

Abstracts

Valérie Feschet, The Surname in Western Europe. Liberty, Equality and Paternity in Legal Systems in the Twenty-First Century

This article examines the different systems of surname transposal in Western Europe. The analysis focuses on the differences between Northern and Southern Europe (single surnames *vs.* double surnames), on the freedom of use, the selection criteria, and on the new symbolic hierarchy of patronymic, matronymic and double names. Particular attention is paid to the tension between male and female in contemporary systems compared to traditional naming systems and to the paradoxes of equality and freedom, particularly in the context of homosexual families who may have very limited choices in the process of re-naming.

Cet article examine les différents systèmes de transmission du nom de famille en Europe occidentale. L'analyse porte sur les oppositions Nord/Sud (noms simples/doubles noms), sur les critères de choix engendrés par la libération des usages, sur le nouvel ordre symbolique des patronymes, matronymes et double nom. Une attention particulière est portée sur la mise en tension du masculin et du féminin dans les systèmes contemporains comme dans les systèmes traditionnels ainsi que sur les paradoxes de l'égalité et de la liberté par rapport aux processus de re-nomination qui se heurtent parfois à des libertés très mesurés, notamment dans le cadre des familles homosexuelles.

Gérard Delille, Names and Lineages. A South Italian Village and its Genealogists (1572–1730)

In 1572, the archpriest at Casalnuova (today Manduria) in the south of Italy began to collect genealogical information of every family of the village. The extant records, his “Libro mango”, are a unique source.

Generally, the keeping of family books was demanded by the Council of Trent (1545–1563). The documentation of births and marriages was an attempt to control the laity, in particular aimed at enforcing the canonical incest legislation. According to Church law, marriages within the same lineage were prohibited, yet marriages within

the same clan (*casata* or house) were very common. Despite considerable effort, the clergy often failed to record correctly the complex family relations of their flock. Sharing the same family name did not always imply actual relationship, as the high ratio of homonymous yet unrelated families in the village shows. Genealogical investigations were further complicated by sobriquets which sometimes changed into surnames. Nonetheless, the records of these clerical genealogists are an invaluable source for modern scholarship researching the history of the family.

Martha Keil Hendl, Suessel, Putzlein. Name and Gender in Late Medieval Jewish History in Austria

The article deals with Jewish Medieval names as indicators of religious identity, geographical origin and migration, and, for the main part, of gender roles and gender attributions.

For Jewish men and women in the Askenazic Middle Ages, the giving of names created difference and hierarchy. Although both men and women had and still have a Hebrew, 'sacred' name and an additional vernacular, personal name, their function is totally different. The Hebrew name is written in every official document and on the gravestone, but for men it is also a medium of honour and prestige: By it they are called to the Tora reading at the services and at other solemn occasions in the public space of the synagogue. Women were excluded from most of the powerful official and religious activities and for this reason the sacred names of women are rarely preserved.

Jewish parents could use a German derivative, a diminutive form or the German translation of their Hebrew name as their children's personal name, but they also chose German names, usually pet names, totally independent of the Hebrew one. Many men but almost no women had additional names, mostly the patronymic, the place of origin or residence, their profession or a characteristic feature. These additional names represented the personality of the owner, shaped his identity, and made him individual. The custom of using the names of mothers, wives or mothers-in-law as an additional name is a broad hint of the importance of Jewish business women in Late Medieval Austria.

Christof Rolker: "I, Anna Hartzlerin, called von Maegelsperg ..." Surname Customs and Female Identity in the Late Medieval Town

In the late medieval town, surnames had several functions, marking both the members of a particular family and property belonging to that family. The transmission of names was patrilineal. Unlike men, who normally preserved their paternal name for life, women acquired new names in marriage. Yet as I argue, wives and widows in medieval German towns like Konstanz did not drop their 'maiden name' or names acquired via

prior marriages. Rather, they had several names at their disposal and could use them to various ends. As a study of female testaments and related documents from fifteenth-century Konstanz shows, very different forms of self-designation are found in the sources, suggesting a considerable degree of individual choice. Names are highly charged symbolic goods, and it is therefore significant that the use of one family name or the other was not determined by context only. Indeed, women having accumulated two or more family names can be shown to have used the multiplicity of their names as a medium of self-fashioning.

