

Two Half-Orphan Aristocratic Girls in Early Modern Hungary^{*}

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Abstract

The study examines 17th century life narratives of a mother-in-law and a daughter-in-law. The fate of the two aristocratic underage girls caught between the crossfire of their mother and grandmother fighting over their guardianship hanged in balance. The family quarrel was suddenly interrupted by some unexpected events, such as a king's decree and the Diet's newly issued law article. The emerging family quarrel over the custody of the children expanded over several geographical regions involving The Great Hungarian Plain, Upper Hungary and Transdanubia. A contract bearing the seal of the palatine complicated even more the situation. Two documents pertaining to the Archive of Princely Esterházy and the National Archives of Hungary are also analyzed and presented. The study aims to bring light to the controversy involving the custody of the Thurzó–Nyáry grandchildren, which started as a private family matter, escalated and got handled by none other than the king himself Ferdinand II.

Keywords: *half-orphans, aristocrats, underage girls, family, early modern history of Hungary*

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