

## Political networks in Transylvanian financial and economic institutions in the early 1920s

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In Hungary and Transylvania, as everywhere else in the modern world, the banking and credit system has been one of the main pillars of financing politics since the 19th century. The regime change at the end of the First World War allowed, as recent scholarship has shown, both continuities of individuals and institutions as well as multiple processes of adaptation, so that the shift from a Hungarian-majority to a Romanian-majority provincial parliamentary elite changed individual actors but perpetuated pre-war practices and dynamics. My research traces the presence of members of the Romanian parliament elected between 1919-1926 in Transylvanian constituencies in the boards of various industrial companies and banks in the early 1920s in an attempt to reconstruct the networks linking the economic and political environments, including trans-ethnic and trans-partisan ones, and to explain how they emerged and evolved. Preliminary research, conducted on the constituencies of historical Transylvania, indicates a moderate to high presence of members of parliament in the management of economic-financial enterprises (over 40% of the total number of MPs) and a strong concentration of network ties in a major cluster dominated by county-level party leaders rather than by the great political figures of the time. In order to test the relevance of the results so far, I aim at extending the research to the constituencies in the Banat and former Eastern Hungary (Partium, Sătmar and Maramureş) in order to reconstruct a wider network of parliamentary involvement in the economic environment, and to assess whether regional differences can be traced. The analysis will be performed using formal Social Network Analysis methods and graph projections in Gephi.

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Projected paper title

*From Monastir to Vienna and beyond:  
Tracing the networks and mobility of merchant families*

#### ABSTRACT

International migration from the Ottoman Balkans offers an impressive insight into the mobility and migration dynamics between Europe, Asia and Africa in the Modern period. A considerable portion of this migration was directed towards the lands of the Habsburg Empire. Between Trieste and Vienna, Brassov and Budapest, or Temesvar and Lemberg, merchants from Southeastern Europe made their way, alone or with their families, to the main trade centers in Central Europe. During that process they not only learned to navigate institutional and socio-cultural challenges across the borders, but they also established transnational networks which influenced the home and host societies, as well as themselves and their families.

This conference paper will focus on the transnational migration of five merchant families from Ottoman Bitola/Monastir to Vienna towards the middle of the 19th century. Based primarily on the analysis of archival material and periodicals, but also on memoirs of contemporaries and interviews with descendants, the aim is to gain an insight into three main areas: 1. Modalities of international mobility (institutional control, transportation means, social aspects of travel); 2. Family structure and migration (kinship, age, gender, financial flow); and 3. Trans-border and cross-cultural networks (between merchants, companies, families). The lives of these families spent between and within the Ottoman and the Habsburg empires, as well as within various and even multiple communities, illustrate a cosmopolitan world that made its mark in both Vienna and Bitola/Monastir, and beyond.

I believe that this paper will be of relevance to the conference subjects: social, business and urban history, among others. The research was done within the project „Vom osmanischen Mazedonien ins habsburgische Wien: Familiengeschichten, Netzwerke und Aktivitäten von fünf orthodoxen Kaufmannsfamilien“, funded by the City of Vienna in 2023, as well as in the aftermath of the project.

## **Abstract**

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### **Of Victims and Villains:**

#### **Habsburg Authorities and Jewish Suspects Active in Trafficking Networks**

In the late 19th century, a moral panic over the so-called trafficking of women swept through the Habsburg Empire, sparking alarm among its elites. Politicians, physicians, and journalists campaigned vigorously to warn Austrian women to remain confined to the domestic sphere. Meanwhile, Vienna's police authorities found themselves grappling with legal accusations related to these activities, and the fact that many of the suspects were Jewish did little to quell the growing unrest. While much scholarly attention has been devoted to the (potential) victims of trafficking, one crucial group remains largely underexplored: the traffickers themselves.

By examining police and court records, this presentation will explore the strategies, networks, and life stories of those involved in these illicit endeavors. Situated at the intersection of Jewish history, everyday history, and criminology, it will reveal the complex, often elusive actions of individuals who worked relentlessly to cover their tracks. The disproportionate representation of Jewish suspects in offenses related to morality and decency must be understood within the broader context of pervasive stereotypes linking Jews to criminality. Expanding this focus, this paper seeks to concentrate specifically on the suspects themselves: Highlighting the economic vulnerabilities of Jewish actors, as well as their adaptability to the processes of urbanization and industrialization, it analyzes their methods and relationships with each other. By examining family dynamics and various forms of social interactions within deviant contexts, this contribution will also enrich scholarship on the modus operandi of Habsburg authorities with respect to border-crossing offenses. A closer examination of the social networks of Jewish protagonists uncovers not only their room for maneuver but also the scope of their actions and the transnational dimensions of their activities.