did perish; two had been stabbed and two hanged." (Dudaș a 1990, 189)

Although marriage was no longer a mystery for the Protestant church, procreation still remained its purpose. The setting up of a Christian family model was its major goal. Both the state and the church considered sexual relationships before marriage as reprehensible acts and serious sins. By no means, the couple had to enter into a marriage to live in a legal framework, to repent and go to church, to get an eventual forgiveness from God. (Prodan b 1986, 406) In this context, an unusual situation occurred in Brașov, where a young goldsmith married a day after christening his child. The fact that he had sex with his future wife before the marriage and she became pregnant, committing thus a very serious sin, was not an impediment to his marriage, the young man was even forced to marry the woman. (Hegyes 1909, 464). Happiness was given only by family life. This is the only way to keep indecent passions and desires under control. This is how the poet expressed his belief in the institution of marriage: "Oh, more could I say, but much am I dismayed / The proverb says that from waves streams are formed / But let us only believe that Good Lord / Will be on our side and with his help / We will find the happiness of married life! / Remember that the unmarried man / Often is he chained by much too many passions"(Opitz 1946, 28).

Marriage is the legal framework in which carnal passions are kept under control. The village obligation of hiring only married vassals is a consequence of this precept. Long periods of loneliness and sexual abstinence have often led to rapes. The unmarried people represented a real burden for the feudal lord. On one hand, it was an economic problem, as the setting up of a family meant also paying regular benefits. On the other hand, a family was a barrier to debauchery. The Cadastre of the domain of Hunedoara, in 1680 stipulated "the serfs' children's age, which was recorded for the ruler to see if the young men met the age of marriage or even exceeded it, not to live a vicious life but to enter into the marriage let by God on earth and evolve, but if they didn't want to, they should be forced and even put into prison, not to procrastinate it". (Prodan b 1986, 105) In some areas there were even some special tithes applied

to the unmarried people, "unmarried villeins" and widows. Usually, they were owed to the preacher. (Prodan b 1986, 106) The Cadastre of the domain of Hunedoara from 1681-1682, mentioned even the sons's ages, for the officials to know who was fit for marriage. If one didn't willingly agree to marry he was obliged, by being threatened with prison. The founding of a new serf unit that would pay taxes was all that mattered. Perhaps that often the young man, confronted with such an alternative, agreed to marry. In this context, a marriage based on love was out of question. (Ursuțiu 1979, 233-242) Princess S. Lorantffi's instructions for the Făgăraș domain regulated the city captain's protection. The princess forbade him to employ "homeless" unmarried serfs, considering that they were "worthless, they could not be trusted". (Prodan c 1970, 10) Marriage offered a different status. It was an undeniable proof of the maturity reached by the individual, of its own ability to support a family.

Setting up a family was a prerequisite for being accepted by the guild. This might be the most effective method of preventing a member of the guild from committing the serious sin of fornication. Otherwise, the guild honour could have suffered. Since the beginning of the 15th century (1424-The statute of the Furrier Guild from Brașov), they mentioned that somebody who wanted to join the guild had to prove that he was a legitimate son, the "fruit" of a marriage recognized both by the church and the civil authorities. (Documente 1999, 26) One of the first guild statutes that required a master to be necessarily a married was that of the furriers. Marriage was the easiest way that could stop a probable life spent in debauchery. The same statute provided, that the one who wanted to join the guild had to demonstrate "that he is legitimate born" and of German origin. (Documente 1999, 146) Another statute, that of carpenters, painters and sculptors in wood, stipulated that the man who was to become a master had to have at least a fiancée, if he didn't have a wife. (Documente, 1999, 153) A craftsman who had been part of the guild, at a certain time, could not be readmitted in the guild if he was unmarried, even if his technical skills were recognized by everybody. (Documente 1999, 236) In October 1545, the magistrate of Brașov together with the senior magistrates of Bârsa decided that all the craftsmen had to be married. This decision was aiming at "maintaining the civic order." It also forbade all the unmarried journeyman to practice the craft in the future. Perhaps this decision taken by the civil authorities was meant to put a stop to a situation

more or less worrying: to an increase of the debauchery acts. It is possible that this decision had been taken under the influence of the Protestant religious ideas, which at that time were already deeply rooted in the Saxon population. (Documente 1999, 194) In a Drapers' Guild statute they mentioned three possibilities for a young craftsman to enter into a marriage. Thus, he could marry "the daughter of a craftsman, a widow or another girl". Even though between the master and the widow could have been quite an important age gap, marriage was beneficial, in financial terms, for both sides. The financial stability could be ensured both for the young master, and for the widow by this marriage. (Documente 1999, 191) In other statutes, they encouraged the marriage between a journeyman and the craftsman's widow, this leading to a reduced tax for joining the guild, from 12 to only six florins, that's half of it. (Feneșan, Lazăr 1979, 234-260) Some statutes encouraged the marriage of a journeyman to a craftsman's daughter, the tax required by the guild being reduced by half. It was the most effective means through which the master ensured the perpetuation of the craftsmanship in his own family. Also, over the years, the master succeeded in knowing the journeyman better, both his moral side and his technical skills. By agreeing to the marriage, the master was convinced that his future son - in - law would be able to provide his own daughter's financial security and peace of soul. (Documente 1999, 235) Sometimes, the guild asked the future groom to prove that financially he was able to support a family. Thus, "the barber who takes a wife should have a new scissors and new double kettles as well as three iron tools necessary for a venesection and he even had to prove that he was able to sharpen his tools." (Documente 1999, 202) In the same context, a journeyman was allowed to marry only after having managed to produce his craftsman work. It was the proof that he would be able to provide his family a decent future. (Documente 1999, 234) The fines charged for the violation of these provisions were very high (4 florins). (Documente 1999, 247) Committing adultery by a member of the guild was severely punished and he was excluded from the guild. The same punishment was given to those who stole. With exclusion was also punished the man "that would leave his wife, to whom he obliged himself by oath and would practice his craft leaving his wife and children". (Documente 1999, 206).

In this context, it's worth mentioning the records made by Comenius regarding a certain state of immorality. Becoming a school teacher at the

alcohol in Sárospatak in 1650, he had served as director of studies for three years. After several years he wrote a letter to the prince, which stresses the economic, social and educational situation in Hungary. Among the more critical attitudes we find his opinion on the couple's life. He mentioned the high number of those who lived together without being married, "most people lived together in an illegal relationship, satisfying thus their immoral desires." He even considered that the low number of children was a result of such a cohabitation "to increase the number of population, it would be suitable to promote legitimate marriages" (Albu 1944, 66-67).

The financial situation and the immoral conduct were major obstacles to a legal marriage. When one of Ștefan Mailat's daughters wanted to marry, her mother strongly disagreed. The age difference between the two of them, the man being much older, was not an impediment. What really led to this rejection were the rumors of the man's immoral life during a previous marriage. (Popa 1937, 119)

Wealth is still a potential obstacle to achieving marriage. In a letter to Erasmus, Olahus complained of one of his learned disciple's fate, who, though being poor, married a girl without a dowry (although she was honest, hard working, born of decent parents), "only his madness and recklessness being to blame." (Firu, Albu 1968, 168-169) In his chronicle, Kraus noted a line belonging to an old song: "Some people may marry for the sake of wealth, and when it vanishes they feel sorry for having neither love nor food." (Kraus 1965, 84) Wealth was often a crucial argument for a matrimonial agreement. Thus, a young apprentice, with a satisfactory wealth, accepted to marry a young woman, at the suggestion of the guild master. Soon, however, discovering that his new wife was poor he asked the authorities to approve the divorce. Their refusal made him desperate and he committed suicide. The prospect of a marriage in poverty, with a wife who was somehow imposed to him and whom he didn't love at all, frightened him. (Nekesch-Schuller 1903, 259).

Philippe Ariès noticed the attitude of a man, who was in love and on the verge of getting married. So when falling for the young Charlotte, the king Henry IV, who was almost old and used to neglect his hair or beard and used to wear worn out and stained clothes, had suddenly changed. He began to trim his hair, he started paying attention to his own hygiene and the clothes he started to wear were new and bright. Everyone at the court

knew very well, even before the news spread, that the king was in love. The attention he gave to his body and clothes was the result of a new awareness of his appearance. The absence of the beloved woman may instead cause the negligence of the body, sometimes accompanied by loss of appetite. The presence of the beloved woman, her eyes, her gestures and smile, her words and especially her personal objects were sacred to the one in love. (Ariès, Duby 1995, 302) In the same context, one of the topics discussed when Mikes Kelemen paid a visit to a lady, was the marriage of her daughter. The future groom was no longer young and this situation gave the chronicler the opportunity of introducing some spicy moments. This type of marriage, between a very young girl and a much older husband was apparently quite frequent in Transylvania of those times. It's about marriages made for financial interests or prestige (titles of nobility), the feelings of love missing almost entirely. In our case, the young wife was ready to overcome the age obstacle, as her purpose was acquiring a social prestige, by getting the title of countess. Keen observer, the chronicler noticed the groom's emotions, concluding that the marriage due to come made him look younger. He noticed with interest the changes taking place in the personal hygiene of the future husband, not being able to overlook the fact that he began to wash more often. In the same context, the author admitted that the men's personal hygiene was not very good at that time ("we haven't quite washed up now, not even once a month"). The lack of women's presence, of meeting them more often, officially or not, led to this situation. The close time of a marriage, of an intimate relationship, leads men to take appropriate steps. An additional argument of the fact that such marriages were quite frequent, is offered to us by the existence of some prints exclusively addressed to couples. The chronicler describes such a print a calendar containing tips for a harmonious sexual life between the two partners. The calendar includes the times of the year when the two partners had to undergo a total abstinence. First of all, the holidays and all the days of fasting were included, when the prohibition was compulsory to all the Christian couples. The following periods of prohibition were determined by the meteorological and astronomical phenomena. The prohibition applied to the times when it rained, snowed, was foggy, cold or scorching hot. Similarly, the sexual abstinence was imposed during the sun or moon eclipses. These recommendations were meant to improve the health of the individual and the couple's health. In this context, even the big numbers of adulteries

committed by the young wives, bored by their domestic of life, doesn't seem to be unusual. (Mikes 1972, 72-75) Another case when a big age gap was not an obstacle to achieving a marriage was recorded by the chronicler, who otherwise confessed with undisguised pride, that his grandfather married a virgin. (Nekesch-Schuller 1903, 244)

It was the parents' duty to deal with the wedding preparation. In this context, the description of such an event that took place in an urban area, offered the opportunity of recording some organizational and ethical data. It was a big wedding with many guests, and, accordingly, with important financial and material costs. They mentioned the price of just a single item consumed at the wedding, the wine, for which they had to pay the sum of 66 florins. Most of the kinds of food served came from the family reserves. It was mentioned: honey, butter, vinegar, fish, knot - shaped bread, the habitual spices. He recorded, very content, that he fulfilled all his tasks, both as a citizen of the town and as a parent. Thus, he paid all the necessary taxes for such an event, both to the guild and to the town. Having failed to pay these financial and civic obligations, would have certainly stained his honor as a citizen with full rights. He also noted that he had carried out all the duties he had as a parent, according to the tradition. The financial efforts he made in this field were significant, but following all the wedding customs was a priority, a matter of honor. Thus, he personally took care of the gifts to the bride, as well as of those to her parents and relatives. Unfortunately, he only recorded the gift for his future daughter - in - law, consisting of several objects of gold and silver. He also took care of the bride's attire, giving her the wedding veil, the double taffeta skirt and many other hair accessories. (Szabó Ferenc Nagy 1993, 196).

Not always the parents agreed with the partners chosen by their children. It happened especially with foster children. In such a case, father gave his consent against his own will, to the marriage of his dearest daughter, Annoko. It is a child who was baptized with the name of his own daughter, who had died of plague. His disapproval is probably the reason for not telling any details of the marriage preparation and wedding ceremony (in such cases, similar events were well described, see the above case. (Szabó Ferenc Nagy 1993, 200).

In this context, children disapprove a remarriage of one parent, following the death of another. But the overwhelming loneliness often causes a new marriage. This is why the chronicler proposed to a

neighbour's widow, only a year after his wife's death. He organized the wedding very quickly, only three weeks after the proposal. Although, he was seventy years old and at a second marriage, he personally organized the wedding banquet. He was pleased he managed to buy high quality wine though at a fairly high price. Not the love feelings led him into this marriage. Moreover, the chronicler noted that he had initially wooed another woman, also a widow, but he was refused. Although somehow disappointed, he confessed that his new wife was in a precarious financial state, but showed no regret. In this context, he is annoyed that she was not invited with him to the wedding of one of his daughters, considering this "lack of kindness". Surely this daughter had some resentment towards her new mother. She might have been against her father's new marriage from the very beginning having in mind his advanced age and the bright image of her mother, who had recently died. (Szabó Ferenc Nagy 1993, 206-207).

Proper times for weddings were especially considered the week before the Advent (St Ecaterina week), the week before the second Sunday after Epiphany (The Gospel about the wedding in Cana), or the week of the Three Kings from the East. (Schullerus 2003, 142). We notice certain violations of the canons that prohibited the religious celebration of marriage during the fasting. From a note (dated 1700) written on one of the pages of the *Cazania lui Varlaam* (Iasi 1643), we find that the archbishop's son Simon married "on a Thursday, May 28 at Easter, on the Easter days, May 31." (Dudaş b 1983, 221).

There are cases when a long time passes between the marriage and the wedding ceremony. Thus, the chronicler married on the 29th of May, 1698, but the wedding was held on September 25, the same year. (Bereczki 1990, 240).

Usually, a wedding invitation was sent at least a month before the event. The groom was in charge of sending invitations. (Bánfi 1862, 122) There was a whole ceremony happening before the actual wedding. A marriage couldn't be officiated without the girl's parents' consent. Also the parents had to ask the girl if she agreed to getting married. Once they got her agreements, the wooing followed. The girl and her parents fixed a specific day when the young man could come to their house. The girl told the boy about the chosen day. On the set day, the young man, elegantly dressed, surrounded by a large suite, descended at the house girl. They were usually invited to dinner. The boy was invited to sit in front of the girl. Sometimes even his

companions joined him to dinner. There were served many dishes. The party used to last until after midnight, the quantities of alcohol consumed being impressive. Dance could not miss from such an event either. Sometimes, even the girl's parents sent suitors (two people, relatives) to the boy's parents. In this case they were also treated very well, with all kind of foods. This custom seems to have gradually got out of use, not being mentioned any longer in the 17th century.

Several days later, the boy sent two suitors to the girl's parents, to fix the engagement day. There was a special ceremony that had to be strictly followed both by the boy and girl. On the set day, the boy came to the girl's house, dressed in his best clothes. He kneeled in front of the girl and through a symbolic gesture, he touched the girl's fingers with his fingertips, asking thus her to marry him (he did the engagement request.). Receiving the girl's consent and that of her parents, he sent the girl the engagement ring through two relatives (suitors.) The girl took the ring through a relative of hers, a woman. She then sent the boy a handkerchief adorned with some stitches (usually embroidered by herself). At a time agreed in advance, the young man, along with some relatives went to the girl's house. Again, it began another strictly respected ceremony. The girl was brought to the meeting by a woman chosen from her relatives. The two future spouses received the priest's blessing, while seated on a carpet that was to be given as a gift after the ceremony. According to the custom, both the girl's and the boy's parents had to offer gifts after the ceremony officiated by the priest. Then the feast followed, the couple being seated at the table face to face. The party used to last long after midnight. The next morning, the groom sent his bride and her parents a gift. Afterwards it followed the girl's separation from her parents. As long as they were engaged the girl addressed to the boy with the nickname "big brother" while the boy told her "little sister". They often used these forms of addressing to each other in their letters before the engagement.

Thorough wedding preparations followed. If there was a considerable distance to the girl's home, requiring several stations, the boy established the route. He was obliged to carry in advance the necessary food in the places where the procession had to set up a camp. The food had to be considerable, as the wedding party procession came back on the same route. The boy chose his godparents, his best men and the bridesmaids from his own relatives. If he didn't have relatives, he had to call a friend, usually a wealthier one. The

wedding procession made a stop near the girl's village. The groom then sent an emissary to the girl's parents to learn when they were able to receive them. Once the permission being given, two best men, dressed for celebration, went to the bride's house, announcing the arrival of the procession. The host offered them wine and they had to dance three times, according to the tradition. The procession then proceeded to the bride's house. The groom was in the first carriage together with the godfather. The godmother and the bridesmaids went in the second carriage. The two coaches were escorted by two best men on horseback. The groom usually brought a carriage pulled by several horses, for the bride. The two coaches were followed by servants "clean and decently dressed." When the procession was near the girl's home, a representative of the host came out to meet them, with a ring and two or three golden coins. A real contest followed, between young men riding horses, both from the bride's and of the groom's procession, to get these things. The winner was then much praised. Once they got to the girl's village, the groom had to send through one of his best men some valuable gifts to the girl. Usually, he sent a couple of dresses and money. The representative of the bride (the host) thanked for the gifts. The host, usually a wealthier nobleman, had a golden stick as a sign of recognition. He had more assistants, with same signs of recognition, but painted in green.

Weddings were often held in spacious tents, especially built for the event. Some stoves gave the necessary heating if the wedding took place in a cold season. Once in front of the girl's house, the godparents were the first who walked into the house, followed by the groom, his parents, best men and bridesmaids. The "host" was that who met the procession "by royal and decent jokes, about the young couple." The bride's parents then brought the bride, inviting the whole congregation at the table. At that time, godmother and a best man lead the bride to the groom's procession and placed her in front of it. The first one among the men was the bridegroom, followed by godfather and a best man. The personal hygiene before the meal was mandatory. A butler brought more towels, bowls and cups. The first who washed their hands were the newlyweds.

The "Hosts" then lead the wedding guests to the table, the groom's procession being placed separately from the bride's procession. The first table was reserved for the couple. Godfather sit next to the groom, the best man near the godfather, followed according to their ranks, in a strict order,

by the other guests. Godmother sit near the bride, followed by the bridesmaid and the other women. The place of the key "host," a true "master of ceremonies", was at the middle of the table. Before dining, the guests, standing up, had to listen to the priest's blessing. An orchestra, but sometimes even two, one of the bride's, another one of the groom's, played music in the background.

The menu usually included four or five dishes. "The host's helpers" were those who served the guests. There was a whole ritual of toasts, the people from the groom's procession toasted in the honor of those in the bride's procession and vice versa". The host's assistants had to take care and fill the guests' glasses all the time. Large plates of fruit and "sweets" ended the feast. Only now dance could begin. The groom and his bride, godfather and godmother, the best man and the bridesmaid were those who started the dance. After that, the other wedding guests were invited to dance. Only the Polish polka was mentioned of all the dances. The bride changed her clothes during the wedding even two or three times. One of the highlights of the wedding was "the bride's dance." The first dance was given to godfather, then to her father and relatives. "It was a sort of farewell to her family".

A habit which seems to have gone at the end of the 17th century was about some symbolic gestures that the girl was obliged to do towards her parents, when the procession entered the house. Thus, while uttering her farewell to her parents, she had to kneel down both in front of her mother and father. She thanked them for their care because "they married her properly". She often kissed her parents' feet and parents, in turn, kissed the girl. Some other dances of the bride followed. Then, the bride was accompanied by the best man, the godmother and the bridesmaid to the bridal chamber, where the groom was waiting. The best man cut the wreath of flowers on the bride's head by a sword stroke. The gesture signified the imminent loss of virginity. The party went on until dawn in the absence of the newlyweds.

The next morning godmother helped the bride to dress herself with one of the dresses received as a gift from the groom. A tiara and a hood sewn and adorned with precious stones were put on her head. The best man invited the guests again to the party. While having breakfast, the best man served the guests with wine and honey. Then everybody kissed his partner. At lunch, godfather and godmother were the hosts. They served a traditional meal "the godmother's pie", a rolled pie made of rice, deer liver, plums and honey. Lunch

lasted until late at night. Dancing was also customary.

The third day, the young bride was ready to leave the family home. Two people, designated in advance, scrupulously noted the items received by the bride as dowry. Also, according to the habit, those who attended the wedding received presents both from the groom and from the bride's parents. Godfather usually received, a silk shirt, sewn with silk thread and having a white lace collar. The women got silk scarves. The next day after the procession departure, the bride's father "paid" those who helped him, "the hosts". He gave each of them, according to their title of nobility, a gift: cloth, fur, golden coins, horses.

These weddings were often peppered with comic moments. In fact, according to the tradition, these pranks were a must, in order to entertain the guests and the children. One of them, addressed to the best man involved serving him with a pie having its dough filled with pieces of cloth and brass sticks. "If he was experienced, he pricked the pie with his fork and then sent it back to godmother, being immediately praised for his skill." Sometimes real contests were organized, meant to entertain the guests. The public enjoyed them very much. Thus, usually on the second day of the wedding, they put a cup of wine, some golden coins and cloth on top of a tall fir tree. The fir tree branches were cut and the trunk was greased with tallow. The few objects got into the possession of the person who managed to reach first the top of the tree. "That was their entertainment." (Apor 1972, 93-114) It is obviously the most thoroughly described noble wedding in the 17th century. The importance of the description lies in revealing some traditional elements of a wedding that began to disappear towards the end of the 17th century.

This custom is also met at a Saxon wedding. Thus, at one of these weddings a tall fir tree was set up, having a bag of money, a pair of pants and a pair of red boots on its top. (Benkner 1903, 198).

Another famous nobles' wedding, described in detail by the chronicler, was held in 1702 in the city of Gilău, near Cluj. Count György Bánffy and his wife, Countess Klara Bethlen married "their beloved daughter", Countess Anna Bánfy to Count Adam Székely. Godfather was Count István Apor. Both godfather and godmother's clothes were sumptuous. Thus, godfather was wearing a burgundy velvet fur coat, with marten skin lined mantles and buttons of precious stones. As about the women their accessories showed an impressive

wealth and were very valuable. (Apor 1972, 114-115) A huge tent was built in front of the fortress, where not less than 50 tables were put. The tent was adorned with expensive carpets, the floor covered with cloth. The chairs, especially made for this event, were covered in red velvet. The tablecloths, of the same material, were hemmed with golden lace around. Dinner had been served in silence. Gradually, the wine unloosened the guests' tongues and they became noisy. Another ten tables were put into the tent, with a huge amount of crockery (cups, goblets). All of them were decorated with rubies, emeralds, diamonds, pearls. The quantity and the variety of foods made from venison (deer, rein deer, pheasants) was amazing. It is worthy to mention the culinary refinement of the dishes, which "were decorated as if it they were alive." As about the pastries, not only their variety, but especially the chef's imagination and the way he decorated them was spectacular. The Făgăraș Fortress was recreated from pastries in its smallest details, "with its inner and outer bastions, with the soldier that guarded its gate having a gun on his shoulders...and around the fortress there was water and small fish inside it". The quantity of the wine purchased on that occasion was more than enough for all the wedding guests. The Hungarian fiddler's music and the dancing had entertained the guests. In the evening, the bride changed her bridal attire with another dress. Also, she unbraided her hair, which was tight into a bun and adorned it with different colourful ribbons. The bride dance then followed, in a strict order, first with the godfather, then with her father and finally with the best man, who afterwards lead the bride to the bridal chamber. In the honor of this event, several cannon volleys were fired. (Apor 1972, 115-119).

Another wedding that became famous by its showy display was that between the Count Ferrari Bartholomew and Agnes, daughter of late magistrate Samuel Kálnoki. Thus, at the end of the wedding, they displayed "fireworks, which hadn't been seen by the Transylvanians before." (Barițiu b 1869, 287).

"Peter Costa" wrote down on one of the pages of the printing *Catavasier* (Blaj, 1762) that he had spent ten days' at his own wedding, at "Kauasd, at his father-in-law, Petru Berghe". He married a woman from the neighbouring village and the wedding probably took also place in his village, but he mentioned only the event organized by his wife's family. We notice the length of time of the event. (Mălinaș 1993, 56)

A story relating a Saxon engagement in a rural area

in 1677 (Nadeș) presents the unchanged custom of the popular betrothal (the speaker becomes the godfather, the groom gives his bride the ring, the girl's consent is asked only after her parents had already agreed, to the marriage "the undoubtedly" wine is drunk to the end): "And Luca Ludwig the guild master, started and asked her father, mother and brother if they wanted him to untie what we had tied before, or to let it untied for ever, and all the three said in one voice not to unravel anything asking him just to be their witness. At this point, the girl was promised to this man and mother father and brother said they all four agreed to that. Then they asked for the girl to come and they told her:" Well, dear daughter, look at him, and if you like him or not, tell us now, otherwise only death would be able to untie you, as we don't agree today and disagree the next day. And Ludwig advised her to think well. And the girl replied, saying this: I won't undo all that did my father and my mother, but tied they will remain, and then she shook my hand and the groom's hand. That's why the groom gave her the wedding ring as a sign of pre engagement while we were all sitting. She received it and we drank a glass of wine in their honor". (Schullerus 2003, 141-142).

There were law items which precisely established the length of time between betrothal and marriage. Thus "if one was engaged to a maid but for two years living in the same country he didn't marry her, the girl, without any impediment because of the vow, may be promised to another one, without letting herself deceived or hindered by the pending marriage." (Sutschek, 1997, 186) The Saxons town statutes established some rules that had to be obeyed by any person who wanted to get married. A marriage, in order to be recognized, had to be made "with the parents' knowledge and approval." Their consent was not necessary any longer, if "they live together and become husband and wife...they will not be separated because of it." (Sutschek 1997, 185).

The Statute of Sibiu, issued in 1565, established clear rules about the wedding feast. It was held in three stages: on the occasion of the promise or hands shaking, on the rings exchange and on the wedding celebration. These strict regulations could be a sign of the big length of time taken in organizing a wedding before this law was adopted. It is easy to notice that all these stages of the feast were in agreement with the Lutheran church canons, certain habits or traditions being prohibited. There was also a ban on the number of guests, they were not allowed to put more than ten tables. (Avrigeanu 1970, 28-29) Similarly, the

statute of the wool weavers' guild from Cisnădie compelled, under the threat of fines, those attending a wedding, to have a sober and balanced behaviour during that event. Thus, there were severely punished those who "shouted out loud while dancing." (Documente 2003, 394) These measures were imposed, as long as, certain conflicts, occurring during a wedding, often degenerated into physical violence. Thus, in July 1600, several witnesses were heard at the judge's seat in the process of the applicant Ioannes of Vlăhița, against Ioannes Jakoch of Căpalnița, on the dispute that arose between the two sides at a wedding. (Demeny 1994, 70)

Frequently certain citizens' weddings enjoyed the attention of the city magistrate who offered different gifts to the new couple. They generally consisted of food. Thus, in Sibiu, in 1497, B. Fleischer received as a wedding gift spices, that cost three florins. This amount would have been plentiful for the preparation of all the necessary food at the wedding. Another citizen, who probably took part in the city council, received as a wedding gift two oxen and six florins, that should have been enough to cook all the dishes for the guests. (Teutsch a 1895, 155) If the man to get married was an important member of the city leadership, the gifts he received were really precious. The magistrate Albert Huet got on his wedding day "from the Council of Sibiu, a golden cup, two chairs and from Prince Bathori a golden cup, and on top of it there were carpets, fish, wine barrels, silver spoons" (Teutsch a 1895, 165).

Information on the Orthodox marriage in Transylvania in the 17th century is offered by the "Molitvelnicul" printed in Bălgrad in 1689. The engagement service was performed after the Mass, in the middle of the church, where the Saint Gospel, the Holy Cross and the candlesticks were put on a table. The engagement rings were placed on the Gospel. It is remarkable that the words, "honest marriage and unsullied bed" were replaced with "unsullied life". The message about the sin of adultery was more hidden in the second message as compared to the first one, where it was very clear. As about the second marriage, the couple was not allowed to drink from "the communal cup." Also, they didn't perform the ritual dance, as the joy it symbolized was inappropriate with the penance recommended by the Church on a second marriage. (Vanca 1998, 95-97) The priests were forbidden to officiate religious marriages in the afternoon or at night. They could only take place in the morning after the Divine Liturgy. They had to inform in advance those who wished to marry, to come on the fixed day "without having drunk or eaten

anything." The priest was not allowed to officiate the marriage if the bride and the groom did not know "Our Father, The Creed and The Commandments". The couple had to promise that, after the marriage, they wouldn't miss the Sunday service at church and would obey the fasts and the confession. Moreover, the confession was mandatory for the bride and the groom just before their religious marriage. (Tempea 1968, 123)

Within the Romanian communities, giving a book as a dowry to the daughter who would enter a marriage was mentioned several times. The archbishop Ștefan of Cășeu gave his daughter as a dowry a "homily" (unidentified). He expressed his will that this print should remain to his grandsons. (Dudaș a 1990, 181) The Octoih printed in Târgoviște in 1712 was bought by Mihai Horje from Călugări for 8 florins and 5 "fonți" of bacon, that valued 10 "groșnițe". The book was given to his son in law "to belong to him and his babies". (Dudaș a 1990, 279) The print Apostol (București, 1683) was given in 1765 by the "priest Avram" to his son, the church singer Anghel Petru. The new owner made a note immediately after receiving the donation: "I wrote in the year 1765, March the 8, Petru Dieac". (Lupan, Hațeganu 1974, 376-377) From a note written in 1675, on one of the pages of Cazania lui Varlaam (Iași, 1643), from Budești, we learn that the print was given as dowry to the daughter of "Priest Toader from Budatelec", who got married in a neighbouring village to the "Priest Precup of Târgșor". After the death of his son in law, after the year 1675, the book went back to the property of "Priest Toader" who gave it as dowry to another daughter, "Tudosia's dowry" who was about to marry to "Priest Gabor from Băița". The note ends with an anathema towards the man who would give the book away. (Dudaș b 1983, 230-231) "Irimie Pop Todor from Vidra de Jos", was in 1856, the owner of the Psaltire printed in Sibiu in 1709. A year later, the book became the property of "Gligor Tamaș the teacher" he received it at his wedding as a result of marrying the "priest Todor's sister's daughter" (the book was probably given as dowry). (Basarab a 1998, 65).

The image of the ideal wife comes out in rhymes, told by the groom during the marriage. He was obliged to counsel his young wife. The purpose of these tips was of setting up a bright image of the new couple in the others' eyes. The woman was obliged to follow the advice to be respected and admired. Any breach would have harmed not only her image, but the couple as a whole. If these precepts were followed the new family wouldn't become subject of gossip. We notice even an

embellishment of the relationship between the husband and wife, all for the same purpose. The fear of being rejected or banished from the community was steadily growing.

The woman had to respect her husband, and therefore his decisions. Hospitality was one of the virtues that a wife should be endowed with. She was required to properly receive the guests and if she was in a low mood she had to hide this as well as possible. Whether there were more or less guests, the conversation should have been cordial, polite and to the point. Otherwise there was the risk of becoming boring or, worse, of talking about issues beyond her own knowledge. In other words, she should answer only if it was necessary and should ask just few questions, and then she had to carefully choose every word. This advice also applied when she went shopping. The next advice was about the attention she had to pay to her own clothes. If she neglected this duty, "if the clothes are crying on you" she would harm not only herself, but the consequences would fall upon her husband too, who would be accused by the community of not being able to support his own wife. The young wife had to skillfully manage the common goods, not to be wasteful, otherwise the people close to her would call her a "bottomless basket". Alcohol drinking should have been moderate, so that "you can taste wine in our house, but must not be a guest at the inn". Another duty referred to fulfilling her household duties so "you should keep our house clean and often sweep our room". Otherwise, the new couple's house had been laughed at, and the wife would have been called "dirty cloth". If the woman hadn't fulfilled her duties, she would have been severely punished by the man "the length of her back couldn't avoid the long rod". These little poems usually ended with threats that in case of disobedience, the toughest corporal punishment would be applied. In fact, this was a sign that there were many cases of domestic violence. It also reveals the woman's social condition, as submission and obedience of her husband were considered to be two essential virtues. The wife's answer contained the commitment that she would follow exactly her husband's advice: "Your words of love are dearest to me, your advice is wise and fair, I will keep them in my heart as precious gifts." (Szkharsi 1892, 26).

Another similar little poem shows us the care that a wife should give to her own clothes, as she had to "praise" the clothes bought to her by her husband. The reason of this advice was the same: the bad impression she would make on the community,

which would have called her "a loosen reel". Another tip aimed at developing the future wife's capacity of wisely managing the wealth of the house, so that "our wheat and flour you must not waste." An intemperate wife wouldn't have honored the house, the opinion of others prevailing in this case too. Moderation was also the key word when referring to drinking alcohol. The future husband didn't forbid her such a pleasure, he even let her occasionally go to the pubs. Another advice was about the wife's duty to take care of the house cleaning. The advice usually ended with one or more threats, addressed by the husband to his wife in case of disobedience. There was even a curse of the kind "if you don't obey me, may God not protect you". The husband's threats envisioned corporal punishments "you shall not keep your back away from the bat or rod". (Szkharsi 1892, 27).

In the same context, another little poem that was circulating at that time contained various tips for the lads and girls who wanted to start a family. To form a happy couple, the woman had to be endowed with some virtues, to fulfill certain duties, considered essential at that time. Thus, the future wife had to take care both of her personal hygiene and of the home she will live in. At about the first requirement the future wife "should not cut the bread with dirty hands." They wanted to comply with minimum standards of personal hygiene, and especially with some behavioral rules showing a good education. Hands' washing before meals was in evidence of this fact. Similarly, the woman's concern for her own aspect played an important role in choosing a wife. Thus, "where the girl combs her hair every third week...it's pointless to go" was the advice for a young man who intended to get married. Related to home hygiene, the future wife should be endowed with the virtue of diligence, the young man being advised "not to go where the house is swept only at lunch time". (Szkharsi 1892, 35)

A little-known fact refers to the life of the new couple, immediately after the marriage was consumed.. Thus, the chronicler and his wife spent the day after the guests' departure at his castle in Bonțida. The following day, together with his wife, he accepted an invitation to lunch. Over the next three days, the newly couple was invited to attend a wedding. A few days later, the chronicler was called by the prince to his military camp and was forced to leave his wife. He left, accompanying the prince on the battle field in Western Hungary. In the first month of war, he still found some time to send two letters to his wife, receiving also two in turn. The fact that his uncle had died just two weeks before the wedding didn't make the

chronicler postpone the event. In fact, two days after the funeral he attended a wedding. (Bánfi 1862, 127-128).

All the institutions of the Principality, the religious (The Protestant and The Orthodox denominations) and the civil ones, both local (city magistrate, guilds, feudal lords) and central (diet) have encouraged and tried to regulate the institution of marriage. They had in view to drop the divorce numbers, debauchery and bigamy. The Saxons' town statutes stipulated that a woman could get a divorce, if the "man because of his impotence couldn't fulfill his marital obligations for two years this without losing a third of her due goods". (Sutschek 1997, 187).

In case of divorce, the Orthodox Church admitted a wide range of reasons: adultery, shameful behavior, maltreatment, absence from home, murder conviction. A reduction of the reasons called upon by a woman to obtain a divorce can be found in the print *Îndreptarea Legii*. Thus, if a man hit his wife when he was angry or drunk, then "if she wasn't beaten too hard, they could not part." The woman could ask for a separation from her husband "if he got crazy", "if he put his wife into irons or somewhere into a prison" or if he hit her so terribly that "if she hadn't managed to escape, he would have killed her" "or if a fight was so serious that "she couldn't speak in front of the judge and sustain her claims". The wounds left by a fight were taken into consideration only if they were made with a knife or an ax. These deeds started to be penalized only in the *Îndreptarea Legii* in 1652. (*Îndreptarea Legii* 1652 1962, 211).

Not only the historians but also the humanists, condemned that the Romanians could get a divorce too easily. A small argument between husband and wife lead to the onset of a divorce. In most cases the woman used to leave home. In the same way, the writer recorded and condemned the ease of receiving blessings for the second or the third marriage. This Transylvanian humanist lyrics is suggestive: "If a quarrel causes justified anger to a furious man / And if he does not control his vindictive rage, / The woman, crying hard, / Rips from her ear the worthless coins / And throwing it into the her husband's chest, is leaving him angrily / And becoming free, she leaves her upset husband". (Poezia latină, 2005, 109) Those who committed such crimes were not only ordinary people. Schesaeus recorded how frequent the Romanian nobles separated from their wives, the reasons for such separations being in most cases "fabrications". In these cases, male infidelity was often the reason of divorce, "whenever they liked,

they left their wives / And others did they take, inventing frequent separations." (Poezia latină 2005, 169).

In fact, the main culprits, incriminated by the representatives of the Protestant denominations were considered the Orthodox priests. The reason was that they accepted the divorce too easily, and easily performed a second or even a third wedding ceremony. Moreover, there are reported cases when even the priest was the one who sinned in this way. Thus, over only ten years (1591 - 1601) two of the priests of the Scheii Brasovului Church remarried after the death of their wives, abandoning the priesthood. (Tempea, 1968, 98) Similarly, the archbishop Florea was accused of allowing "unpious things" officiating the fourth marriage of some parishioners. (Tempea 1968, 114) The British travelers were also surprised by the ease with which the Orthodox priests tied and untied a marriage or blessed "a second or even a third marriage." (Andras 2003, 315) In addition to the triple announcement of the marriage in church, to avoid any hindrance, the Orthodox priests were required to keep records on marriages, spouses' names and date of marriage. They aimed in particular at avoiding bigamy and stipulated the compulsory separation of the bigamist laymen together with a severe fine of 100 florins. (Ghitta 1987-1988, 467-474)

The Protestants have tried to impose their own model, admitting only three reasons that could undo a marriage: adultery, home abandonment, husband's impotence. Generally, divorces were forbidden when a spouse left home but continued to live in Transylvania, separations being admitted only if one partner left and didn't return within seven years. In fact, the chronicler recorded the divorce of four people "although they had a long marriage." This statement is an argument of the rarity of such separations, because if the divorce was a mass phenomenon, the note could have missed.. (Nekesch-Schuller 1903, 232).

In this context, a document from 1596, mentioned the request of a Romanian from Ocna Sibiului, Petru Orgovan, who asked for a divorce at the local court, but was refused. Dissatisfied with this decision, he addressed himself to the prince, who sent his request to be solved by the Court in Sibiu. Disgruntled, he called on Princess Maria Cristierna, who ordered the resumption of the process by the Court in Sibiu".

It indicates that the Romanians had to submit to the same rules of divorce on one hand, and on the other, the couples' difficulties in getting a final

separation .(Teutsch b 1862, 246, 249).

A record of a divorce happened in Simleul Silvaniei reveals details of the intimate life of a couple and the reasons they asked for divorce. This example comes only to strengthen the previous one, the court decision certifying that there were no real reasons for getting a divorce. The document appears to be relevant in terms of providing some aspects of family life, domestic violence being quite common. Sexual frustrations pushed the man to commit violent acts against his wife. The court admitted the defendant complaints, considering that the wife's very observance of her conjugal duties could prevent future acts of violence .The wife sued her husband, having as arguments the frequent physical abuses she was subjected to. In this context, several witnesses were interviewed, all declaring that "there wasn't any brutal beating because none of them had seen the defendant beating the plaintiff with a stick or other brutal object or that he would have caused bruising or red spots on her body or he would have plucked off her hair or he would have made have blood on her body...which all are signs of severe beatings...also that she couldn't present any medical certificate to certify what she had said...thus, a severe fight couldn't be proved". However the sixth witness' stated that he had seen the defendant slapping his wife. The defendant did not deny that he often hit the plaintiff, but "not in a brutal way". The man tried to excuse himself, speaking about the reasons which led him to commit violent acts against his own wife and complained to the court saying that "the plaintiff hated him so much that at night she used to move away from him...and she didn't even let him put his hand on her...and when he wanted to come near her, she used to start shouting loud, to wake up everybody and thus evade the marital obligations." He continued his plea, stating that he was affected by his wife rejection "being in a permanent emotional turmoil, he is absent to all that's happening around him." Further, the defendant, through the certificate issued by the local priest, as a consequence of the testimony of nine witnesses, proved that his wife was taught by her mother "to be evil to her husband" and not to fulfill her marital obligations, "something that have lasted for more than nine months." He also mentioned that this sexual abstinence had worsened his health so that "his nerves are shaken, he has no will of working and there are strong reasons to show that the misunderstandings between them and their difficult life was due to the plaintiff's mother."

The court couldn't find any grounds for divorce and rejected it. In this context, they were required to respect some rules of conduct. Thus the wife was obliged to return home "along with all the objects she took when she left, to respect and obey her husband, to fulfill her marital duties and not to avoid her husband, as St. Paul said, wife is no longer her own master but her husband' is". The man promised to the priest and the curators that "he won't beat his wife any longer, he won't drink as much as before, he will love and protect his wife as any other good Christian." Other decisions taken by the court referred to their relations of the wife's mother. Thus, to avoid suspicion that mother stirs her daughter against her husband through her advice, she was forbidden to come and visit them. In turn, the wife could visit her mother only with her husband's consent. There were excepted from this rule the cases when the daughter's mother would have become ill, in this situations the girl's visits could be unlimited. If the plaintiff's mother had broken the rules, she would have been brought to justice. (Biblioteca Județeană Astra Sibiu, Colecții speciale, Document nr. Inv. 10297. Decizia de divorț a soților Vorelko).

If people wanted to remarry, invariably they should obtain forgiveness from the church. Two people in this situation were rebuked by the priest in church. His attitude was very harsh, his accusations were headed both to the woman and the man. The two of them were simply thrown away. The man left the sacred place extremely annoyed by the reaction of the priest, but somehow confident that he hadn't sinned. They got on trial as a consequence of this event. Most of the witnesses were surprised by the priest's language, who called them: "slut", "whore", "mad dogs". His reaction was amplified by the fact that although the two had asked forgiveness for their previous divorce, they were married by "a priest of heretical religion" (in their belief, an Orthodox priest). (Asszonyok és Férfiak Tüköre 1980, 378-384) A remarriage shortly after the death of a first wife was the only option of a priest in getting an ordainment. Nistor Socaci "rector of Biscaria and of Săulești" married Sofia Popovici in May of 1837 "the daughter of the late Ion Popa". After a few months, on the 5th of November she died and was buried on a "Sunday, November 7". From another note we find that Nistor Socaci was appointed deacon soon after his marriage from June, 3, 1837. In about a year, on the 25th of June 1838 he was ordained priest. (Basarab a 1998, 108)

The ceremony of christening, celebrated on the same day or shortly after birth, marked the entry of

the new born into the Christian life. This is the mystery that, cancelling the original sin, made him a good Christian. The name chosen for him by the godfather and godmother placed the child under the protection of a saint in heaven, who became his model, and at the same time integrated the child into the family community. The christening mystical and symbolic significance clearly transpired when the town priest managed to convince many people to be baptized again. The belief in the necessity of this act can purify the sinners' souls. (Hegyés 1909, 464).

Often a longer period of time (even several months) passed between the birth of a child and his baptism. Thus, Kálnoki the chronicler, baptized his daughter, who was born on the 20th of April 1637, only on the 19th of July the same year. (Kálnoki 1862, 149) His son, Samuel Kálnoki, was in the same situation several decades afterwards. Thus, he baptized his girl who was born on September 2, 1669 only two months later. It's worthy to notice that on the 20th of July, 1670 another daughter was born to him. Basically his wife became pregnant immediately after giving birth to their first child. (Kálnoki 1862, 156) In another similar case, a wife gave birth to a baby only 13 months after the death of another child. (Bereczki 1990, 241).

The custom of choosing more godparents was often met in the Saxon community. It seems that it was not mandatory for the godparents to be married, the chronicler mentioning that they were "Pleckerus and Chrestels and his wife Sara". (Benkner 1903, 189) The chronicler chose three godparents for his newborn daughter, a man and two women. But he had to pay a sum of money to persuade them. (Hegyés 1909, 457) There are also cases when the number of the godparents was really impressive. Thus, on a girl's christening, there were chosen not less than nine godparents, including four men and five women. Among them, two were the priests who baptized her. It should be noted that the nine people weren't related. After the christening ceremony, the child's parents invited the godparents to dinner where they served "three kinds of meals and the dishes were so wonderful that they could have been appreciated anywhere." (Wesselényi 1973, 715) Personal notes were found on the Psaltire printed in 1796 in Bucharest. In 1840, on a Friday, "son Joseph Oto" was born, whose godfather was D. Iosif, "parochi Panovici". Two years later, on November 28, at midnight "son Atilius Paulus" was born, whose godfather was Paul Dunka from Zlatna. The next two children, Paulina, born on the 30th of June 1846 "at 3:00 p.m." and Ioan, born in 1849, had the

same godparents, named "Kovaks". The last of the children, Ana, was born in 1852 "after midnight". Her godfather was "Iosiv the priest". It's worth to know that the person who wrote the notes, for two of the children also mentioned the sign under they were born "Lion". (Pascu 1976, 87-88)

The high birth rate and the high mortality, the family structure and the family size, often transpires in the notes written on the old Romanian books. The high birth rate of the time followed but the high infant mortality shows first of all the individual attitude, his resignation as he accepts his child's death, firmly believing that this was God's will. The sadness caused by the death of a child was usually removed by the birth of another child, a sign of divine benevolence. Notes about births followed by deaths, are found on the pages of the printing *Acatistiaru* (Blaj 1763). The priest Grigore Șeușa bought at an unspecified date (probably the second half of the 18th century) the *Molitvenic*, printed at Bălgrad in 1689. The book was purchased for the remembrance of his family, consisting of three boys and five girls "to bring pity upon me, my wife, Ștefania and my sons, Constantin, Ion, Maria, Ana, Ioana, Ileana, Nastasia". (Bogdan, Mișu 2008, 20) Some notes made on several pages of the *Cazania lui Varlaam* (Iași, 1643) from Brăgălez, offer information on the family structure. The print was bought by "Priest Toma from Călăcea", "on the days of Apafi Mihai, prince of Transylvania" and given to his family. According to the notes, the priest Toma had two sons, five daughters, two grandchildren, two brothers and three sisters. (Dudaș b 1983, 228) Through the efforts of a single family, they managed to purchase a copy of the *Cazania lui Varlaam* (Iași, 1643) from Desești, just two years after its publication (1645). According to this note, the man who managed to buy the printing had three sons and two daughters. (Dudaș b 1983, 266-267) In 1699, a copy of the *Cazania lui Varlaam* (Iași 1643) was purchased from Hârnicești with 21 florins by the local priest together with villager Mihai Brândău and given as alms to the local church. He had six boys and one girl, as the diptych showed. Although the note ended with an anathema against those who would give the book away, only eight years later, the book was bought a second time by the villager Oprea Luca from Vereșmort of the "Vidic Satmar" and given to the church for his relatives' forgiveness and remembrance. He had two daughters, two brothers and three sisters, as it was shown in the diptych. The text signed by Grigore the deacon concludes with an anathema against those who would give the book away. (Dudaș b, 1983, 291-

292) Only seven years after its publication, the Chiriadromion, printed in Bucharest in 1732, was bought with 19 florins possible by some brothers "Avram Mircesc and Iosif Mircesc and Stancu, Mircesc and Dragomir Mircesc and Gheorghe Mircesc" and given to the church in Săcel "for their remembrance". (Basarab b, 2001, 41) The owner of the print "Molitvenic", (Râmnic 1758) noted very precisely the date of birth of two of his children, adding the month of the year, the day of the month, the religious holiday, the time "when my daughter Bulata was born, on February 14, a Dragobete day, on a Tuesday towards

Wednesday, 7 o'clock, 1835", "when Dumitru my son was born, in the month of December, in the evening, 1839 ". (Mălinaş 1993, 53)

Taking into account the fact that the generosity of the approached subject leaves space to multiple interpretations and evaluations, in the procedure of the historical investigation, the few considerations of the present study, allow us to conclude that, under the impulse of the Reform, both the civil authorities (central and local) and the ecclesiastical one, have stated laws by which they managed the institution of marriage.

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