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**The Barber's Guild in the Early Modern period (16th-17th century) in the Saxon
University, Sibiu, Brașov, Cluj, Târgu Mureș, Debrecen, Tokaj, Sárospatak, Győr, Pápa,
Esztergom**

– Summary of the doctoral thesis –

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Key words: barbers, guild, premodern era, Saxon University, Sibiu, Braşov, Cluj, Târgu Mureş, Debrecen, Tokaj, Sárospatak, Győr, Pápa, Esztergom

During my academic studies, I was keen on exploring health care in the Middle Ages and in the early modern age, thus physicians in the principality era was the subject matter of my state examination and a branch of the same theme, namely the activity of the physicians in the principality era was analyzed in my master's dissertation in detail. The PhD provided for me the opportunity to devote an in-depth reflection to yet another branch of the early modern age health care, which was no longer aimed at the „elites” activity but rather highlighted a more civilian unit of those involved in health care activities: namely the barber-surgeons’ guild life.

For a long time, the range of activities provided by ecclesiastics, priests and monks covered all patient care and cure in Europe during the Middle Ages. Relying upon ancient knowledge, medicine was rather a method of treatment soaked with superstitions in the early Middle Ages Europe than medicine in the sense that we know it today. Indeed, in the Middle Ages, Christian medicine had a cornerstone which was started to be neglected only in the Renaissance era: namely that the church banned on several occasions the monk physicians to have contact with blood, and therefore, no significant change was possible to occur in this field.

A significant progress in medicine was brought about by laicization in the Renaissance era. The more the number of universities increased, the more the number of the medical science students increased and an ever growing number of Hungarian (and Transylvanian) citizen's children enrolled as students in universities abroad. Consequently, secular intelligentsia gains ground and, in the same time, ecclesiastic presence in the medical field is reduced inasmuch as by the early modern age, there were more secular physicians than ecclesiastic ones. However, this does not mean that physicians changed their opinion about surgery. Such interventions were still deemed to be degrading, beneath dignity, and as such, to be avoided, since - lacking specialists - they moved into the artisanal category, where barbers and bathers took care of such tasks: i.e. treated wounds, opened up abscesses, performed bloodletting, extracted teeth, healed burns,

attended to bone fractures and even amputated. From among these two categories, barbers (barbitonsor, barberius, barbiriis in Latin and balbirer in German), who fit in easily into the framework of standards given in the Middle Ages and Modern Age and Christianity, became more representative personalities in surgery. They set up guilds, developed in a town environment and observed all formalities thereof, i.e. had guild regulations encompassing the barbers' standards system. As soon as their surgical activity became increasingly common, they were more and more frequently called surgeons (chirurgus in Latin and Wundtartz in German), and in certain cases, statutes mention barber-surgeon guilds. Although we do not have enough data about the actual differentiation between the profession of barbers and surgeons, but as long as both are mentioned, one can draw the conclusion that the process got started.

It is difficult to define their place in the early modern society due to the complexity and also due to the non-traditional productive activity thereof. JENEY-TÓTH Annamária drew the attention to the fact that as far as categorization is concerned, it is worthwhile to rely upon the contemporaneous mentality, and observe in this respect the first civics book of Cluj-Napoca (1589-1614), where barber surgeons were included in the clothing and cleaning group. This also reveals that although their activity highly differed from the traditional productive industrial occupations in towns, they were part and parcel of the town life by the 16th-17th century.

In this highly diversified guild life, each trade, as well as the commonalities of interests related thereto, reveals a very important additive about the social, economic and legal structures and culture of the era. Somehow, from the very beginning, I was more interested in the status and situation of the barbers and surgeons, above all. I was eager and I am still curious to find out about those who practiced this modern age profession, their everyday life, the legal frameworks of their operation, the position they held in society and the strata they originate from. Yet another starting point of my research is comparing barber guilds which used to operate in various towns, and within this, I looked for an answer to the question of the extent and the way in which the split of the Kingdom of Hungary into three parts in the Middle Ages brought a change into the barber guilds life. Here, due to the rich documentation, I reached a crossroad, since the monographic analysis of the barber guilds of each town was not completed, so I had to choose such further issues within the life of the above mentioned commonalities of interests, which were present in all of them and relatively encompassed the guild life. So I came to choose to examine barber guild statutes.

The difficulty of the theme is given by the fact that unlike other guilds, this one is an unevenly documented group, where constitutive acts or copies thereof have not been preserved in each and every town. With a view to have a fuller and more authentic picture, I confined myself to take examples from all three areas of the early modern age, namely the Royal Hungary, the vassal territories and Transylvania, alike. In researching the barbers' letters patents, I mainly focused upon those rules according the statutes, which support the organization and the operation of the town life, and which most clearly mirror the barbers' system of values in the early modern age. Also, an important goal was to provide a base, a starting point for understanding and further researching the diversified however important works in the field, by presenting the documents. Therefore, in the first part of my doctoral thesis, I described the documents and the subject matter items, mainly keeping the logical sequence as set thereby. In the second part of my thesis, I compared these data according to areas but here, I pursued the logic of development: starting from the fundamental criteria (such as accepting members and applying penalties), I approached the direction of the moral, religious and social measures towards implementation. In this comparison, the progress line was somewhat given by Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which essentially stipulates that needs at the very bottom of the hierarchy have to be at least partially fulfilled in order that the human motivation require and accomplish a higher level, until the self-actualization level is reached.

The lengthy analysis and comparison shows that the letters patent subject to discussion feature all those articles and topics which are present in all other guild statutes of the era, and it also became evident that barber guilds are similar in far more ways than expected, and I found more significant differences only in terms of nationality and religion. This implies that in the 16th-17th century, barber surgeons considered themselves craftsmen just as other masters, who provided however a productive work in the Hungarian regions. Due to the guilds framework, barbers also had the possibility to get integrated into the town structure during the early modern age, and so the differences given by the variety of the trades, namely that barber surgeons rather belonged to the service industry (as it became more common in towns only later, in the mature phase of the modern era) than to the productive branches of industry, disappeared.

An important question in my thesis was whether the surgeons' role within barber guilds represents or not a distinct trade as compared with the barbers?

Analyzing the development of the surgeon concept, one can notice that words such as “would surgeon” and “wound physician” are mainly used in Transylvania, and less in the Royal Hungary area (only in Tokaj, and presumably also in Kassa). In terms of craft, it is still not separated from the barbers but is rather part and parcel of barbering. On the other hand, it started to get separated as an activity (yet not as a craft) in Transylvania, as early as in the 16th century. This is shown by the very fact that here, this concept is used more frequently and in a sense that is well distinguishable from barbering. In terms of responsibilities, professional qualification and benefits, it also differs from the other, haircutting, hair-washing and shaving activities. Here, we find yet another proof of the presumption that in Transylvania and occasionally in such Royal Hungary areas where citizens nurtured a closer relation with Transylvanian people, “barber” was used as a generic term, including all those who were in business with haircutting (shaving) and surgery, alike. In this time, one cannot talk about surgery as a distinct craft, but rather only as an activity. All these aspects have to be discussed from the viewpoint of the signs indicating the development of the guild life, in favor of the Saxons, who placed a stronger emphasis on the system: they officially laid down in writing their tasks, for all purposes, thus customary law determined the barbers’ and surgeons’ activity to a lesser extent.

With barbers, guild life dynamics and progress developed according to the customs of the era, which started by enrolling in the guild, in all three areas. Documents and letters (in proof of birth and apprenticeship) had to be presented by the future guild members to the masters, who jointly decided about the acceptance. Beside written letters, a defining role was played by witness declarations, since often, due to the war situations, it was not possible to safely obtain sealed documents in support of the application for being admitted as members.

Differences are more significant in terms of fees for being hired with and accepted into the guild, as well as the entering fee, which are not spatial but actually time-related differences: the more recently a document was issued, the more requirements were imposed in this respect. Fees were expected to be given in money, wax or wine, however providing a feast was a general requirement to celebrate the hiring and admission events. The tendency was similar in the case of the master meal to be delivered after the masterpiece.

In certain places, for becoming a guild member, it was mandatory to acquire civil rights and get married. By the turn of the 16th-17th centuries, acquiring civil rights is endowed with a

new meaning, according to which this is no longer a status as before, in the Middle Ages but a requirement, and that's why it is mentioned only in some documents. As far as marriage is concerned, the necessity thereof is known only with Saxons and in Pápa. In the former case, the reason for this is the attitude of the Saxons towards family, to be discussed later, since it is highly probable that in their view, marriage was a surety for the individuals' proper moral stand and reliability as a breadwinner.

As soon as the hiring and the apprentice period was over, which usually encompassed three years, it was very important, especially with Saxons, that the apprentice starting his professional journey, as well as the future master preparing for his masterpiece, have serious skills in the barber surgery field: apprentice were supposed to be able to perform bloodletting and extract teeth, while future masters were supposed to take an examination in the above mentioned surgical interventions and wound dressings, beyond various infusions, when presenting their masterpiece. Surgical knowledge was especially important in the case of the Tokaj and Sárospatak masterpieces, but elsewhere, they put an emphasis only on the preparation of infusions and other ointments. This must not necessarily be interpreted as non-professionalism, as certain researchers of the medical history put it at the beginning of the 19th-20th centuries. There shall be taken into account that in the early modern age, medical doctor examinations were also rather theoretical ones, a breakthrough started to be accomplished in this respect in Europe and surgical knowledge started to gain importance in academic circles, as well. Thus neither at the barbers' level can it be expected that masterpieces demonstrate serious surgical knowledge. With Saxons, as well as in the case of Tokaj and Sárospatak, such a requirement must be deemed to be a more practical step than a scientific provision.

Parallel with the member acceptance steps, there is the dynamic of leaving or being excluded from the guilds.

Quitting the guild was possible in two generally acceptable ways: professional journey and leaving. The professional journey was the best method for acquiring experience, and also for the flux of information within the profession. The possibility to return meant knowledge accumulation for the barber guilds, i.e. it was worthwhile to stimulate a fellow-craft to set up for a journey and accept them back when the one-year journey-time elapsed, because meanwhile, the fellow-craft developed (also in this way). The possibility of leaving was mainly used in towns located in the

Royal Hungary area and in Esztergom, but prior notification thereof was mandatory. Saxons and those in Târgu Mureş tried to limit the number of escapes (fluctuation) in guilds by introducing a 2-4 weeks probation period during which it was possible for the youngster to experience whether the barber surgeon profession suits him or not.

A more dramatic way to quit the guild was exclusion to be applied by guild superiors in cases where a member perpetrated corporate sin (theft, adultery, fornication, murder) – otherwise they used this type of penalty everywhere without exception under such circumstances as the most severe procedure, because judging such cases was subject to the exclusive competence of the town court judge. They deemed to be severe and as such to be punished with exclusion any dice or card playing, because these abuses were detrimental to the community, as well. Moreover, neither were tolerated those who accused, ran away, were forever insulting, dissenting, collaborating with amateurs, or those who left their families. Such individuals were either excluded or prohibited to work for a certain period of time, and in Győr they even excommunicated those who dissented and instigated – causing a significant material drawback for the culpable ones. The cases herein above are listed by way of example, since only in one document can be read each, however they indicate that the guild did not tolerate those individuals who produced so called moral or material prejudices. In some cases, the documents allowed that by mutual agreement, the guild accept back the person found guilty, provided that he completed his penalty – this mention is not generally valid but it is present with barber guilds in all country areas. Eventually, as far as severe wrongdoing is concerned, mention must be done that judging all wrongdoing for which the fine exceeded one-two guldens belonged to the town magistrates' competence.

Guild life dynamics, as one can see, was influenced by the town council or the judge with certain restrictions. Also, chapters or constables – subject to where the town belonged – had an influence upon barber guilds, namely supported processes to set up or renew guilds (for various reasons, such as the guilds in Târgu Mureş for fortification building and protection purposes). Of course, their existence was defined by the ruler himself (in this case Emperor Maximilian II, Queen Izabella or the Transylvanian princes), mainly in terms of setting up guilds or confirming guild statutes, but through the town judge, barbers were instructed to take care of the wounded at the very sites of the battles – however this latter was characteristic only in the Royal Hungary area.

Just like any other guild, barber surgeon guilds assumed a great role in social discipline. The guild management, as a representation of the town council, provided for the peaceful life of the town at a small community, one may say elementary level. Various minor offenses were punished by the guild itself through the guild master's and guild superiors' judgment, and the members had to obey them at all times, and the guild regulation provisions were applicable to all members.

Electing guild masters is scarcely mentioned in documents, but the few available data show that the barber guild members voted them annually, when the town judge was elected, and there are data available about the possibility of reelection. Saxons even ordered that candidature shall be accepted and it was possible to reject it only in justified cases (vice-versa, a silver mark was the penalty for those who opposed). Enacting this paragraph might be connected to the guild master's wide range of activities which, beyond responsibility, was presumably a drawback for the barber master's work in several cases, thus this position is not a clear benefit, but meant acknowledgment, a status even within the town community. Only such guild masters could be elected who were above the other guild members both in terms of knowledge and in terms of conduct, and as such, had enough authority to discipline the guild members.

At least 35 offenses were distinguishable according to the documents, some of them general (such as non-obedience or luring away servants) and most of them known only according to a few regulations, but if mentioned in each area of the country, the general feature can be implied. Most penalties originated from defiance and disobedience, and were related to masters. Somewhat less penalties were applied to fellow-craft, while for apprentices there were barely penalties, which means that presumably their education was at the masters' own discretion.

Basically, penalties were intended to teach good conduct and decency. Secondly, the purpose was to avoid conflicts (such as disobeying orders, loudness and underestimation). Prejudices to the guild through gossip or profiteering also resulted in severe penalties. It was important that guild members show due respect to deceased guild members, thus it was unacceptable to refuse to be a pallbearer or not to be present at the funeral. Thirdly, subject to penalty were also those who lured away or deluded others' servants or patients, or whose tools or knowledge were found to be deficient. Such offenses could result even in death or aggravation of the disease, so barbers were strictly punished for these.

Comparing penalties, one can notice that the Tokaj and Sárospatak letters patent are most thoroughly worked out. Neither of these two towns belonged to the free royal towns, had a lower rank as market towns and nevertheless, their statutes were the most detailed ones. Looking at the nature and quantity of information included therein, one might say that as smaller towns, they took more care to have accurate and thorough regulations, nothing left to the customary law: they tried to attain the level of the more prestigious towns.

We find a similar thoroughness in the Saxon barbers' statutes, as a whole. Both the 1562 and the Braşov regulations are supplements to the first one, which was issued by Queen Izabella in 1550. This means that the rules system was not only thorough, but also provided severe and well-defined penalties to those who broke rules, but the penalties were not disproportionate as in certain cases such as in Esztergom.

At the turn of the 16th-17th centuries, penalties were still paid not only in money (gold, silver mark, gulden, Wien penny, denarius) but in almost half of the cases both in wax and in wine. In the early modern age, the role of the money is continuously increasing but is not exclusive, the more not in the Royal Hungary area. In Transylvania, as well as in Esztergom which was located in the vassal territory, penalties in money are present in a greater number, indicating a presumably more developed or more intensive economic life.

Considering each and every discussed case (Saxons, Tokaj, Sárospatak), the role of the guilds was not to put obstacles by imposing so many rules but rather to act as educators and exercise social control.

Disciplining took place not only by penalties but also through benefits, which had a strong motivational force. Thus apprentices who fairly completed their apprenticeship in Debrecen, Târgu Mureş and with the Saxons, were given by their masters an initial toolkit (scissors, razor and comb) to be used as fellow-craft when they started to work and earn money. As fellow-craft, they shared the work: one third from haircutting and one quarter from wound dressing and patient care.

Moral is a pivotal point of social discipline: basic as it may seem, only those were able to meet the expectations who acquired the social norms of the era through education and learning. This is why also barber guilds apply the highest level penalties for these. For guild membership applicants, a basic requirement was to have irreproachable moral history, to submit sealed letters

in proof of their birth and fair completion of their apprenticeship, and sometimes use witnesses, as well. Their morality had to be preserved throughout their guild membership. Summarizing moral-related offenses one can see which were the most repugnant sins in the early modern age: first of all, corporate sins (theft, adultery, fornication and murder), then sins perpetrated against family, such as abandon, playing dice and cards, and finally, untrustworthiness.

From the viewpoint of nationality, using as start points the names, we can see that in the Royal Hungary and vassal areas as well as in Târgu Mureș, barbers were most probably Hungarians. Moreover, in Eger, one can see that several people arrived from other locations (Komáromi, Taploczai, Palotai, Budai etc.) – and some of them most probably moved to the town in their wish to avoid sack. In the case of the Transylvanian Saxons, the Saxons' proportion was probably greater (in Sibiu and Brașov this can also be proven). Not so in the case of Cluj-Napoca and the Hungarian barbers of Sibiu in 1611. Unlike the other letters patent, here we find factual assertions in terms of nationality. In accord with the town laws, barbers in Cluj-Napoca had to elect two guild masters, namely one Saxon and one Hungarian, in order to avoid litigation. No restriction is found in terms of the members' proportion, and a fifty-fifty percent share is not probable, since the regulation details the procedure according to which in times of war, barber surgeons shall be sent to the battlefield to treat the wounded according to the in-guild proportion. In Sibiu, the situation was different, though. Ethnic conflicts made it necessary to provide for a demarcation: In 1611, the Hungarian barbers in Sibiu took advantage of the political opportunity, asking for and receiving from Prince Báthory Gábor a special regulation of their own, addressing barbers of Hungarian nationality, which was completely different from that of the Saxons. This implies that this guild had no Saxon members. Further research is needed to find out how long this guild in Sibiu survived (Prince Báthory Gábor's death) on the long run. The fact is that by the beginning of the 17th century, there were so many Hungarian barbers active in Sibiu that they were able to set up a distinct guild of their own. Essentially, each and every letters patent includes a resolute standpoint in terms of nationality, even if the same is not as clearly detailed as in the case of Cluj-Napoca and Sibiu.

Analyzing guild regulations from the viewpoint of religion, and taking into account the historical data concerning the town, one can ascertain that by the time letters patent were issued, reformation was implemented in most of the localities and even the transition must have taken

place because the statutes rarely include indications of Catholic ceremonies. There is, however, an exception here, namely Esztergom, where a distinct article provides for barber guild members being Catholic, exclusively. Barber guild letters patent do not emphasize protestant exclusiveness, but sometimes a slight hostility is felt against Catholic specificities (for instance in the case of the Cluj-Napoca regulation). On the other hand, religiousness is clearly present in each and every statute, since reverence towards God, the call for piety, humbleness, fairness, morality, charity and the obligation to render the last respect to the deceased is relevant on a general basis. In Transylvania, a special emphasis is laid on legitimate birth and the Saxons' documents issued within 1562-1580, it is specially mentioned that treating the poor free of charge was a Christian obligation of all barbers.

At a social scale, a high degree sensitivity is noticeable with barber-surgeon guilds, which was manifested according to several levels. Most strictly, here again, the Saxon, Tokaj and Sárospatak documents set forth that charges collected in the guild chest shall be used to help the poor, the diseased and the orphans, and with the Saxons, that attending free of charge to the poor was a must.

They truly cared for the guild members' safety and health, so that in wartimes they did not expose them to life threatening situations just for the sake of obtaining their birth certificates, but rather confined the requirement to declarations to be provided by witnesses. Whenever a guild member, either master, his family member or a fellow-craft got sick, the guild directed designated nurses to attend to the diseased. Also, if needed, they decreed that the sick master be given a certain amount of money from the guild chest, so that he does not get poor due to his health condition, and even a fellow-craft was ordered to his side to work with until fully recovered.

The regulations included special provisions for widows and masters' children. Widows were usually allowed to keep the shop until remarried. Masters' children or those who married a master's daughter or widow, were entitled to semi-craft, stimulating in this way that they stay with the guild or get into the barber guild, too. How the guild and its members took benefit from such provisions on the long run is another question, however the fact is that they tried to make the craft attractive, in keeping with the guild customs of the epoch.

As a final word, one can ascertain that barber surgeon guilds set up at the turn of the 16th-17th centuries both in Transylvania and in the Royal Hungary and in the vassal areas, fully fit into

the guild society of the era. The slight differences noticeable among them were given by the local circumstances however there were a few guilds which handled with an outstanding thoroughness all inner and outer issues. Systematization, regulation, penalties and benefits to guild members all granted a certain protection to the guild members, including their families, to feel safe within the guild framework, as well as a wide range of possibilities to develop. Thus living in a town and in the neighborhood thereof, it was practical and attractive to belong to such a strong inner system which was endowed with ample rights, however subordinated to the town management under a national leadership. In this way, no guild became self-serving but was strong enough to sustain itself and its interests, to enter a fair competition with the barber guilds having similar structures in other towns and in addition to preserving quality, actually sustain a social community. Consequently, barber-surgeon guilds fully met the individual level requirements and provided opportunities for self-fulfillment in the early modern era.

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