

Article published in:

Mirjam Thulin, Markus Krah, Bianca Pick (Eds.)

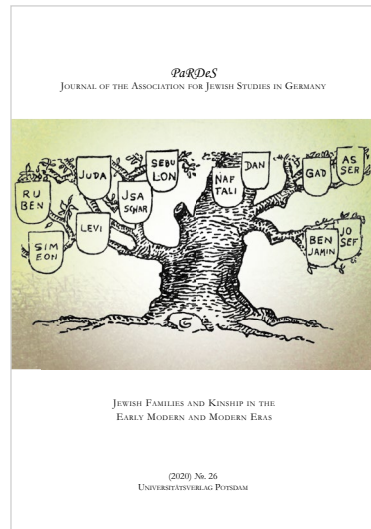
Jewish Families and Kinship in the Early Modern and Modern Eras

PaRDeS : Journal of the Association for Jewish Studies in Germany, Vol. 26

2020 – 180 pages

ISBN 978-3-86956-493-7

DOI <https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-47365>



Suggested citation:

Máté Tamás: "Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie:" Business and kinship in the early 19th-century Habsburg monarchy, In: Mirjam Thulin, Markus Krah, Bianca Pick (Eds.): Jewish Families and Kinship in the Early Modern and Modern Eras (PaRDeS ;26), Potsdam, Universitätsverlag Potsdam, 2020, S. 75–88.

DOI <https://doi.org/10.25932/publishup-48564>

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons License: Attribution 4.0

This does not apply to quoted content from other authors. To view a copy of this license visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

“Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie:” Business and Kinship in the Early 19th-Century Habsburg Monarchy¹

by Máté Tamás

Abstract

In 1810, Moses Lackenbacher, together with two of his children, Israel and Heinrich, and Moses Löwenstein created the company “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie” with headquarters in Nagykanizsa and a branch in Vienna. The main profile of the company was army purveyance. The business activity resulted in a high spatial mobility which led to socio-cultural acculturation and conversions to Christianity within the kinship. This paper explores the connection between kinship and the operation of the company on the basis of the prominent yet little-researched Lackenbachers in the early 19th-century Habsburg Monarchy. Central questions are how the relatives organized a company during the Napoleonic wars, as well as the impact of operating a business; how familial bonds and kinship links were affected, and, in this context, how relatives together evolved into a multi-religious network of kinship.

1. Introduction

In July 1812, in Sopron (Ödenburg), a town in Western Hungary, Moses Lackenbacher (c. 1750–1814) and his two sons from his first marriage, Heinrich (c. 1784–1837) and Bernhard (c. 1789–1843),² signed a contract to reorganize

¹ This research has been supported by the Institute for Minority Studies (Centre for Social Sciences), the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (HAS), the Sasakawa Young Leaders Fellowship Fund (SYLFF), the Collegium Hungaricum Program (Tempus Public Foundation), and the Jewish Community of Nagykanizsa. I am grateful for the support of these institutions. Moreover, I thank Zsuzsánna Balogh, Viktória Bányai, Pál Danyi, István Fazekas, András Feig, Georg Gaugusch, Károly Halmos, György Kövér, Péter Lánchidi, Balázs Lázár, Attila Magyar, András Oross, Anna L. Staudacher, Barnabás Szekér, and István M. Szijártó for their helpful contributions on this paper. Finally, I thank the anonymous peer reviewers and the editors of PaRDeS for their suggestions, and David Robert Evans for editing this article so carefully.

² Wherever birth and death data are not indicated, no such data could be determined.

the firm (Commandithandlung) “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie.” The company’s main profile was army purveyance, meaning that it served several units of the imperial royal army stationing in Lower Austria, Styria, Croatia and Western Hungary with grain and cattle from Sopron and Nagykanizsa (Großkanischa), a town in southwest Hungary. When in 1812 Moses Lackenbacher handed over his business to his sons, he had made a formal asset management contract, formulated in German that was probably not written by himself but in his place. The first paragraph of the contract reads as follows:

“As my sickly condition and physical weakness do not allow me to carry on my business myself, I decided to pass on my Viennese business to my above-mentioned sons, Heinrich and Bernhard (nevertheless, under the condition that the firm maintains its name Moses Lackenbacher et C[ompagnie] forever), namely that from now on all undertakings or any other business, under whatever name they are, are to be carried out on their own accounts and responsibility, and either profits or damages that may follow, are their owns and theirs alone.”³

This asset management contract of 1812, which primarily deals with methods of operating the business, comprises many significant elements concerning familial relationships and kinship links, displaying the rather paternalistic basic structure of the firm. In my paper, I will analyze the connections between kinship and running a company as illustrated in the Lackenbachers in the early 19th-century Habsburg Monarchy.

My paper applies a more complex definition of family and kinship than the traditional structuralist approach. Influenced by cultural history, family and kinship research has changed, resulting in the study of the family in the context of wider kinship networks. According to this constructivist

³ The German original reads: “Da meine kränkliche[n] Umstände, und körperliche Schwäche mir nicht beygeben, meine Geschäfte mehr fortzuführen, so habe ich mich entschloßen, meine Handlung zu Wien an meine zwey obigen Söhne Heinrich & Bernard zu übertragen (jedoch mit der Bedingung, daß die Firma Moyses Lackenbacher et C[ompagnie, M. T.] immerwährend beybehalten werden muß) und zwar so, daß sie von nun an, alle Unternehmungen, und was immer Name hat, Geschäfte, auf ihre eigene Rechnung und Gefahr zu machen haben, und sowohl der Nutzen, als auch der Schaden, der sich etwann zeigen dürfte, nur ihnen allein zufällt, und trifft.” Quote from the asset management contract between Moses, Heinrich and Bernhard Lackenbacher, Sopron, July 1, 1812, in The Zala County Archives of the National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Zala Megyei Levéltára, Zalaegerszeg; hereafter MNL ZML), IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and also in The National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára, Budapest; hereafter MNL OL), O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

approach – replacing the structuralist narrative that restricts the definition of family to consanguineal and affinal kinship – family and kinship must be understood as a flexible network created by interactions between individuals. The familial bonds and kinship ties, their meanings and the roles of individuals are not explained within a rigid structure. They are rather pliable and always adapt to actual circumstances.⁴

In recent decades, scholars became more interested in kinship ties in family businesses.⁵ In this context, some researchers have already emphasized the importance of familial relationships for the establishment and operating of businesses. In the case of Hungary, particular attention has been paid to Pest, the commercial center of the country during the 19th century.⁶ In a review essay, Naveed Akhter provides a useful synthesis of the research literature on the connection between kinship and family businesses.⁷ He discusses some crucial aspects of kinship in a family business such as the continuity of generations, succession, inheritance, and resource provision. Finally, he concludes

⁴ For the family and kinship research, see David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Jon Mathieu, eds., *Kinship in Europe: Approaches to Long-Term Developments (1300–1900)* (New York: Berghahn, 2010); Christopher H. Johnson, David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher, and Francesca Trivellato, eds., *Transregional and Transnational Families in Europe and Beyond: Experiences since the Middle Ages* (New York: Berghahn, 2011); Christopher H. Johnson and David Warren Sabean, eds., *Sibling Relations and the Transformations of European Kinship, 1300–1900* (New York: Berghahn, 2013); Lyndan Warner, ed., *Stepfamilies in Europe, 1400–1800* (London/New York: Routledge, 2018).

⁵ See Andrea Colli, *The History of Family Business, 1850–2000* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003); Cornelia Aust, *The Jewish Economic Elite: Making Modern Europe* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2018).

⁶ Vera Bácskai, *The Forerunners of the Entrepreneurs: Wholesalers in Budapest in the Hungarian Reform Era* (Budapest: Magvető Könyvkiadó, 1989; Hungarian); György Kövér, “Liedemann und Wahrmann: Strategien von Kaufmann-Bankiersfamilien im 19. Jahrhundert,” in *Eliten und Aussenseiter in Österreich und Ungarn*, Waltraud Heindl, György Litván, Stefan Malfér, and Éva Somogyi, eds. (Wien/Köln/Weimar: Böhlau Verlag, 2001), 79–99; György Kövér, *The Trajectory of Accumulation: Studies on Economic and Social History* (Budapest: ÜMK, 2002; Hungarian); Judit Klement, “The Business Strategy of Fathers and Sons: A Hungarian Family in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries,” *Aetas* 20 (2005): 69–92 (Hungarian); Károly Halmos, *Family Capitalism* (Budapest: ÜMK, 2008; Hungarian); György Kövér, *The Legacy of the City of Pest: Studies in the Banking History* (Budapest: BFL, 2012; Hungarian); Judit Klement, *Hungarian Businesses in the Heroic Age: Firms in the Budapest Steam Milling Industry in the First Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Budapest: ELTE Eötvös Kiadó, 2012; Hungarian).

⁷ Naveed Akhter, “Kinship and the Family Business,” in *Theoretical Perspectives on Family Businesses*, Mattias Nordqvist, Leif Melin, Matthias Waldkirch, and Gershon Kumeto, eds. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2015), 175–190.

that the human, social and financial capital of kinship as a resource could help a family business develop and gain competitive advantage.⁸

Nevertheless, not only the impact of familial relations on businesses is relevant, but also how the businesses affected and changed kinship connections and family structures. Trust within kinship played a significant role in developing business connections and in doing business. When setting up a new company or developing an existing business, entrepreneurs generally turned to their relatives and other personal connections. The operation of companies required the personal presence of entrepreneurs, even if the different parts of the company operated in various spaces. Mostly entrepreneurs involved relatives whom they trusted and who had the necessary business knowledge. This resulted in a high spatial mobility within the kinship. At the same time, associates of the family business were influenced by the socio-cultural environment of their respective spaces. In this context, spatial mobility, different forms of socio-cultural impact and transcultural exchange that arose while doing business affected the kinship links.

In my paper, I will examine how the Lackenbachers established their company during the Napoleonic Wars, and, furthermore, how the impact of operating the business affected their familial relationships. Moreover, I look at how the Lackenbachers eventually created a multi-religious network of kinship. My paper is based on the records on the firm “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie.” Originally, clerks of the firm kept and controlled the ledgers and the incoming and outgoing correspondence that contained crucial information about the progress of the business and the official communication.⁹ These documents, however, later disappeared. In contrast to the studies of Francesca Trivellato, who studied the correspondence of the Ergas and Silvera Company,¹⁰ and Francesca Bregoli, who examined the letters of the Salomone

⁸ Akhter, “Kinship and the Family Business,” 184–185.

⁹ Partnership agreement between Moses, Israel, Heinrich Lackenbacher and Moses Löwenstein, Nagykanizsa, July 15, 1810, in Wiener Stadt- und Landesarchiv (Municipal and Provincial Archive of Vienna; hereafter WStLA), 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 73 and L 115. Concerning business correspondence in Hungary, see Judit Klement, “Letter-Writing Enterprises: The Letter as a Genre in the Everyday Activity of Enterprises in the Second Half of the Nineteenth and Early Twentieth Centuries,” *Történelmi Szemle* 55 (2013): 639–655 (Hungarian).

¹⁰ Francesca Trivellato, *The Familiarity of Strangers: The Sephardic Diaspora, Livorno, and Cross-Cultural Trade in the Early Modern Period* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2009).

Enriches & Joseph Franchetti Company, business letters cannot be investigated.¹¹ Moreover, the personal correspondence of the family was not preserved. Thus, kinship ties can only be examined by looking at the mainly German-language official texts that were attached to litigations or sent as attachments with applications. These juridical documents are crucial for the understanding of how the kinship ties and the management of the business were interrelated. Furthermore, they give insight into general aspects of early 19th-century mercantile Jewish life at a time when the provision of the imperial royal army caused a temporary export-led boom in Hungary.

2. The Foundation of “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie”

In July 1810, Moses Lackenbacher signed a contract to create the company “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie” with the *Haupthandlung* (headquarters) in Nagykanizsa.¹² Co-owners of the business were two of his children from his first marriage, Israel (d. 1815) and Heinrich, as well as Moses Löwenstein (c. 1763–1824), a local merchant. By that time, Moses Lackenbacher, his first-born son Israel and Moses Löwenstein were not only wealthy merchants but also leading figures of the Jewish community of Nagykanizsa, one of the most populous Jewish communities in 19th-century western Hungary.¹³ The town was located at the intersection of five trade routes linking economically important regions of the Habsburg Monarchy. The location of the town facilitated the development of its function as a key market in the region.¹⁴

¹¹ Francesca Bregoli, “‘Your Father’s Interests’: The Business of Kinship in a Trans-Mediterranean Jewish Merchant Family, 1776–1790,” *Jewish Quarterly Review* 108 (2018): 194–224.

¹² Partnership agreement, Nagykanizsa, July 15, 1810, in WStLA, 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 73 and L 115. See Bernhard Wachstein, “Die Wiener Juden in Handel und Industrie nach den Protokollen des Niederösterreich. Merkantil- u. Wechselgerichtes,” in *Nachträge zu den zehn bisher erschienenen Bänden der Quellen und Forschungen zur Geschichte der Juden in Österreich*, Arthur Goldman, Bernhard Wachstein, Israel Taglicht, and Max Grunwald (Wien: Selbstverlag der Historischen Kommission, 1936), 265–360, here 325–326.

¹³ See [Zsigmond Groszmann], “Nagykanizsa,” in *Jewish Lexicon*, Péter Ujvári, ed. (Budapest: Pallas Nyomda, 1929), 628–630, here 629 (Hungarian); Péter Hanák, “Jews and the Modernization of Commerce in Hungary, 1760–1848,” in *Jews in the Hungarian Economy, 1760–1945: Studies Dedicated to Moshe Carmilly-Weinberger on his Eightieth Birthday*, Michael K. Silber, ed. (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1992), 23–39, here 37.

¹⁴ Zoltán Kaposi, “From Traditionalism to the Modern Economy: Kanizsa Merchants and their Business in the Last Period of Feudalism, 1690–1848,” *Korall* 11–12 (2003): 135–162, here 135 (Hungarian).

The four founders provided the company with one million guilders in *Bancozetteln*; the equivalent was not more than 250,000 guilders in *Konventionsmünzen* (Convention money).¹⁵ Moses Lackenbacher invested 600,000 guilders, Moses Löwenstein 200,000, Israel Lackenbacher 150,000, and his brother Heinrich 50,000 guilders. Alongside their headquarters in Nagykanizsa, they established a *Filialhandlung* (branch) in Vienna. The Viennese branch was meant to make the company more effective by advancing the business connections, chiefly with aristocrats who resided in Vienna but owned estates in Hungary and whose products the firm intended to purchase. Army purveyance was profitable thanks to the increased market demand caused by the French and Napoleonic wars from 1792 onwards. The permission needed to establish the branch had already been granted for the head of the company, Moses Lackenbacher, by the Viennese *Merkantil- und Wechselgericht* (Commercial Court) and by the *Niederösterreichische Landesregierung* (provincial government of Lower Austria).

The branch management was in the hands of Heinrich Lackenbacher; nevertheless, the founders of the company were equally responsible for the operation of the head and branch offices.¹⁶ For managing the branch office Heinrich and his wife, Anna (née Arnstein; c. 1788–1837) and their firstborn son moved from Nagykanizsa to Vienna. By 1810 already, when the company was founded, Moses Lackenbacher (whose second wife, Catharina [née Hirsch], was probably deceased by this time) and his two children from his

¹⁵ The *Konventionsmünze* was the name of the silver coins minted in accordance with the monetary standard (*Konventionsfuß*) which was in effect between 1753 and 1857. According to the monetary agreement with Bavaria twenty guilders (*Gulden*) were minted from one Cologne mark (*Kölner or Kölnischer Mark* = 233.86 grams of silver). Based on this convention, the *Wiener Stadt-Banco* (Viennese City Bank) started to issue, from 1762 the so-called *Bancozetteln* (banknotes). The French and Napoleonic wars induced a considerable increase in the demand for military-related goods. Subsequently, metal reserves as a source for currency money decreased. The state attempted to supply the higher demand by minting copper coins (*Scheidemünzen*) and by issuing of banknotes (a kind of fiat money, according to modern economics), which finally led to an inflation. In July 1810, one guilder *Konventionsmünze* was worth 4,05 guilders *Bancozetteln*. On the contemporary finance market and values, see “Bancozettel” and “Conventions-Münze,” in Felix Czeike, *Historisches Lexikon Wien*, vol. 1 (Wien: Verlag Kremayr & Scheriau, 1992), 243–244, and 591–592; Markus A. Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates, 1590–1914* (London/New York: Routledge, 2016), 255–256. The exchange rates are based on Pál Danyi: “The Inflation of Paper Money during the Napoleonic Wars (1799–1818),” accessed October 31, 2020, <https://artortenet.hu/a-napoleoni-haboruk-inflacioja-1799-1818/> (Hungarian).

¹⁶ Partnership agreement, Nagykanizsa, July 15, 1810, in WStLA, 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 73 and L 115.

second marriage, Theresia (c. 1795–1866) and Jacob (c. 1797–1848), also moved from Nagykanizsa to Vienna. Eventually, only the other two founders of the company, Moses Löwenstein and his family, as well as Israel Lackenbacher and his wife Rosalia (née Wolf), lived in Nagykanizsa, and the headquarters was probably operated by them.

3. The Transformation of the Company’s Management

In September 1811, Moses Löwenstein left the company.¹⁷ His decision was probably caused by a decree of February 20, 1811 that devalued paper currency in the Habsburg Monarchy to a fifth of its original value. Subsequently to the decree, the subscribed shared capital of the company decreased, and Israel Lackenbacher apparently continued single-handedly to run the headquarters until 1812.

Following the events, the management of the company was reorganized by the legal asset management contract of 1812.¹⁸ According to the contract, Moses Lackenbacher assigned the management of the branch in Vienna, together with the clearing houses and warehouses in Vienna and Sopron, to his two sons, Heinrich and Bernhard, which made the Viennese branch an independent company – a second headquarters –, yet under the same business name. Both the original headquarters and the Viennese branch had separate accounting systems, enabling the Lackenbachers to conduct their businesses separately, and share the financial risks and make the management more effective.¹⁹ To be able to keep a close eye on the business, around 1812, Bernhard Lackenbacher, together with his wife, also moved to Vienna from Pest where previously he lived and conducted his business for a period of time. He was married to Anna Bauer (c. 1793–1873), the daughter of Salomon Bauer (c. 1755–1824), a wealthy merchant, and of Cäcilie (née Heller; d. 1817).²⁰

¹⁷ Moses Löwenstein’s declaration, Nagykanizsa, September 28, 1811, in WStLA, 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 115.

¹⁸ Asset management contract, Sopron, July 1, 1812, in MNL ZML, IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and MNL OL, O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

¹⁹ Károly Halmos, “Entrepreneurial Types in 19th-century Hungary,” *Szociológia* no. 3 (1987): 433–440 (Hungarian).

²⁰ Georg Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war: Das jüdische Grossbürgertum Wiens, 1800–1938*, vol. 2: L–R (Wien: Amalthea Verlag, 2016), 1657; Bácskai, *The Forerunners of the Entrepreneurs*, 35.

Although Moses Lackenbacher had officially transferred his business to his sons, he kept control over all large-scale deals and had the running costs of his Viennese residency covered by the firm. By 1812, he calculated the value of the branch as 870,000 guilders in *Wiener Währung*, which was approximately 395,000 guilders in *Konventionsmünzen*.²¹ This valuation was not official, however, and the amount of the outstanding loans and debts, together with the uncollected assets cannot be estimated. Heinrich and Bernhard Lackenbacher had a clearing obligation to the state. Moreover, they provided for their father's house and garden in Wieden, then a suburb of Vienna, and for his coach with two horses. In 1812, Moses Lackenbacher moved back from Vienna to Nagykanizsa; nonetheless, he retained partial control over the management. Heinrich and Bernhard had to inform their father about the progress of the business and had to ask his permission for transactions of over 10,000 guilders whenever their father was residing in Vienna; in case of a loss by the company, the sons were fully liable and could be removed from the management by him.²²

Moses Lackenbacher presumably had five children from his first marriage with Debora (d. 1791) – Israel, Gottfried (b.c. 1782), Heinrich, Catharina, and Bernhard – and two children, from his second marriage with Catharina Hirsch – Theresia and Jacob.²³ According to the contract, however, he decided to divide a certain amount of money from the company's capital only among the five children from his first marriage, with 120,000 guilders for Israel, 82,442.26 guilders for Gottfried, 120,000 guilders each for Heinrich and Bernhard, and 13,732.38 guilders for Catharina Hirschler (née Lackenbacher). The

²¹ The devalued *Bancozetteln* were since 1811 and 1813 respectively converted for new types of paper money, the so-called *Einlösungschein* and *Anticipationsschein*. Until 1857 these paper moneys, basically fiat moneys, remained in use under the name *Wiener Währung*. Following the establishment of the *Privilegierte Österreichische Nationalbank* (Austrian National Bank), these paper moneys were converted into banknotes, issued by the national bank and based on the monetary standard. Between 1820 and 1857, the *Wiener Währung* was used along the *Konventionsmünze*, with an official exchange rate. In July 1812, one guilder in *Konventionsmünze* was worth 2,21 guilders in *Wiener Währung*. Concerning the 1811 devaluation and its consequences, see Czeike, "Antizipationsschein," "Einlösungschein" and "Wiener Währung," in Czeike, *Historisches Lexikon*, vol. 1, 122, vol. 2, 144, and vol. 5, 646; Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates*, 255–256. In this paper, all values after the February 1811 devaluation are denominated in *Wiener Währung*.

²² Asset management contract, Sopron, July 1, 1812, in MNL ZML, IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and MNL OL, O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

²³ Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war*, vol. 2, 1653–1661.

asset management contract did not specify how and when the payment should be made. It is not clear why the contract is silent on the other two children of Moses Lackenbacher, likewise there is no indication of how the amount of Gottfried's and Catharina's shares were set. Inequalities between the shares stipulated in the 1812 contract might point to previous payments to relatives.²⁴

According to the 1812 contract, Heinrich and Bernhard Lackenbacher had to keep the remaining capital, i. e. 413,825.36 guilders, in the company; in return they did not have to pay the five per cent interest to their father (20,691.27 guilders annually), for three years. They were nevertheless obliged to support their father by paying him 300 guilders a week. After the three years, their father could disinvest the remaining capital, either by withdrawing one sixth of the capital from the company half-yearly, or by keeping the entire amount in the firm with five per cent interest. Moses's capital was no longer an investment, but rather a loan held by the company.

In October 1812, shortly after the company's management had been reorganized, Israel Lackenbacher left the company. His departure caused a further decrease in the subscribed share capital of the company.²⁵ After Moses moved back from Vienna to Nagykanizsa, Israel and his father continued to manage the local headquarters; Moses died in March 1814. The content of the 1812 contract suggests that Moses Lackenbacher had made a will which did not survive.²⁶ However, based on the 1812 contract, we might conjecture the will's main stipulations. Presumably, the Viennese headquarters was inherited by Heinrich and Bernhard, while the one in Nagykanizsa was passed on to Israel.

Half a year after Moses's death, in August 1814 both Heinrich and Bernhard bought the property that Israel had inherited from his father.²⁷ According to the contract, Israel was obliged to pay 5,000 guilders which Moses had left for the synagogue in Nagykanizsa and take over the debts he had incurred in Hungary. Heinrich and Bernhard had to repay Moses's debts outside Hungary. By then, Israel had already received his inheritance of 120,000 guilders, as

²⁴ Asset management contract, Sopron, July 1, 1812, in MNL ZML, IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and MNL OL, O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

²⁵ Israel Lackenbacher's declaration, Nagykanizsa, September 28, 1811, in WStLA, 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 115.

²⁶ Asset management contract, Sopron, July 1, 1812, in MNL ZML, IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and also MNL OL, O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

²⁷ Contract between Heinrich, Bernhard and Israel Lackenbacher, Nagykanizsa, August 29, 1814, in MNL ZML, IV.14.e. no. 417–418, and also MNL OL, O 23, II, 41, no. 261.

ordered by his father in 1812. Thus, it can be assumed that these payments had been made to the other full and half-siblings while their father was still alive. Eventually, Israel was not able to fulfill his contractual obligations due to his early death in July 1815.²⁸

4. Conversion and the Formation of a New Type of Kinship

After Moses Lackenbacher's death, all but two of his children and their families converted to Roman Catholicism, influenced by socio-cultural factors they encountered while doing business in Vienna and Pest.²⁹ The baptisms as the main act of the conversion could only be performed with prior permission of the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. In the case of children, the conversion required in addition the parental consent.³⁰

Gottfried Lackenbacher and his family were the first to convert. In October 1815, the two sons of Gottfried and his wife Theresia (née Zappert; b. c. 1781) were baptized in Pest. The godfather of the children was István Végh (1763–1834), a member of the *Statthaltere*i (Lieutenancy Council) who, a few months later, became Gottfried's godfather as well. In June 1816, the two daughters of Gottfried and Theresia converted to Roman Catholicism, and their godparents were Franz Steinbach, a member of the town council of Pest, and his wife, Anna (née Schorndorfer). More than a year later, Gottfried's wife was baptized, assisted by Glycerius Aigl (1761–1830), the director of the Piarist Grammar School of Pest.³¹

In September 1816, Heinrich Lackenbacher, together with his wife and three children, was baptized in Vienna. Heinrich's godfather was *Regierungsrat* Philipp Viktor La Roze (d. 1821), a senior civil servant at the *Judenamt* (Office for Jewish Affairs). The sister of La Roze, Theresia Braulik (d. 1848), and her husband, *Hofrat* Carl Alois Braulik (c. 1778–1832), court counsellor of the *Oberste Polizei- und Zensurhofstelle* (Supreme Police and Censorship

²⁸ Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war*, vol. 2, 1661.

²⁹ On Jewish conversion in Hungary, see Miklós Konrád, *Within and Beyond Jewishness: Jewish Conversion in Hungary from the Age of Reform to the First World War* (Budapest: MTA BTK TTI, 2014; Hungarian).

³⁰ On Jewish converts in the Viennese context, see Anna L. Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten in Wien, 1782–1868*, 2 vols. (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2002), here vol. 1, 57–156.

³¹ Erzsébet Mislovics, "The conversion of Hungarian Jews to Christianity in Buda, Óbuda, Pest and Vienna between 1746 and 1850," *Aetas* 30 (2015): 31–58, here 42 (Hungarian).

Court Authority),³² became attached to the kinship as well: Theresia Braulik was the godmother of Heinrich’s wife and one of their daughters, while her husband became the godfather of the first-born son. Among the godparents we find even converted Jews: the godfather of Heinrich’s other son was Franz Rouland (b. c. 1766), a prominent merchant in Vienna and a convert to Roman Catholicism.³³

In December 1817, the six children of Bernhard Lackenbacher and his wife Anna were baptized in Vienna, and again with ties to bureaucrats, such as Johann Rüstel, a counsellor at the *Militär-Appellationsgericht* (Court of Military Appeals), and Adam von Manstefeld, one of the secretaries of the Lower Austrian Provincial Government. The godmother of the then only daughter was her aunt Anna and Theresia Rüstel (née Greuffer), the wife of Johann Rüstel. The godparent of Bernhard’s two sons was their uncle Heinrich. In the following year, Bernhard Lackenbacher, together with his wife Anna, was baptized. His godfather was Philipp Viktor La Roze, who had already acted as godfather for his brother Heinrich.³⁴

A few years later, the two children from Moses Lackenbacher’s second marriage, Jacob and Theresia, converted to Catholicism in Vienna. In December 1823, Jacob was baptized and his godfather was Ignaz Mayer, a wealthy merchant who converted earlier. Theresia and her husband, Rudolph Kohn, were baptized in January 1827, in Vienna. Theresia’s godmother was her sister-in-law, Susanna Kaan von Albest (née Kohn; c. 1783–1857), whose husband was Samuel Kaan von Albest (c. 1779–1844), a prosperous merchant. The godfather of Rudolph Kohn was his brother-in-law Heinrich Lackenbacher.³⁵

The baptisms within the kinship show that Moses Lackenbacher’s children from both marriages converted to Catholicism as adults, following the death of their father in 1814. All of these children had moved from Nagykanizsa to

³² Friedrich Freiherr von Haan, “Genealogische Auszüge aus den Sperr-Relationen des n.-ö. und k. k. n.-ö. Landrechtes 1762–1859. (Fortsetzung,)” *Jahrbuch der k. k. heraldischen Gesellschaft “Adler,”* Neue Folge no. 17 (1907): 1–130, here 32; Friedrich Wilhelm Schembor, *Franzosen in Wien: Einwanderer und Besatzer. Französische Revolution und napoleonische Besatzung in den österreichischen Polizeiakten* (Bochum: Dieter Winkler Verlag, 2012), 125.

³³ Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten*, vol. 2, 269–271; Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war*, vol. 2, 1654–1657.

³⁴ Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten*, vol. 2, 269–271; Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war*, vol. 2, 1657–1661.

³⁵ Staudacher, *Jüdische Konvertiten*, vol. 2, 223–225, 269–271; Gaugusch, *Wer einmal war*, vol. 2, 1661.

Vienna or Pest, whether for business or marriage. Only two of Moses's children, Israel Lackenbacher and Catharina Hirschler, who lived in Nagykanizsa, remained Jewish. It should be noted that the conversions within the family did not happen simultaneously. There were periods when certain members of the family (husband or wife, parents or children) were of different denominations – some still Jewish while others already Christian.

The conversion through baptism not only meant a change of religion but also created new types of fictional kinship relations: a christening turned existing connections into a more ritual kinship. As the positions of the godparents show, the new fictive kinship resulted mainly from business and social connections. Some types of consanguineal and affinal kinship, particularly the connections between uncle and nephew or between aunt and niece, were also modified by baptism. These familial relationships were strengthened by the meaning of the godparenthood. Moreover, these networks of kinship kept growing with the Lackenbachers' themselves becoming godparents such as Bernhard Lackenbacher became the godfather of Ludwig Minkus (1826–1917), a famous composer.³⁶

Nevertheless, it appears that conversion did not cause a split or serious conflict within the family. Apparently, relations remained as strong as before. The denominational differences caused no tensions either in the business or the family. Although Heinrich, Bernhard, and Jacob Lackenbacher converted at different times, the business connections remained solid.³⁷ However, kinship ties also remained stable: the converted Heinrich chose for his baptized children – alongside his by then Christian brother, Bernhard – two guardians from his Jewish kinship, namely Moritz Horschetzky (c. 1787–1859) and Philipp Schey (c. 1798–1881). Horschetzky and Schey were sons-in-law of Moses Lackenbacher's brother who was the leader of the Jewish community

³⁶ Robert Ignatius Letellier, *The Ballets of Ludwig Minkus* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2008), 5.

³⁷ Heinrich and Bernhard Lackenbacher's application to the Viennese Commercial Court, Vienna, October 1, 1828, in WSLA, 2.3.2. A3, 3, Firmenakten, Series 1, L 115; Wachstein, "Die Wiener Juden," in Goldman et al., *Nachträge*, 326.

of Nagykanizsa.³⁸ The three guardians, a Christian and two Jews, shared their responsibility which was based on trust and familial relationships.³⁹

5. Conclusion

The objective of this paper was an examination of the company “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie,” its kinship ties and management in the context of the early-19th-century Habsburg Monarchy. Moses Lackenbacher together with his first-born son Israel and Moses Löwenstein were leaders in the Jewish community of Nagykanizsa, one of the largest in Western Hungary. Since the late 18th century, Moses was interested not only in local but also in transregional commerce, the main part of which was carrying out government orders and supplying the army in particular. Finally, in 1810 Moses Lackenbacher and his sons Israel and Heinrich, together with Moses Löwenstein, established a company with headquarters in Nagykanizsa and a branch in Vienna that made military supply more effective and was able to respond to the needs of a growing export market. With the exception of Gottfried, Moses involved all his sons in the management of the company; Gottfried nevertheless conducted his own affairs in Pest and helped to establish business connections.

Moses Lackenbacher and his children from two marriages were part of a Jewish economic elite which secured its local and transregional business and kinship ties by marriage. The spatiality of these connections had as much of an impact on the familial bonds and kinship ties as their quality and quantity. The marriages of Moses Lackenbacher’s children and the development of the business resulted in a spatial mobility and the construction of new spaces within the kinship. The children and their families settled in important trading

³⁸ Letter of Heinrich Lackenbacher and other leaders of the Jewish community to Prince Philip Batthyány (1781–1870), Nagykanizsa, August 27, 1821, in MNL OL, P 1314, no. 83896. See also Michael K. Silber, “The Entrance of Jews into Hungarian Society in *Vormärz*: The Case of the ‘Casinos’”, in *Assimilation and Community: The Jews in Nineteenth-Century Europe*, eds. Jonathan Frankel and Steven J. Zipperstein (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), 284–323, here 301; Ujvári, *Jewish Lexicon*, 629.

³⁹ Application of the county assembly (*vármegyei közgyűlés*) of Zala to the Lieutenantcy Council Zalaegerszeg, November 6, 1843, in MNL ZML, IV.1.b. no. 3402. See also Bácskai, *The Fore-runners of the Entrepreneurs*, 146–150. This phenomenon can also be observed in the case of Moritz Ullmann (c. 1782–1847) who converted and bequeathed a certain amount of money not only to Christian but also to Jewish relatives.

centers of the Habsburg Monarchy and helped the company to operate more efficiently.

The company, which always kept the name “Moses Lackenbacher & Compagnie,” was reorganized several times. The key positions within the company at different places were always filled by Moses’s sons. Those relatives who moved to Vienna or Pest acculturated to the surrounding societies and cultures. Eventually, after Moses Lackenbacher had died, all family members that had left Nagykanizsa converted to Roman Catholicism. Everyone’s motivation may have been different but it can be assumed that the choice of the godparents was used to strengthen the existing business and official connections as well as kinship ties and establish new kinds of kinship links. The new fictive kinship, as it is called among ethnographers and anthropologists, created by the godparenthoods in the process of conversion, resulted in the modification of the business and official connections and the extension of the boundaries of kinship. Moreover, it strengthened the consanguineal and affinal kinship of those who had already been converted. The relatives created a new type of kinship and linked themselves to Christian individuals in such a way that the conversion did not cause any conflict in the family and kin. Thus, the business connections of the Lackenbachers as well as their new fictive kinship through conversion point to the emergence of the phenomenon of a multi-religious and intertwined network of kinship in the early-19th-century Habsburg Monarchy.