

FRANCISCO GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ | SANDRO GUZZI-HEEB

(eds.)

Historia de la familia, historia social

Experiencias de investigación
en España y en Europa (siglos XVI-XIX)



TREA

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FRANCISCO GARCÍA GONZÁLEZ

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Paths of Social History: Michael Mitterauer (1937-2022) and the History of the Family in Vienna

MARGARETH LANZINGER¹

Since the beginnings of social history in the early 1970s, Vienna has been one of its centres in the German-speaking world as well as a centre for family history. This is inextricably linked with the name of Michael Mitterauer. Throughout the decades of his academic career at the Department of Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna, he was instrumental in enriching and repeatedly repositioning social history with new thematic orientations and different methodological approaches. A central field of research in this context was family history. It soon became an international project. Michael Mitterauer was one of the protagonists in this field, both in the German-speaking world and in the international context. Since the 1990s, family history has differentiated into various directions, during the 2000s into historical kinship studies, among others. With a number of publications, Michael Mitterauer has also positioned himself in this area.

Michael Mitterauer was an extremely productive historian. In his laudatory speech when he was awarded the renowned German Historian Prize in 2004, Johannes Fried counted 18 books,² including *Warum Europa* (Why Europe), for which he received the aforementioned award.³ More books should follow. The list of publications on the website of the Department of Economic and Social History, including prefaces, press articles and online contributions from recent years, counts more than 350 publications – and it certainly has a gap or two. Several of his publications have been translated into Bulgarian, English, Greek, Italian, Japanese, Swedish, Serbian and Spanish. Michael Mitterauer was an enthusiastic historian who was able to convey his fascination for social and economic history topics very vividly in his texts, books, lectures and especially in his university teaching. His ability to associate was

¹ University of Vienna.

² Johannes Fried, Laudatio auf den Preisträger, in: Jahrbuch des Historischen Kollegs, 2005, Munich, 2006, pp. 15-24, p. 16.

³ Michael Mitterauer, *Warum Europa? Mittelalterliche Grundlagen eines Sonderwegs*, Munich 2003; English translation: *Why Europe? The Medieval Origins of Its Special Path*, Chicago, 2010; Spanish translation: *Por que Europa? Fundamentos medievales de un camino singular*, Valencia, 2008.

legendary, as was his “Introduction to the Study of History”, held for many years on Tuesdays at 8.30 a.m. during the winter semester. With his demanding yet supportive manner, he had a decisive influence on many academic careers, especially those of his doctoral students. On the occasion of his 65th birthday in 2002, the Michael Mitterauer Prize for Social, Cultural and Economic History was established in recognition of his academic life’s work and his commitment to the promotion of young scholars.

In this contribution, I first outline the most important stages in Michael Mitterauer’s career that preceded his turn to social and family history, and then show the contexts of its beginnings. The third section deals with positioning and methodological approaches, including historical anthropology. Michael Mitterauer himself called what was important to him in research, further education, teaching and outreach “Viennese paths of social history” in his lecture on the occasion of the award of the Golden Doctorate — fifty years after his PhD — in March 2010.⁴ This refers to the volume published in 1997 on the occasion of his 60th birthday with contributions from colleagues at the Department of Economic and Social History and from his immediate environment.⁵ It concludes with a reflection on what was specific about it and some highlights of what has changed.

Michael Mitterauer: From Medieval Historian to Pioneer of Family History

Michael Mitterauer followed a classic educational path for his time: he graduated from the prestigious Schottengymnasium in Vienna and studied history and art history at the University of Vienna from 1955 to 1959.⁶ He wrote his PhD thesis at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research (Institut für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung), founded in 1854 by imperial decree with the aim of “promoting

⁴ Michael Mitterauer, Wiener Wege der Sozialgeschichte — Rückblick und Ausblick, in: Austria Forum, <https://austria-forum.org/web-books/docwienerwegeoodeids> (10 Feb. 2023). Lecture given on the occasion of the award of the Golden Doctorate on 26 March 2010 at the University of Vienna.

⁵ Franz X. Eder, Peter Feldbauer and Erich Landsteiner (eds), Wiener Wege der Sozialgeschichte. Themen — Perspektiven — Vermittlungen, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 1997. In addition to the volume by staff and friends of the Institute, which was dedicated to Michael Mitterauer, there was a second one: Josef Ehmer, Tamara K. Hareven and Richard Wall (eds), Historische Familienforschung. Ergebnisse und Kontroversen. Michael Mitterauer zum 60. Geburtstag, Frankfurt a. M./New York, 1997. The two volumes offer a broad overview of the development of the history of the family since the 1970s, of approaches and topics.

⁶ This and the following sections incorporate passages from the obituaries published in German. See <https://wirtschaftsgeschichte.univie.ac.at/institut/aktuelles/einzelansicht/news/nachruf-auf-em-o-univ-prof-dr-ddr-hc-michael-mitterauer-12-juni-1937-18-august-2022/?tx_news_pi1%5Bcontroller%5D=News&tx_news_pi1%5Baction%5D=detail&cHash=a8ae3ebac8d44055309e9477f3991681> (10 Feb. 2023); Erich Landsteiner, Margareth Lanzinger and Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, Nachruf auf Michael Mitterauer, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 30, 3 (2022), pp. 378-387; Margareth Lanzinger, Michael Mitterauer, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für Österreichische Geschichtsforschung (MIOG)*, 131 (2023), pp. 221-225.

patriotism in the Empire of Austria through the reappraisal of its (pre-)history and through historical argumentation”⁷ The institute was thus, in its beginnings, a governmental and essentially political institution, as was customary at the time. It later specialised in auxiliary historical sciences, initially above all in the study of medieval imperial charters, and thus became the central training centre for archivists. Between 1959 and 1962, Michael Mitterauer attended the institute’s renowned training course. He received his doctorate in 1960 with the highest distinction *sub auspiciis praesidentis*, which means that the doctorate was awarded in the presence of the President of Austria. At that time, the award was linked to the post of assistant professor. His PhD dissertation, published in 1963, was on the Carolingian Margraves in the Southeast, the Frankish imperial and the Bavarian nobilities in the Austrian region. It shows that he was then focusing on the history of the Middle Ages, as did his habilitation – the second book – that followed. This was about the medieval economic constitution of an old Austrian settlement and was published in 1969 under the title *Zollfreiheit und Marktbereich* (Exemption from Customs and Market Area). This already showed his interest in theoretical and methodological foundations by applying the central place theory and addressing social connections and explanations. Although he remained faithful to the economic history of the Middle Ages, the work on his habilitation was no longer carried out at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research. From 1959, he was employed first as a research assistant and then, after his doctorate, as an assistant professor at the Department of Economic and Social History, where he habilitated in 1968 and taught, researched and headed numerous projects until his retirement in 2003. The knowledge, skills and resources he acquired during this period formed an important basis for his scholarly work throughout his entire life. Michael Mitterauer was and remained a medievalist and economic historian. And yet, he also set entirely different priorities in the following decades. His international fame is primarily linked to his turn to social and family history, which he helped shape from the outset as increasingly important historical sub-disciplines. In a text he wrote in 2002 entitled “A New Context: the Historical of the Family at the Turn of the Century”, he sees himself as an early family historian recognised by the public and the social sciences, especially by sociology, and also by some in the historical discipline, but also as a “radical outsider” who was expected to “improve the tarnished image of the historians’ guild”⁸ Over the years, the history of the family has been able to position itself

⁷ See <https://geschichtsforschung.univie.ac.at/ueber-uns/> (10 Feb. 2023); Thomas Winkelbauer, *Das Fach Geschichte an der Universität Wien. Von den Anfängen um 1500 bis etwa 1975*, Göttingen, 2018, pp. 96–110.

⁸ See the pdf of the manuscript at <http://austria-forum.org/web-books/docneuerkontextoodeisds/000001> (11 Feb. 2023), without page numbers (p. 1).

internationally. Mitterauer found discussion partners in this field of research from Bulgaria, Serbia and Greece to Germany, Great Britain and the USA, from Scandinavia to Italy and beyond.

In addition to his own achievements, the emergence of family history as a recognised sub-discipline and of Vienna as one of its centres was very directly related to the upheaval of the late 1960s and the many changes in the 1970s that affected, among other things, the understanding of marriage and family, gender relations and the relationship between parents and children. This change was also reflected in the education system and at universities. In 1969, for example, a curriculum for the extended school subject “History and Social Studies” (*Geschichte und Sozialkunde*) was drawn up for the first time in Austria, with the aim of integrating social history and social science content into the school curriculum. In connection with this, an associate professorship for social history was created at the Institute for Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna in 1971 and Michael Mitterauer was appointed to this position at the age of only 34. In 1973, this was converted into a full professorship in social history. The Department of Economic and Social History was founded in 1922 by Alfons Dopsch (1868–1953),⁹ an economic historian of the Middle Ages, as the “Seminar for Economic and Cultural History”. After its closure in 1938 and re-establishment in 1946, it was renamed the “Department of Economic and Social History” in 1961 with the creation of a professorship of the same name.¹⁰ The economic historian Alfred Hoffmann (1904–1983) held this chair from 1961. Until his retirement in 1974, he greatly expanded the department’s staff and, as head of the department, had a lasting influence on the life of the department. As Michael Mitterauer noted in his retrospective in the aforementioned speech on the occasion of the award of the Golden Doctorate, he created the ideal conditions for the “Viennese paths of social history”, which “owes a great deal to him”: “He not only allowed new topics, new methods, new forms of teaching but also encouraged them.” Mitterauer emphasised the “spirit of liberality, of openness, of willingness to change, which at that time” — with Hoffmann — “was established” as a prerequisite for socially informed scholarship.¹¹

⁹ He was a professor at the Institute of Austrian Historical Research when he was offered a post at Humboldt University in Berlin. In the negotiations that followed, he succeeded in establishing his own department. Although his work was criticised by Marc Bloch in reviews, Dopsch was one of the few from the German-speaking world who had contact with the *Annales* during the interwar period. See Peter Schöttler, *Die Annales und Österreich in den zwanziger und dreißiger Jahren*, in: *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Geschichtswissenschaften*, 4, 1 (1993), pp. 74–99.

¹⁰ See Winkelbauer, *Das Fach Geschichte*, pp. 264–269.

¹¹ Mitterauer, *Wiener Wege der Sozialgeschichte*, without page numbers (p. 6).

The Beginnings: Social History of the Family – Projects and the Vienna Family Database

Social research, history that is relevant to society, was the motto of the 1970s. In this respect, the period in which Michael Mitterauer took up the chair offered almost ideal conditions for repositioning himself. It was the time of the rapid rise of social history, which was driven by democratic concerns in the wake of the 1968 movement. Even if the profound reappraisal of the implications of National Socialism for the universities did not begin until the mid-to-late 1980s,¹² this period was also marked by a generational change that was a clear break with the numerous personal and intellectual continuities after 1945. Against this background, a politically focused history of ‘great’ men was no longer compatible with the way many of the younger generation understood history. Instead, interest turned to ordinary people, who had hitherto had no significance and no voice in history, representing at best a faceless mass. Workers’ history, everyday history, women’s history and family history became new and innovative fields of research during this period.

In social and family history, important impulses have also come from historical demography, especially from France. The analysis of church records – baptismal, marriage and death records – provided access to a whole range of information for almost the entire population: age at marriage, birth intervals, life expectancy, infant mortality, number of children per family, rate of children born out of wedlock, marriage patterns, who the witnesses and godparents were, and much more. In the mid-1960s, Michel Fleury and Louis Henry had published instructions on how to reconstruct families over generations on index cards from such church records, starting with the marriages from the marriage registers.¹³ The incipient use of computers opened up entirely new possibilities. The discovery of another source while researching his own family history, namely a *liber status animarum* from 1649 in the parish of Berndorf north of Salzburg, was in some ways a key experience for Michael Mitterauer.¹⁴ These are books or records in which a local clergyman listed the occupants of houses and households in a parish in order – ideally for several consecutive years. These sources, which have survived in larger numbers

¹² For the beginnings of this still incomplete process of coming to terms with the history of National Socialism, which is still incomplete, see Gernot Heiß, Siegfried Matzl, Sebastian Meissl, Edith Saurer and Karl Stuhlpfarrer, *Willfähige Wissenschaft. Die Universität Wien 1938-1945*, Vienna, 1989.

¹³ Michel Fleury and Louis Henry, *Nouveau manuel de dépouillement et d'exploitation de l'état civil ancien*, Paris, 1965.

¹⁴ Michael Mitterauer, Einleitung, in: Mitterauer, *Historisch-anthropologische Familienforschung. Fragestellungen und Zugangsweisen*, Vienna, Cologne, 1990, pp. 9-23, 10. This *status animarum* was the basis for the article: Michael Mitterauer, *Zur Familienstruktur in ländlichen Gebieten Österreichs im 17. Jahrhundert*, in: Heimold Helczmanovszki (ed.), *Beiträge zur Bevölkerungs- und Sozialgeschichte Österreichs*, Vienna, 1973, pp. 167-224.

in the Austrian region and internationally, facilitated completely new insights and possibilities for analysis, which were to become constitutive for historical family research. They also opened up the way to international exchange and cooperation. This discovery was made in 1972, practically at the same time as the enormously influential publication of the volume *Household and Family in Past Time* by Peter Laslett and Richard Wall, which was based on the analysis of household lists and the typology of household forms.¹⁵

Thus, at the Department of Economic and Social History, the first research projects on the social history of the family were carried out as early as 1973 on the initiative and under the direction of Michael Mitterauer.¹⁶ Michael Mitterauer's first publications on this subject also appeared in 1973: the essay on family structure in rural areas of Austria in the seventeenth century, the introduction to a special issue on the family as a historical social form and, in a first version, the momentous text on the myth of the pre-industrial large family. He wrote the latter two texts for the journal *Beiträge zur historischen Sozialkunde* (Contributions to Historical Social Studies).¹⁷ The journal was founded in 1971 by Michael Mitterauer and scholars from the Department of Economic and Social History as a medium for teacher training. In it, specialist knowledge on innovative topics was appropriately prepared and accompanied by didactic suggestions. Only a few years later, Michael Mitterauer, together with Reinhard Sieder, wrote the groundbreaking book *Vom Patriarchat zur Partnerschaft* (Patriarchy to Partnership), which was first published in 1977 and went on to be reprinted three times by the Munich publishing house C.H. Beck. An English translation of the book was published by Blackwell in Oxford in 1982 and went through several editions.¹⁸ Other seminal books followed over the next ten years: the Suhrkamp Wissenschaft volume *The History of the Family*, co-edited with Reinhard Sieder, a book on single mothers and the social history of youth and a volume on family structure and labour organisation in rural societies, co-edited with Josef Ehmer.¹⁹ The aim was to historicise the family, that is, to relate the family

¹⁵ Peter Laslett/Richard Wall (eds), *Household and Family in Past Time*, Cambridge, 1972.

¹⁶ See Josef Ehmer and Reinhard Sieder, *Familie im sozialen Wandel*, in: *Historical Social Research* 4, 4 (1979), pp. 23-28, p. 23.

¹⁷ Mitterauer, *Zur Familienstruktur in ländlichen Gebieten Österreichs im 17. Jahrhundert*; Michael Mitterauer, *Die Familie als historische Sozialform*, in: *Beiträge zur historischen Sozialkunde* 3 (1973), pp. 1-4; Michael Mitterauer, *Der Mythos von der vorindustriellen Großfamilie*, in: *Beiträge zur historischen Sozialkunde* 3 (1973), pp. 41-47.

¹⁸ Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, *Vom Patriarchat zur Partnerschaft, Zum Strukturwandel der Familie*, Munic, 1977 (4th edition 1991); English translation: *The European Family, Patriarchy to Partnership from the Middle Ages to the Present*, Oxford, 1982 (reprinted in 1983, 1988 and 1989). For the publication list of Michael Mitterauer see <https://wirtschaftsgeschichte.univie.ac.at/fileadmin/user_upload/l_wirtschaftsgeschichte/Aktuelles/2022/Michael_Mitterauer_Publikationsliste.pdf> (11 Feb. 2023).

¹⁹ Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder (eds), *Historische Familienforschung*, Frankfurt a. M., 1982; Michael Mitterauer, *Ledige Mütter. Zur Geschichte unehelicher Geburten in Europa*, Munic, 1983; Michael Mitterauer,

in its various forms, compositions and changes to social and economic contexts differentiated by space, time and society. At the same time, naturalising and harmonising historical stereotypes were to be questioned and dismantled.

Interdisciplinary cooperation was sought, especially with sociology, but also with *Volkskunde*, later renamed European ethnology. Such a working context was provided by a large, five-year research project consisting of seven sub-projects on the topic of “Family in Social Change. Historical-Sociological Studies on Structural and Functional Changes in the Family in Recent Centuries”, which was funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF and the Volkswagen Foundation from 1979. The two main projects were 1) “Changes in Family Structure in Austria since the Seventeenth Century” and 2) “Structural Changes in the Family in a European Comparison”. The five sub-projects were: 3) “Case Studies on Changes in the Family in Urban and Rural Areas of Austria since 1918”, which was conceived as an oral history project; 4) “Effects of the Housing Situation on the Family in the Viennese population during the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries”; 5) “Household and Consumption in Austria since the Eighteenth Century”; 6) “The family in the System of Social Control”; 7) “Women in Marriage and Family: Social Control and Marital Power Relations”.²⁰ All projects were situated between the seventeenth and twentieth centuries, thus transcending time periods, and its themes seem very productive for interdisciplinary cooperation. From a historical point of view, the aim was to explore the historical dimension of the family in terms of its changeability and to highlight the importance of socio-economic contextualisation beyond the abstract “family”. Social science approaches, theories and methods were introduced from sociology.

In the first main project funded by the FWF, quantifiable sources from the period between the sixteenth and twentieth centuries were collected and an extensive collection was created using the means of the time – copies, microfilms, transcripts, but also punch cards and magnetic tapes. This resulted in the “Vienna Family Database”, in which the data were prepared for use with the SPSS statistics programme. Household lists from ecclesiastical — *libri status animarum* — and state censuses, such as census materials, conscription lists, etc. from over 70 urban and rural parishes in Austria were recorded, representing different social, economic and legal contexts and different settlement structures.²¹ In this context, there was a lively exchange with the Cambridge Group of the History of Population and Social Structure, for example with Peter Laslett (1915-2001) and Richard Wall (1944-2011). For project staff,

Sozialgeschichte der Jugend, Frankfurt a. M., 1986; Josef Ehmer und Michael Mitterauer (eds), Familienstruktur und Arbeitsorganisation in ländlichen Gesellschaften, Vienna, 1986.

²⁰ See Ehmer/Sieder, Familie im sozialen Wandel, pp. 23-24.

²¹ See Ehmer/Sieder, Familie im sozialen Wandel, p. 24.

who at the time included Josef Ehmer and Reinhard Sieder, these close contacts offered the possibility of research stays in Cambridge. International cooperation was also an integral part of the second main project funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. The Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen was also a project partner. Of particular importance to Michael Mitterauer were the international conferences on “Changes in the Family”, which he organised with Karin Hausen, Arthur Imhof, Hans Medick and Heidi Rosenbaum and which took place regularly in Göttingen and Vienna from 1979 onwards.²² The sources collected on Austria for the Vienna Family Database were supplemented by material from the Federal Republic of Germany, Switzerland, Italy, Yugoslavia, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and the former USSR, especially state censuses of the nineteenth century.²³ In the 1980s, the project “Quantification in Historical Research and Teaching and in Computer-Assisted History Teaching”, which was also didactically oriented, was launched.

These pioneering projects, which involved the processing of extensive source material on household forms and composition, including serial soul descriptions available at annual intervals, laid the foundations for the very large body of research on household structures that was paradigmatic for the history of the family during the 1970s and 1980s.²⁴ Subsequent projects continued the range of topics of these early projects, while opening up new spaces and settings, including, among other things, social structures in the Balkans, youth in the Balkans and migrant families from the former Yugoslavia and Turkey in Vienna.

As can be seen very clearly, the 1970s offered a wide range of creative opportunities that gave the social history of the family a great boost. This productive departure was made possible not least by the fact that Michael Mitterauer had already recognised and used the potential of third-party funding, which had been opened up by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF), founded in 1968, but also by other funding bodies. This made it possible not only to set new topics, develop sources and test new methods but also to create positions for PhD students and post-doctoral researchers at the department, which would otherwise have been unthinkable in the job structure of the time. In these contexts, interdisciplinarity was lived scientific

²² Mitterauer, *Einleitung*, p. 12.

²³ See Ehmer/Sieder, *Familie im sozialen Wandel*, p. 25.

²⁴ For example, Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, *The Developmental Process of Domestic Groups: Problems of Reconstruction and Possibilities of Interpretation*, in: *Journal of Family History* 4 (1979), pp. 257-284; Michael Mitterauer and Reinhard Sieder, *The Reconstruction of the Family Life Course: Theoretical Problems and Empirical Results*, in: Richard Wall (ed.), *Family Forms in Historic Europe*, Cambridge, 1983, pp. 309-345. See also Lutz Berkner, *The Stem Family and the Developmental Cycle of the Peasant Household. An Eighteenth-Century Austrian Example*, in: *American Historical Review* 77 (1972), pp. 398-418.

practice and international exchange was essential, but also, from the beginning, the communication of research results by addressing teachers down to the school level. Michael Mitterauer's research, projects and publications since the early 1970s have made him an internationally renowned and widely networked family historian who did not limit his research to a specific era, but pursued questions and problems from the Middle Ages to the present. When he reflected on, emphasised and demanded the social relevance of historical research, he also had the wider public in mind. In all these activities, he could count on the support of a group of young colleagues in the Department of Economic and Social History around 1970 and who, together with him, followed the path from medieval research to modern and contemporary topics and shared his interest in a reorientation of social history. This group also made a significant contribution to creating the productive and inclusive working atmosphere that still characterises the Department of Economic and Social History today, and in which research projects, topics and approaches could be established and developed.

Oral History, Biographical Records and Historical Anthropology

Thus, in the early days of family history, the sociologically inspired focus was primarily on family and household structures in different social milieus, on the links between economic practices, family forms, household compositions and labour organisation. This research was accompanied by pioneering data collection and, consequently, quantitative approaches and working methods. With the increasing presence of the history of everyday life, everyday life also came to the fore in the history of the family, and with it oral history as a method, which had also already been used in one of the sub-projects mentioned above. Discussions about the spheres of action of historical actors, their perceptions, the concept of popular culture and methodological questions stimulated historical research as a whole at this time. Michael Mitterauer also integrated oral history into university teaching, for example in courses on changes in family and everyday life in rural areas and on the topic of "rural lower classes" during the early 1980s. Students then conducted interviews with older people.²⁵

An oral history project initiated by Reinhard Sieder at the Department of Economic and Social History, in which representatives of *Volkskunde* — now European ethnology — and PhD students with their dissertation projects participated, was conceived as a "community study": Maria Langeegg in the Dunkelsteinerwald in

²⁵ Michael Mitterauer, Vorwort, in: Maria Gremel, *Mit neun Jahren im Dienst. Mein Leben im Stübl und am Bauernhof, 1900–1930*, Vienna, 1983, p. 7.

Lower Austria was the site of the study. In retrospect, this oral history project with its fieldwork opened up new perspectives for Michael Mitterauer in terms of “more anthropologically oriented” approaches.²⁶ In a 1987 article, however, he also mentions the problems of biographical narrative interviews in particular, which generate an almost unmanageable amount of information and can become “a great burden” for the interviewer.²⁷ He himself took a different path: working with life history records. He received his first manuscript from a student who had participated in one of his oral history courses. It was the memoirs of Maria Gremel, who had had to go into service at the age of nine. These memoirs were published in 1983 as the first volume of the series “Damit es nicht verlorenght...” (“So That It Is Not Lost”), founded by Michael Mitterauer and published by the publishing house Böhlau Vienna.²⁸

These memoirs were also the impetus for the establishment of the “Documentation of Biographical Records” at the Department of Economic and Social History, which still exists today and whose holdings have since been considerably expanded.²⁹ Mitterauer saw its significance for history, especially for younger generations, in the contrast to life in the “big city” of the 1980s and in the perception of a past world as “completely unfamiliar”.³⁰ The second volume *Kreuztragen* (Bearing the Cross), published a year later in 1984, contains the life stories of three women. In this and subsequent volumes, the focus was on people from “poor family backgrounds”; the so-called lower classes: smallholders, cottagers, lodgers and servants. In his preface, Michael Mitterauer emphasises the value of autobiographical texts as sources, which had to be attributed to them in the first place against the background of the structural-historical dominance of the time. For him, however, it was not only a matter of “securing traces for a new history of everyday life”; equally important was the initiation of conversations between generations.³¹ At the time, there was great media interest in such biographies.³²

²⁶ Mitterauer, Einleitung, p. 12.

²⁷ Michael Mitterauer, Neue Wege der Alltagsgeschichte zwischen Quantifizieren und Oral History, in: *Kampftal-Studien* 5 (1985), pp. 193-214 and in: Herwig Ebner et al. (eds), Festschrift Othmar Pickl zum 60. Geburtstag, Graz/Vienna, 1987, pp. 433-442, p. 439-440.

²⁸ Maria Gremel, Mit neun Jahren im Dienst. Mein Leben im Stübl und am Bauernhof 1900-1930, Vienna, 1983. In the meantime, almost 70 volumes have been published, some of them individual autobiographies, others compilations of excerpts from several autobiographical records on a particular topic.

²⁹ See <<https://wirtschaftsgeschichte.univie.ac.at/en/research/collection-of-biographical-records/>> (13 Feb. 2023).

³⁰ Mitterauer, Vorwort, in: Maria Gremel.

³¹ Mitterauer, Vorwort, in: *Kreuztragen. Drei Frauenleben*, Vienna, 1984, pp. 7-14, 8, p. 14.

³² In 1984, for example, Mitterauer published a text about a radio project that dealt with the living conditions of rural lower classes. Michael Mitterauer, “Aber arm wollte ich nicht sein“. Zu einem Rundfunkprojekt über die Lebensverhältnisse ländlicher Unterschichten, in: Hubert Christian Ehalt (ed.), *Geschichte von unten*, Vienna/Cologne/Graz, 1984, pp. 143-162.

The concept of collecting recordings of people from the less educated classes, which distinguishes the “Documentation of Biographical Records” from other collections of self-testimonies, and the specific insights it provides were essential for Michael Mitterauer’s path to historical anthropology.³³ His collaboration with the Institute for Historical Anthropology in Freiburg, which was headed by the ancient historian Jochen Martin, opened up to him the potential of the “long-term perspective and intercultural comparison” and at the same time brought the question of “religious determinants” into play. He describes as a “key experience”: “reading ethnographic accounts of the Slava feast celebrated in Serbia in honour of the patron saint of the house, with its specific forms of ancestor commemoration”.³⁴ It was the perception of difference that fascinated and inspired him.

The term historical anthropology first appeared in his list of publications in 1985, in connection with an extensive text on the topic of illegitimacy in Europe in the third volume of the series published by the Institute for Historical Anthropology in Freiburg.³⁵ The title “Historical Anthropology” itself refers to a publication on historical-anthropological family research, which appeared in 1990 in the series “Kulturstudien by Böhlau”, the introduction to which I have already referred to several times. According to Michael Mitterauer, the collection of essays also had a “a practical purpose” in that it included scattered texts, some of which had been published in other languages or in journals that were difficult to access. More important to him, however, was to set “very specific accents in the broad field of historical family research”, namely to think in terms of “historical-anthropological questions and approaches”. These had become increasingly important to him in his “almost twenty years of research activity in the field of the history of the family”.³⁶ For him, the essays collected in this volume represent individual steps in this direction, the goal of which he by no means saw as having been reached. They include the essays

³³ Mitterauer, *Einleitung*, pp. 12-13.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14. Southeastern and Eastern Europe were areas on which Michael Mitterauer’s scholarly interest repeatedly focused in various contexts. Particularly after 1989, the targeted integration of the European academic space was a major concern of his. Among his initiatives in this regard were the Winter Balkan Meetings for PhD students, which took place in cooperation with Karl Kaser as well as with Kristina Popova and her colleagues in Bulgaria — in Pansko and later in Blagoevgrad — as the “International School in Historical Anthropology” in the second half of the 1990s and the early 2000s. A final major project, led by Michael Mitterauer and Josef Ehmer, among others, was a collaboration with Czech universities and archives, with the Collegium Carolinum in Munich and the Max Planck Institute for History in Göttingen: the project on “Social Structures in Bohemia in the Early Modern Period”, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and led by Markus Cerman (1967-2015), which began with a pilot phase in 1992 and ran from 1996 to 1999.

³⁵ Michael Mitterauer, *Illegitimität in Europa. Historische Bedingungen in Familienverfassung, Wertesystem und Arbeitsorganisation*, in: Ernst Wilhelm Müller (ed.), *Geschlechtsreife und Legitimation zur Zeugung*, Freiburg, 1985, pp. 551-682.

³⁶ Mitterauer, *Einleitung*, in: Mitterauer., *Historisch-anthropologische Familienforschung. Fragestellungen und Zugangsweisen*, Vienna/Cologne, 1990, pp. 9-23, p. 9.

on European families in intercultural comparison, on Christianity and endogamy,³⁷ on complex family forms in a socio-historical perspective, on rural family forms in their dependence on the natural environment and the local economy, on Russian and Central European family forms in comparison,³⁸ on the social history of the family as an object of research in regional studies, on servant marriages in Carinthia as a special case of historical family formation,³⁹ on servant life in the Alpine region and on the gender-specific division of labour in pre-industrial times. Michael Mitterauer traces his own path in the introductory pages. He begins with the *Beiträge zur Historischen Sozialkunde*, the aforementioned journal for teacher training, which he co-edited and helped shape numerous issues over the decades, as well as a lecture in the winter semester of 1971/72 for teacher candidates on the topic of “History of the Family”, which, in retrospect, he positioned between Otto Brunner and sociological structural functionalism.⁴⁰

In 1993, the first volume of the journal *Historische Anthropologie. Kultur — Gesellschaft — Alltag* (Historical Anthropology. Culture — Society — Everyday Life) appeared. This was a time when a number of journals were being founded that advocated counter-concepts to classical historical scholarship. Richard van Dülmen, Alf Lüdtke, Hans Medick and Michael Mitterauer had signed a contract with Böhlau publishing house the previous year as managing editors. When *Historical Anthropology* was launched, it served as a critical impulse — a “counter project” to structural-functional and modernisation-theoretical approaches.⁴¹ This criticism was accompanied by a fundamentally new conceptualisation that declared everyday life and practice, action and experience, situations and processes to be research-guiding approaches on the basis of a broad notion of culture. At its core was the “diversity and contradictory nature with which people appropriate the world”.⁴² The concept of appropriation makes it possible to historicise an “alleged natural quality” of topics such as birth, childhood, family, illness, gender differences and

³⁷ Also published in English: Michael Mitterauer, Christianity and Endogamy, in: *Continuity and Change* 6, 3 (1991), pp. 295-333.

³⁸ Also published in English: Michael Mitterauer and Alexander Kagan, Russian and Central European Family Structures, in: *Journal of Family History* 7 (1982), pp. 103-131 (special issue on “The Family in Eastern Europe”).

³⁹ Also published in English: Michael Mitterauer, Marriage without Co-Residence: A Special Type of Historic Family Forms in Rural Carinthia, in: *Journal of Family History* 6, (1981), pp. 177-181.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10. Michael Anderson divides family history into three areas: the demographic approach, the sentiments approach and the household economics approach. Michael Anderson, *Approaches to the history of the Western family, 1500-1914*, Cambridge, 1995.

⁴¹ On this see most recently Caroline Arni, Nach der Kultur. Anthropologische Potentiale für eine rekursive Geschichtsschreibung, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 26, 2 (2018), pp. 200-223, p. 200; Julia Heinemann, Margareth Lanzinger and Juliane Schiel, Von der ‚Aneignung‘ zur ‚Rekursion‘. Drei Reflexionen zu Caroline Arnis Aufruf, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 27, 2 (2019), pp. 281-295, p. 281.

⁴² First sentence of the editorial of the first issue of *Historische Anthropologie*, 1, 1 (1993).

sexuality. The consistent historicisation of phenomena and categories is still one of the core tasks of historical anthropology. Appropriation, on the other hand, became the decisive lever for a critical reflection on categories of analysis such as “structure” and “action”, which had hitherto been conceived as strongly dichotomous. This shift brought actors as well as concrete forms of appropriation, social logics and willfulness (*Eigen-Sinn*) into the centre of interest.

With Edith Saurer, Mitterauer introduced the journal in the *Quaderni storici* in 1993. They begin their text by noting the persistence of national and regional scholarly traditions and lamenting the lack of a social anthropology in the German-speaking world. They cover a wide range of references that, in their view, have brought forth historical anthropology in the German-Swiss-Austrian area: the Freiburg Institute for Historical Anthropology with its cultural comparisons that go back to antiquity and beyond Europe, the history of workers and the “history from below” (*Geschichtswerkstätten*), which dealt intensively with “their own” history, especially during National Socialism, Clifford Geertz’s concept of culture, questions and topics of family history from childhood through various phases of life to old age and, last but not least, migration and the challenges of multicultural societies. From this positioning of the journal, which is also oriented towards contemporary issues, they derive the need for an interdisciplinary orientation as a programme and primarily address social anthropology, European and non-European ethnology.⁴³ In what follows, they outline their conceptual considerations that led them to publish the first issue of the first volume of *Historical Anthropology* in 1993. Their aim was to be broad in time and space, and to represent a wide range of topics.⁴⁴ The new alignment towards historical anthropology took place in the exchange and reception of changes in the approach discussed in the English, French and Italian historiographies, which left a lasting impression on the new social history.⁴⁵

The journal celebrated its 30th anniversary in 2022 in Vienna. According to its mission statement, *Historische Anthropologie* still provides a forum for research

⁴³ Michael Mitterauer and Edith Saurer, “Historische Anthropologie“. Una nuova rivista in lingua tedesca, in: *Quaderni storici* 82 (1992), pp. 267–278, pp. 268–270.

⁴⁴ In the following years until his retirement, Michael Mitterauer edited five more issues of *Historical Anthropology* — at that time all without a thematic focus. Cf. *Historische Anthropologie* 3, 1 (1995), 5, 1 (1997), 7, 1 (1999) as well as 10, 1 (2002) and 10, 2 (2002).

⁴⁵ Peter Burke, E.P. Thompson and Natalie Zemon Davis along with anthropologists Frederick Barth, Victor Turner, Clifford Geertz and Marshall Sahlins were the dominant voices in the Anglo-Saxon world; in France it was the *nouvelle histoire* and the *anthropologie historique*, which were established in part around the *Annales* and Philippe Ariès, Roger Chartier, Robert Darnton, Georges Duby, Jacques Le Goff, Emmanuel Le Roy Ladurie, Michelle Perrot and many others. In Italy, the *microstoria* associated with the journal *Quaderni storici* was the main source of new impulses. For an overview see Jakob Tanner, *Historische Anthropologie*. Version: 1.0, in: Docupedia-Zeitgeschichte, 3.1.2012, URL: <http://docupedia.de/zg/Historische_Anthropologie> (12 Feb. 2023); Jakob Tanner, *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung*, Hamburg, 2004, chap. 3.

and discussion of current topics and new approaches in the historical and cultural sciences. “Central to the treatment of the different topics is a comprehensive concept of culture and society: *culture* is not understood as a characteristic of a specific sector, but as a medium of historical life practice, *society* is seen as a space of interaction. The analysis of rituals, symbolic actions, and discursive strategies is of equal interest to that of the specific experiences and self-images, relations, and *everyday* practices of historical actors. Interpretations and imaginations, modes of action and interactions are to be examined in their historical-social contexts. The decisive interest in the diversity of perspectives and forms of practice in different historical-social relations of cultures requires an expansion of the field of vision beyond Europe and, time and again, a reflection on one’s own positioning.”⁴⁶

It was important that in the 1980s a very fruitful exchange took place that promoted the “anthropologising of history” and the “historisation of anthropologies”. This dialogue became constitutive for the field of historical anthropology. From the start, the approach to and dialog with the anthropologies in their critique of Euro- and ethnocentric ways of thinking resonated. Historical-anthropological approaches were used to actively oppose and circumvent these.⁴⁷ The critical position was thus connected with the reception of postcolonial theory, but also with the debate on “decentralizing” historical approaches, as advocated by Natalie Zemon Davis.⁴⁸ Another important development occurred in the shift towards microhistory and later to global historical anthropology.⁴⁹

The founding members of *Historische Anthropologie* envisioned a journal that would be closely linked to new conceptions of their own research fields and approaches. Among the approaches that were crucial in this process of reorientation towards historical anthropology, the first to mentioned is a new social history of various time periods, including ancient history, which was increasingly interested in approaches, methods and topics of social and cultural anthropology⁵⁰ and

⁴⁶ See <<https://www.vr-elibrary.de/hian/about>> (12 Feb. 2023).

⁴⁷ See the positioning in the founding editorial, Editorial, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 1, 1 (1993), pp. 1-3, p. 3; Hans Medick, Quo vadis Historische Anthropologie? Geschichtsforschung zwischen Historischer Kulturwissenschaft und Mikro-Historie, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 9, 1 (2001), pp. 78-92.

⁴⁸ Natalie Zemon Davis, Decentering History: Local Stories and Cultural Crossings in a Global World, in: *History and Theory* 50 (2011), pp. 188-202.

⁴⁹ For example, Rebekka Habermas, Der Kolonialskandal Atakpame — eine Mikrogeschichte des Globalen, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 17, 3 (2009), pp. 297-319; special issue *Globale Dinge*, *Historische Anthropologie* 25, 3, (2017).

⁵⁰ Hans Medick, “Missionare im Ruderboot“? Ethnologische Erkenntnisweisen als Herausforderung an die Sozialgeschichte, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 10, 3 (1984), pp. 295-319; Hans Medick and David Sabean (eds), Emotionen und materielle Interessen. Sozialanthropologische und historische Beiträge zur Familienforschung, Göttingen, 1984; Rebekka Habermas and Niels Minkmar (eds), Das Schwein des Häuptlings. Sechs Aufsätze zur Historischen Anthropologie, Berlin, 1992; Rebekka Habermas, Geschlechtergeschichte und “anthropology of gender”, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 1, 3 (1993), pp. 485-509.

which developed an alternative concept to a social history dominated by linear modernisation paradigms. Second, historical anthropology was oriented towards the new cultural analysis influenced by the linguistic turn, which represented a broad understanding of culture, applied to the practice of everyday life. This conceptualisation of culture was therefore compatible with both the new social history and the empirical cultural sciences and European ethnology. The connection of these partial disciplines was constitutive for the profile of *Historische Anthropologie* — both as a research field and a journal. Third, empirical cultural sciences/European ethnology and the debate on the concept of popular culture, which, since the paradigm shift in the 1970s, have been studying everyday life and culture, provided a link to the topics and approaches touched upon in new social history and historical anthropology.⁵¹ Interdisciplinary exchange has been omnipresent as a demand and to some extent also as a practice since the 1970s and is again called for here. The search for and the consistent establishment of interdisciplinary dialogue is certainly one of Michael Mitterauer's legacies.

Conclusion: Viennese Paths of Social History: Positionings and Perspectives

If we compare the Viennese paths of social history with the situation in Germany, especially in the 1980s, the essential characteristic is certainly that the paths taken in Vienna mediated between different approaches. Michael Mitterauer undoubtedly made a decisive contribution to this. Social history in Germany was characterised by sometimes heated and fierce controversies between historical social science on the one hand and everyday history — and thus historical anthropology and micro-history — on the other. The representatives of social history oriented towards the social sciences, for which structures, predefined terminology and models as well as quantifying work were constitutive — paradigmatically represented by the so-called Bielefeld School — criticised everyday history in particular for its inductive approach, in the sense of grounded theory.⁵² But they also found fault with the fact that categories such as experience, practice or meaning were declared the guiding principles of the historical approach, and that the modernisation paradigm, and thus the bourgeoisie and the state, were no longer seen as the driving forces of

⁵¹ Carola Lipp, Kulturhistorische Studien und doch keine Kulturgeschichte, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 20, 2 (2012), pp. 242-245; Brigitta Schmidt-Lauber, "Historische Anthropologie" — ein vorausschauender Rückblick zur Transdisziplinarität aus disziplinärer Sicht, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 20, 2 (2012), pp. 246-248.

⁵² Seminal Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann, *The Social Construction of Reality. A Treatise in the Sociology of Knowledge*, New York, 1966.

history.⁵³ Everyday history was ascribed a distance to theory and denied a scholarly and academic status. At the 35th *Historikertag* – the conferences of the German Association of Historians — in Berlin in 1984, the dispute between Hans Medick on the one hand and Hans Ulrich Wehler and Jürgen Kocka on the other over the positions and epistemological potential of these two different approaches came to an open and public head. Thomas Lindenberger speaks of a “family quarrel” within social history⁵⁴ that reached a climax here. The dichotomisation it expressed was to leave a lasting mark on social history in the German-speaking world.

The fact that Michael Mitterauer positioned himself quite differently in this matter is expressed very clearly in his article “New Ways in the History of Everyday Life between Quantification and Oral History”, which appeared in 1985 and 1987 — that is, after the dispute — in different publication contexts.⁵⁵ Here, as in the essay “From Historical Social Science to Historical Anthropology?”, he argued in a conciliatory way.⁵⁶ He was strongly opposed to a demarcation between historical social science and historical anthropology. Rather, he argued for cooperation with social anthropology, ethnology, including European ethnology, and historical cultural studies, especially in the sense of area studies.⁵⁷ At the end of the introduction to the volume, he once again explicitly pleaded for an “open” — in the English text for a “flexible” — project of a historical-anthropological social history and against “dogmatic specifications in subject matter and method”.⁵⁸ And he contrasts the comparatively conflict-free situation in Austria with the “dualism” in Germany.⁵⁹ His vital interest in openness in different directions, in the integration of seemingly diametrically opposed approaches, must certainly also be seen against the institutional background: at the Department of Economic and Social History in Vienna, there were projects, researchers and PhD students around him who were working in parallel with precisely these different approaches and methods. What counted

⁵³ See the polemic by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Königsweg zu neuen Ufern oder Irrgarten der Illusionen? Die westdeutsche Alltagsgeschichte: Geschichte “von innen” und “von unten”*, in: Franz Josef Brüggemeier and Jürgen Kocka (eds), “Geschichte von unten” — “Geschichte von innen”. Kontroversen um die Alltagsgeschichte, Fernuniversität Hagen, 1985, pp. 17-47. On the ‘loss’ of the state, Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Transnationale Geschichte — der neue Königsweg historischer Forschung?*, in: Gunilla-Friederike Budde, Sebastian Conrad and Oliver Janz (eds), *Transnationale Geschichte. Themen, Tendenzen und Theorien*, Göttingen, 2006, pp. 161-174.

⁵⁴ Thomas Lindenberger, “Alltagsgeschichte” oder: Als um die zukünftigen Grenzen der Geschichtswissenschaft noch gestritten wurde, in: Martin Sabrow et al. (eds), *Zeitgeschichte als Streitgeschichte. Große Kontroversen nach 1945*, Munich, 2003, pp. 74-91, p. 74.

⁵⁵ Michael Mitterauer, *Neue Wege der Alltagsgeschichte zwischen Quantifizieren und Oral History*.

⁵⁶ Michael Mitterauer, *From Historical Social Science to Historical Anthropology?*, in: Miroslav Jovanovic, Karl Kaser and Slobodan Naumovic (eds), *Between the Archives and the Field. A Dialogue on Historical Anthropology of the Balkans*, Belgrade/Graz, 2004, pp. 11-20.

⁵⁷ Mitterauer, *Einleitung*, pp. 15-16.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁵⁹ Mitterauer, *From Historical Social Science to Historical Anthropology*, pp. 16-17.

were common interfaces of interest and content. “Labels are not important”, he wrote paradigmatically in the aforementioned essay from 2004, “what is important is the content”.⁶⁰ That was his motto.

In the 1990s, Michael Mitterauer’s always conciliatory manner often gave us as PhD students cause for discussion among ourselves — and sometimes annoyed us a little. It seemed to us that the way he dealt with us was all too harmonising and to the detriment of clear positions. But we always had the freedom to find and go our own way. In the 1990s, historical family research began to differentiate itself in various directions — from the history of labour or property to the history of sexuality⁶¹ or inequality, and countless others. With the establishment of gender history and historical anthropology, new questions and perspectives came to the fore. For my own PhD dissertation, a micro-study of marriage and inheritance practices in the South Tyrolean market town of Innichen between 1700 and 1900,⁶² in which I reconstructed local and familial contexts, it was important to break up the household as a unit, to ‘separate’ the married couple and to ask about the position and agency of wives and husbands. This was mainly due to the fact that it was now necessary to focus much more on legal aspects and corresponding sources in order to be able to say something about the right of ownership and use, and at the same time about hierarchies and power relations within the household. In other words, it was not about formal law, but about law in social practice. Marriage contracts between bridal couples and property transfer contracts between generations opened up entirely new insights into aspects that were considered potentially conflictual and therefore subject to negotiation and contractual agreements. It also became clear that it was not enough to include inheritance law and inheritance practice in the analysis in order to understand the property situation. Marital property law — whether separation or community of marital property or community of accrued gains was common — made a big difference to the position of wives and widows, but also to the position of men marrying heiresses who took over the parental landed property.⁶³ However, law also played a major role at the municipal level: it regulated who was

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 18.

⁶¹ Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, *Sexe, impôt et parenté. Une histoire sociale à l’époque moderne, 1450-1850*, Paris, 2022; Franz X. Eder, *Sexuality in Premodern Europe. A Social and Cultural History from Antiquity to the Early Modern Age*, London, 2023.

⁶² Margareth Lanzinger, *Das gesicherte Erbe. Heirat in lokalen und familialen Kontexten, Innichen 1700-1900*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2003.

⁶³ Margareth Lanzinger, Gunda Barth-Scalmani, Ellinor Forster and Gertrude Langer-Ostrawsky, *Aushandeln von Ehe. Heiratsverträge der Neuzeit im europäischen Vergleich*, Cologne/Weimar/Vienna, 2010 (2nd edition 2015); Margareth Lanzinger, *Transferencia de bienes, relaciones generacionales y de género. Trayectorias en perspectivas comparadas, siglos XVI y XVIII*, in: Francisco García González (ed.), *Familias, trayectorias y desigualdades. Estudios de historia social en España y en Europa, siglos XVI-XIX*, Madrid, 2021, pp. 437-461.

accepted as a new burgher, who had access rights to the commons and who was allowed to marry at all — under the auspices of the necessary municipal marriage consensus, which was only granted to those who had sufficient economic means, at best property ownership.⁶⁴ Local and family spheres were closely intertwined, and the social price was high. For the village and the diocesan area belonging to the Deanery of San Candido, I also explored marriage dispensation applications, which close relatives and in-laws had to submit when they wanted to get married.⁶⁵

Historical kinship studies developed into a separate and highly productive field of research, not least because of the criticism of the household-oriented perspective of family history.⁶⁶ The phenomenon of kin marriages was one important topic among many others that also found expression in the Spanish project context around Francisco Chacón Jimenez and Francisco García González in conferences, workshops and edited volumes.⁶⁷ In the process, research interest has also moved away from a concentration on the so-called lower classes: petty and upper middle-class families and contexts are now being studied with new questions and new source material, as is the nobility.⁶⁸ Letters, diaries, family books and other self-testimonies provide new access and insights. Transnational families, especially in trade and industry, are a newer topic, as are wealth and material culture or the domestic context in a broad understanding as an approach to family and kinship.⁶⁹ The social challenges in connection with family issues are currently numerous and

⁶⁴ Margareth Lanzinger, Landlessness and Marriage Restrictions. Tyrol and Vorarlberg Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries, in: Christine Fertig, Richard Paping and Henry French (eds), *Landless Households in Rural Europe 1600-1900*, Suffolk, 2022, pp. 243-269.

⁶⁵ These very rich sources formed the basis of the book placed under the heading of historical kinship studies and, at the same time, the new cultural history of administration: Margareth Lanzinger, *Verwaltete Verwandtschaft. Eheverbote, kirchliche und staatliche Dispenspraxis im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*, Vienna/Cologne/Weimar, 2015. English translation: *Administrating Kinship. Marriage Impediments and Dispensation Policies in the 18th and 19th Centuries*, Leiden/Boston, 2023 (in print and open access).

⁶⁶ For a discussion of the limitations of the history of the family, especially of access via household structures, see Sandro Guzzi-Heeb, *Von der Familien- zur Verwandtschaftsgeschichte: Der mikrohistorische Blick. Geschichte von Verwandten im Walliser Dorf Vouvy zwischen 1750 und 1850*, in: *Historical Social Research* 30, 3 (2005), pp. 107-129; David Warren Sabean, *Reflections on Microhistory*, in: Budde/Conrad/Janz (eds), *Transnationale Geschichte*, pp. 275-289. Programmatically on this David Warren Sabean, Simon Teuscher and Jon Mathieu (eds), *Kinship in Europe. Approaches to Long-Term Development (1300-1900)*, New York/Oxford, 2007.

⁶⁷ See, among others, Francisco Chacón Jimenez and Gérard Delille (eds), *Marriages and Alliances. Dissolution Continuity and Strength of Kinship (ca. 1750-ca. 1900)*, Roma, 2018.

⁶⁸ This change is aptly documented in the book by Andreas Gestrich, *Geschichte der Familie im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 2013. The first two editions of this comprehensive work, published in the series “Enzyklopädie Deutscher Geschichte” — “Encyclopaedia of German History” —, appeared in 1999 and 2010. In the third edition of 2013, Andreas Gestrich added three sections: *Family in the GDR*, *Noble Families in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries* and *News from the Family in the Bourgeoisie?*; *ibid.*, pp. 113-124.

⁶⁹ For example, Simone Derix, *Die Thyssens. Familie und Vermögen*, Paderborn, 2016; Joachim Eibach and Margareth Lanzinger (eds), *The Routledge History of the Domestic Sphere in Europe Sixteenth to Nineteenth Century*, London, 2020.

very internationally situated: family and the different forms of migration, starting with care-chain migration, the family in the post-colonial context,⁷⁰ same-sex marriages, rainbow and patchwork families, international adoptions, kinship in the context of reproductive technologies, social security etc.⁷¹ This shows that a multifaceted, contextualised history of the family is still relevant and has potential.

Conceptually, however, it also poses new challenges for social history. In his 2004 volume on the reorientation of historical anthropology, Jakob Tanner already argued for the “heuristic principle of a ‘symmetrical anthropology’”.⁷² His aim is not only to point out and help overcome Eurocentric imbalances but also anthropocentric ones. While the question of Eurocentrism has accompanied historical anthropology since its beginnings, the anthropocentric imbalance has only come to the fore in recent years, following new media theories, science and technology studies, and readings of Bruno Latour and Philippe Descola.⁷³ Both endeavours — the critique of Eurocentrism and anthropocentrism — are still ongoing and, alongside the demand for a radical historicisation and the systematic integration of the material world, including nature, constitute key areas in which social history and historical anthropology currently see and unfold their critical potential. Caroline Arni, Matthieu Leimgruber and Simon Teuscher published a special issue of the *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte / Annuaire suisse d’histoire économique et sociale* (Swiss Yearbook for Economic and Social History) entitled *Neue Beiträge zur Sozialgeschichte / Nouvelles contributions à l’histoire sociale* (New Contributions to Social History).⁷⁴ The special issue “explores what is being done as social history today, where traditions and classical concepts prove to be unbrokenly sustainable and where new impulses and transdisciplinary concept transfers are emerging”. The contributions deal with the agency of slaves, but also of horses and dogs; with naming practices, migration routes of Alpine merchants between transnationality and locality, the training of maidservants, debt networks, work as a political issue, retirement and inactivity. The space is open!

⁷⁰ For example, Kendra T. Field, The Privilege of Family History, in: *American Historical Review* 127, 2 (2022), pp. 600-633.

⁷¹ On internationalisation and broad differentiation see for example, Silvia Sovič, Pat Thane and Pier Paolo Viazzo (eds), *The History of Families and Households: Comparative European Dimensions*, Leiden/Boston, 2016; Mary Jo Maynes and Ann Waltner, *The Family: A World History*, Oxford, 2012.

⁷² Tanner, *Historische Anthropologie zur Einführung*, pp. 202-203.

⁷³ Bruno Latour, *Reassembling the Social. An Introduction to Actor-Network-Theory*, Oxford, 2005; Philippe Descola, *Beyond Nature and Culture*, Chicago, 2013.

⁷⁴ *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Wirtschafts- und Sozialgeschichte / Annuaire suisse d’histoire économique et sociale* 32 (2017).

La historia de la familia como campo de investigación nació a principios de los años sesenta del siglo xx y desde entonces ha experimentado una importante evolución que ha modificado tanto su contenido como su orientación. Esta obra colectiva ofrece un balance de este ámbito de estudio en España y en varios países europeos incidiendo en sus particulares avances, así como en la riqueza y en la diversidad de sus enfoques actuales. Con la intención de fomentar el intercambio de planteamientos y de la transmisión de conocimientos referidos a diferentes territorios, el libro presenta una amplia muestra de experiencias de investigación entre los siglos xvi y xix que constituyen una excelente expresión del desarrollo de la historia social en Europa a partir de los estudios de historia de la familia. La mayor atención prestada a la dimensión social de los fenómenos que concurren en ella ha supuesto multiplicar su potencialidad para la explicación y comprensión de las sociedades del pasado, contribuyendo de manera decisiva a la renovación y al impulso de nuevas formas de hacer historia dentro del panorama historiográfico internacional.

