

**“Babeş-Bolyai” University, Cluj-Napoca**  
**Faculty of History and Philosophy**

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

**Transylvanian Titled Elites**  
**The family of the Counts Haller in the 18-19<sup>th</sup> Centuries.**

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The research of the aristocratic elites in Romania is a relatively new branch of the historical research. In Romania this research has intensified in the last two decades. Many works have appeared: biographies, family histories etc. But even today there are still few works discussing this topic. The historiography has tried to remake the distorted picture of the nobility given by communist historiography. There is also sometimes notable a nostalgia for a period and institutions that probably are not adequate for the 21st. century.

In the West the research of the nobility was uninterrupted. In Romania the reissuing of important genealogical works and family histories has started and new works have also started to appear. Sadly there is still a lack of works of aristocratic biographies that are based on a real archival research.

Our interest in the history of the Haller family comes from a real interest for the forgotten history of a social category and also a family that is present in the annales of history but it has never been completely researched.

In the case of the Haller family the works discussing the family's history are few and even these were edited at the end of the 19th century. In 1886 Lajos Szádeczky wrote a series of articles in the magazine *Turul*. He based his work on the „Family Book”( today in the collections of the National Museum of Hungary). Szádeczky concentrated on the history of the family in the 17-18th centuries, the later generations being only mentioned. Our research concentrated not only on archives found in State Archives but also in private property.

A few words should be said about the „ Family Book”. It was started in the 16th century by Bartholomeus Haller von Hallerstein for the Transylvanian branch of the family. It was written by family members until the 20th century. At the end of the 19th century it was in the property of the last member of the Coplean line, Haller Eugen, then entering the property of Haller Ferenc from the Sânpaul line, who took it in 1943 to Budapest. The book is today in the

property of the family though deposited at the National Museum of Hungary. The most interesting parts of the book are the first chapters until the beginning of the 18th century, the family portraits and diplomas are true works of art. The last to work on the book was Count Haller Géza who translated the book (written in German and Latin) into Hungarian.

The family of the Counts Haller von Hallerstein appears in documents starting with the 12<sup>th</sup>. century. The "Family Book" written by members of the family mentions the members of the family as living in Nüremberg starting with 14th century. The first Haller to be in direct connection with the present day Hallers was Ulrich Haller. The family's primary occupation was that of tradesmen. In this capacity Ruprecht Haller was sent to the, then German town of Buda. In a short time he became one of the most influential members of the town's patricians. One member of this branch, Peter Haller came to Transylvania around the year 1526.

In the discussed period the family had more lines. The Coplean line founded in 1606, the Sânpaul and Albești lines, after the division of goods of 1715, Cristuru Secuiesc line from 1849, the Cetatea de Baltă line from 1898. We have tried to analyze the family's history in these centuries from different aspects: education, marriages, estates, patrons of art and church, political activity.

The education of each member of the family began at home. The boys who were the heirs started to have by their side tutors from an early age. These tutors could be priests, teachers from the local religious schools or even university students. In the period the most frequented schools were: The Royal Lyceum and Jesuit College from Cluj, Reformed College and Roman Catholic Gimnazium in Tg. Mureș. Abroad they would attend the schools of the piarist order in Pest, the Theresianum in Vienna or Notre Dame Convent in Bratislava. The most information we have about the children of Haller Gábor and Károlyi Klára.

In the case of the Haller family, in the 18th. century marriages with representatives of the lower and middle nobility characterize the first half of the century. It is to be mentioned that in this century the marriages are both with representatives of Transylvanian families and also those from Hungary. From these marriages two can be mentioned: Haller Gábor with Grassalkovich Anna Mária (daughter of Grassalkovich Antal, an advisor to Maria Theresia), and that of his son József with Koháry Mária Terézia (the family was in close relationship with the Sachsen Coburg-Gotha family and thus with many ruling families of Europe). The 19th. century brings an increase in the number of marriages with Transylvanian families. There are also marriages with

representatives of middle class families. The most famous is that between Haller János and Kleisch Zsuzsanna continued by his sons: József with Kiss Anna and Ferenc with Baruch Eliz. It also to mention, that marriages with Non-Hungarians are rare. One of them is that of Haller Gabriella in 1850 with the Austrian baron Theodor Weiss-Starkenfels.

The members of the family were involved in many charitable actions and cultural initiatives. It is remarkable the interest for literature and collecting books. There was a special relation also between the Catholic Church and the family. The most important patrons were the women of the family, mainly: Károlyi Klára and Daniel Zsófia who helped convents, religious schools, churches.

The first estates given to the family were in Târnava and Alba de Sus counties. The first estates were acquired by Peter Haller. In 1553 he was given the estates of Albești, Dăișoara in Alba de Sus county and a part of Blăjel in Târnava county. Estates were also inherited after the death of prince Bocskai István. The sister of Bocskai was married to Haller Gábor, so after his death the family was given the estate of Coplean in Solnocul Interior county. In 1609 Haller István got through marriage, the estate of Sânpaul which became the centre of a line after 1715. Later acquisitions included the estates of: Hoghiz or Cetatea de Baltă.

Throughout the centuries the family was active in the counties as lord lieutenants, members in the county councils or just owners interested in the cultural, economic and political life of the county. Outside the county the family was also involved in national politics. Councilors in The Gubernium, or Haller János even becoming governor of Transylvania between 1734-1755, Haller Gábor Thesaurarian, Haller Ferenc ban of Croatia. The family also participated at Diets. In 1848-49 some of them are members of the Hungarian Revolutionary Parliament. After 1867 they were representatives and after 1885 members in the Hungarian House of Lords.

Today the family lives on. In Transylvania there are only two representatives with the Haller name but other members of the family live in Argentina, Germany and Hungary.