

**PHD THESIS**

***THE CONTROL EXERCISED BY THE COMMUNITY  
OVER THE INDIVIDUAL IN THE VILLAGES AND  
SMALL TOWNS OF SZABOLCS COUNTY IN THE  
EARLY MODERN AGE (SUMMARY)***

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## **1. The Topic and Structure of the Thesis**

The Ph.D. thesis investigates the topic of community control on a specific type of written sources, namely, the criminal records of county, municipal and seigneurial courts in Szabolcs county regarding the so called sexual crimes including adultery, fornication, prostitution. The period of the research covers mainly the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century due to the inappropriate quantity of legal documents of the preceding centuries.

The chapters of the thesis examine several aspects of the relation between the individual and community. One of these chapters deals with the language of criminal records and covers the ecclesiastical perception of the nature of sexual crimes. The following chapter explore the narrow boundaries of private life in rural communities and the several forms of control (being ecclesiastical as well as secular) exercised on persons committing sex crimes.

The last main part of the thesis is divided into three sub-chapters which deal with adultery and bigamy, fornication, infanticide and prostitution, which were the most

frequently punished crimes in Szabolcs county during the XVIII<sup>th</sup> century. In the first sub-chapter I intended to point out some crucial differences between the law and the legal practice dealing with male and female adulterers claiming that both kind of the accused were equally penalized by the judges so we cannot speak about any kind of double standard applied to women in the practice.

Following this, I examined the main groups of convicted fornicators and child murders: the maid servants and widows and I tried to point out several factors which caused that these two groups were more frequently cited to courts than other members of the rural communities.

The last chapter investigates prostitution as a typical urban phenomena through the example of two small towns of Szabolcs county called Nagykálló and Nyíregyháza. I examined not only the penal practice of these two towns but also the several social aspects of prostitution, e. g. the provenance and (original) occupation of streetwalkers, the relation between prostitution and other crimes, etc.

## **2. The sources of the research**

Most of the above mentioned criminal records were found among the files of the Noble Court and General Assembly of Szabolcs County in the archive of Szabolcs-Szatmár-Bereg county, Nyíregyháza. The municipal records covers the source material of Nagykálló and Nyíregyháza, while the practice of the seigneurial courts was studied on the criminal records of the court of Count Károlyi family which are accessible in the National Archives of Hungary, Budapest. Behind the legal sources, I also studied the documents of the Trans-Tisza District of the Hungarian Reformed Church regarding corrective church discipline. These documents can be found in the archive of the district, in Debrecen.

### **3. Publications related to the subject:**

1. Egy magyar passiójáték. Krucsay Jánosné Tolvay Borbála két házasságtörési pere, 1711-1728. In: Pócs Éva (szerk.): Közösség és identitás. Budapest, 2002. 199-232.
2. Riválisok és jó rokonok- egy háromszéki boszorkányhistoria néhány tanulsága. In: Czövek István (szerk.): Múlttöredékek. Tanulmánygyűjtemény Hársfalvi Péter emlékére. Nyíregyháza, 2008. 208-221.
3. Egy falusi boszorkány és a közösség: Fodor Mária története. In: Czövek István (szerk.): Tanulmányok az egyetemes és magyar történelem köréből VI. Nyíregyháza, 2008. 41-54.
4. Prostitúció Nyíregyházán a XIX. század elején (vázlat). In: Czövek István (szerk.): Tanulmányok az egyetemes és magyar történelem köréből VIII. Nyíregyháza, 2010. 33-41.