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Michaela Fenske (Hg.)

Alltag als Politik –
Politik im Alltag

Dimensionen des Politischen
in Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

Ein Lesebuch für Carola Lipp

LIT

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Michaela Fenske

Einleitung

Alltag als Politik – Politik im Alltag: Der Titel des vorliegenden Buches spielt auf drei Anliegen an, die für das Fach Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie bedeutsam sind. Alltag benennt zunächst Gegenstand und Blickrichtung des Faches. Er steht für die Erforschung des Gewöhnlichen, scheinbar Banalen, Nebensächlichen, Selbstverständlichen – oft ausgeführt in Form akteurszentrierter Mikrostudien in lebensweltlichen Kontexten. Alltag meint zweitens eine Arena politischer Aushandlungsprozesse. Diese Arena benannt und als Untersuchungsfeld stark gemacht zu haben, ist nicht zuletzt ein Verdienst der Zweiten Frauenbewegung. Sie machte in den 1970er und 1980er Jahren den Alltag als Ort der Aushandlung geschlechtlicher Zuschreibungen wie überhaupt von Machtverhältnissen aus. Die Politisierung des Alltags erhielt zudem durch die seinerzeit boomende Alltags- und die Protestforschung wesentliche Anstöße. Auch ihnen ging es um eine Infragestellung des bis dahin gültigen Politikverständnisses: Politik war demnach keineswegs mehr nur eine Domäne privilegierter Machthaber, sondern auch ein Aktionsfeld nichtprivilegierter Akteure. Damit wurde der Politikbegriff gewissermaßen »entstaatlicht«, und zugleich gerieten die alltäglichen Lebenswelten als zentrale Aushandlungsräume politischer Willensbildung und Praxis in den Blick. Das dritte Anliegen bezieht sich auf das Selbstverständnis des Faches Kulturanthropologie/Europäische Ethnologie, das – wie die berühmte Falkensteiner Formel von der gewünschten Beteiligung an der »Lösung sozio-kultureller Probleme« besagt – mit seinen Erkenntnissen aktiv die Politik der jeweiligen Gegenwart mit gestalten will. Damit verbunden ist eine selbstreflexive Haltung, die das

David Warren Sabean

Constructing Lineages in Imperial Germany: *eingetragene Familienvereine*

On 13 February 1902, the von Natzmer family established the articles of association for the »Familienverband Natzmer«, whose registered seat was to be in Berlin.¹ Drawn up on the letterhead of Justizrat Dr. Koffka, Rechtsanwalt with the first royal provincial court, and the notary Gundlach, Rechtsanwalt with the second royal provincial court, the association applied for official recognition through registration in the *Vereinsregister* as an incorporated society (*eingetragener Verein*). Members of the society were »all those male persons who are eligible (*berechtigt*) to carry the name Natzmer«, with the explanation in parentheses, »cousins who signed the preliminary articles of association of 13 February 1902«. The document also established the category of »extraordinary membership«, accorded – *ohne weiteres* – to the wives and legitimate children of the ordinary members and offered the possibility of independent, unmarried, married, or widowed female members of the family to apply for extraordinary membership to the regular assembly of the family (*Familientag*), which could accept them through majority vote into the association. The assembly also could decide by majority vote on applications for new membership. The document went on to carefully delineate who could not become members: unbaptized Jews (those »who do not profess the Christian religion«) and adoptive or illegitimate children or their descendants, even when they legally had the right to carry the name »Natzmer«. But if illegitimate children were legitimized through the subsequent marriage of their

¹ Landesarchiv: *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26125: *Familienverein Natzmer*.

parents, they could be considered for membership in the relevant category of extraordinary or ordinary membership. Only the ordinary members of the association could participate in discussions at the family assembly and vote on any issues before it. On the other hand, both ordinary and extraordinary members had equal claim to assets of the association and to advice and aid in all matters relevant to the family.

Beginning in 1900, the civil law code offered the possibility of associations to register themselves with the courts (vgl. Stöber 2004; Reichert 2005; Schweyer, Waldner 2006). They had to make clear the purpose of the association, define its membership and constitution, declare the intended frequency of its meetings, and report on the election of its officers and assets. Many of the newly-registered family associations were already in existence before the possibility of registration with the authorities, and there were other kinds of societies whose purpose was to support familial cohesion, such as *Familienstiftungen*, or foundations, whose documentation is difficult to find in one place. Even after the possibility was open to register a family association, clearly many families did not find it necessary to take the extra formal step for what was already a satisfactory and lively form of family club. Many of the registered associations had the intent of accumulating significant assets to disburse within the family for various purposes, and it is perhaps that fact that encouraged them to take the extra step for legal recognition.

Registration offers the historian the possibility of finding enough documents in one place to begin to look at the phenomenon of family associations, societies, and clubs, and the files of the *eingetragene Familienvereine* frequently enough allude to earlier documents, earlier attempts at association, and earlier activities of family members to stimulate family intercourse. All this material provides insight into the practical construction of family cohesion, models and representations of kinship, and the motives and desires of people to locate and associate in new ways with their dispersed kin. A great deal more research is necessary before definite conclusions can be reached, but it appears that the drive towards founding *Familienvereine* became widespread in the 1870s, and they continued to proliferate in the following decades. The form of association was almost always the same and that is what I want to document in this paper—namely, gathering together

descendants from a particular ancestor or group of ancestors defined in terms of a male lineage. This has to be seen in the context of the dynamics of kin reciprocities during the nineteenth century. It has become clear now that at least throughout property holding classes, from peasant proprietors to aristocratic landholders, military officers, and officials, forms of marriage developed from the mid eighteenth century, lasting to World War I, that brought families repeatedly into intimate contact with each other (see the overview by David Warren Sabean and Simon Teuscher 2007). One of the forms – but only one – was characterized by first and second – and even, third – cousin marriage, a practice that lay behind the construction of particular milieus. While there are many indications in the literature of this practice, the only carefully constructed, detailed study for one milieu has been done by the anthropologist Adam Kuper for the English Darwin-Wedgwood families (2009). What such alliances and inter- and intragenerational exchanges did was to create a lively set of reciprocities among particular generations of uncles and aunts and nephews and nieces, cousins, and affinal kin. On the other hand, it appears that continuous chains of exchange also presumed some kind of structure to the exchanging parties – and that was provided by the construction of groups represented by male descent (cf. Sabean 1998: ch. 22–3). It is this construction that I want to explore in this essay.

In the example of the Natzmer family that opens the analysis, the family was to gather around the *name*. That ensured in the first place that membership came exclusively through male descent. Behind the insistence on the name, however, was something else. If adoptees were excluded, then it was clear that some principle of purity of the line, of blood, of genetic substance was inherently crucial for a sense of belonging. And the problem of illegitimacy presented a slightly different take on the problem. For a daughter to produce an illegitimate child might well entail succession to the family name through a female, a son, for example, carrying the Natzmer name of the mother. This would violate the principle of substance inherited through males alone. By contrast, the illegitimate child of a male Natzmer might well carry the name of the mother, and although by biological heredity it would follow the principle of male descent would endanger the purity of the name.

In 1914, the »German Family Genest Registered Society« was established in Berlin by twenty-five members from thirteen different cities.² Their group included professors, building officers, engineers, military officers, lawyers, merchants, teachers, and insurance adjustors. Eligible members of the Society were those adults, both male and female, who could be shown to descend in the male line (*im Mannesstamme*) from Imer Genêt (deceased 15 July 1690 at Bergholtz i. U.) and whose ancestors had their permanent residence in Hanre in 1700 in the current territory of the German Reich. Application for membership had to be accompanied by documentation presented to the officers of the Society or, by appeal, to the Family Assembly. Wives of members could also join the Society. The principles of membership for this bourgeois family are similar to those of the aristocratic von Natzmers. The only women who could belong were those who once or currently carried the family name. In each generation, the females fell out of the line of Descent—succession through a mother did not count. Reciprocally, women who married in, of course, changed their names and now for the duration of their lives, so long as they did not once again marry out, changing the name again, were eligible for inclusion. But for all the members of the Society there were grounds for exclusion – and this had to do with the name once again. Anyone who lost civil honor through a legal judgment for criminal activity, was dismissed from office or status for dishonorable action, damaged members or the name of the family through improper behavior, was incapable before a proposed marriage of proving to the family officers that there were no hygienic objections, most grossly violated race feeling by the choice of a wife, or did not pay dues for three years in a row could be relegated from the Society. Indeed the scruples for health or marrying a Jew continued to be valid for descendants and could lead to exclusion for further generations: after twenty-five years reentry for descendants could be taken up again.

The peasant, artisan, and petit-bourgeois family of Zerrenner, who founded a *Familienverein* in 1938 after family members had been carrying on genealogical investigations since 1888, leading to publication of a family chronicle in 1912, put considerable energy into locating its members

² Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26305: *Familienverein Genest*.

across the German Reich.³ But they had a problem narrowing down just who belonged: the name had variant spellings and it originated wherever mining and iron smelting was located. They wanted to gather only those people who demonstrably or probably could trace their ancestors back to around 1550 in Sorbitzau in Thüringen and later to those who went on to settle in Oberfranken. Every registered *Verein* had to have an express purpose (*Zweck*), and the Zerrenners were no exception. Their goal was to distinguish themselves from other families who also received their name during the Middle Ages from occupation in mining but who followed a different line of descent (*Abstammung*). In fact, the name of this society was meant to make the distinction up front: »Sippenverband der Familie Zerrenner aus der Sorbitzau«. They thought that Berlin would make a good seat for the Society because of the current spread of the descendants all over the German Reich. And as usual the members were adults who carried the name.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, it was, of course, a widespread practice to establish family firms, large and small. Down the generations, various firms grew, while family members proliferated, establishing a complex set of rights to family property, and in those instances where substantial enterprises developed, they could act as centripetal forces to pull in in one way or another ever larger numbers of descendants. On the other hand, families might just as well fission, developing separate occupational and entrepreneurial trajectories. Different branches of the same lineage often allied with the same families in marriage, and they often acted as patrons for each other or as members of the same network. By mid century and increasingly throughout the later decades of the century, families tried to develop strategies for continuing older experiences of intimacy or finding new ways to implicate dispersed relatives in each other's concerns. The new forms of communication, together with the rise of a tourist industry, provided the possibility of relatively easy gatherings for family anniversaries and the like and for periodic festivals. The Siemens family, for example, after the 1860s took over entire hotels in the Hartz Mountains every three years or so (see Sabean forthcoming). What seems so impressive is

³ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 43795: *Familienverein Zerrenner*.

the ever greater »need« to reinvigorate relations among families that burgeoned with each generation. And in the wake of this trend, many other families who had not felt the need before began to follow suit. It may be that the Zerrenner family was caught up in Nazi ideology in the 1930s, leading to the founding of the *Familienverein* in 1938, but they had been at the task of developing an identity at least since the 1880s. In general, the problem was to find some kind of a base line, some original ancestor or localized name group from which to locate all the living heirs – to the name or to the male substance.

In 1821, the Zachariae family established their *Verband*, with the specification of the branch (*Stamm*) of the family that had come from Schönstedt.⁴ The express purpose was to create a lively interchange among living members of the family by locating and writing up all those who were dead. Here they began with the ancestor: members were all adult, male, legitimate offspring of the Superintendent Magister Christoph Zachariae, born in Schönstedt near Langensalza in 1598 and died in Grafentonna near Gotha in 1669 – so long as they carried the surname. And all spouses and widows, so long as they also carried the name could be members. Further, all adult married daughters even if they had lost the name through marriage could apply to continue membership, although it went without saying that their children would not be able to follow them. Or did it? There seems to have been a problem with the Zachariae, Stamm Schönstedt, namely, that they were not a very large group. They were worried that the male line might die out, in which case the women who remained would have to decide if the *Verband* might be able to continue. After all, they hoped to amass considerable assets through dues and donations from family members. Rather hopefully, but without a great deal of clarity on the issue, the Zachariae men provided that the Society resources could be transferred to the new association that the surviving women might establish – but only so long as the Zachariae name could be included.

The von Wietersheim family in 1902 spelled out expressly how to think about the lineage, or what they called the »Von Wietersheim'sche

⁴ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26509: *Familienverein Zachariae, Stamm Schönstedt*.

Geschlechts-Vereinigung«.⁵ It was to include anyone whose »fathers legally and according to blood (*Blut*) really are of Wietersheim descent (*Gebürt*)«. »Anyone adopted or who for any other reason carries this name (for example children born out of wedlock) or has it as a nickname do not, along with their descendants, belong.« And they created two classes of members on different levels. Level 1 included the voting members – just the adult men. Level 2 included the young men, women, girls, and children. Women who marry out into other lineages (*Geschlechter*), unless they expressly wish to stay members and continue to work for the interests of this lineage, automatically leave. Otherwise they only return upon divorce and assuming the von Wietersheim name again. Widows and divorced wives of von Wietersheim men belong to the lineage so long as they continue to carry the name of the husband.

Any reader going through the available records from the *Vereinsregister* cannot help seeing how much was centered on the *name*. One of the express purposes of the »Uradliger Geschlechtsverband der Freiherrn v. Troschke« was to prevent the development of a »bogus nobility (*Scheinadel*) with our name«. ⁶ The Schmeling *Familienverband* included three branches, von Schmeling, von Schmeling-Diringshofen, and Blecken von Schmeling.⁷ Members were any man or woman who carried any one of these names legally. The *Geschlechtsverein* was first founded in 1884, and now in 1900, that and the family foundation were being brought under one institution. At the meeting to set up the Society, someone proposed that the »Damen« be given the right to vote, but that was turned down by a hefty majority – there was to be no fooling around with the principle of male lineage. The von Schlieffens in 1910 opened membership to their *Verein* to adult male descendants of Johann Leo von Schlieffen (1719–1777), born from Christian marriages celebrated in the Church, and who carry the name of Grafen von Schlieffen.⁸ Threatened with exclusion was

⁵ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 28789: *Familienverein von Wietersheim*.

⁶ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 52742: *Familienverein Troschke*.

⁷ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26098: *Familienverein Schmeling*.

⁸ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26226: *Familienverein von Schlieffen*.

anyone who carried on a dishonorable life or made himself guilty of a dishonorable activity or otherwise through his behavior damaged the respect of the family and its name. In 1932, with a change of the by-laws, the Society expressly excluded those female members who married and gave up the family name. In 1936, they included wives who carried the name. The von Rieben family, officers and forest administrators, in 1920 also included as possible member those who carried the name – marriage out and loss of name implied without special dispensation loss of membership.⁹ In 1909, the »von Rappard e. V.« by-laws specified the name as criterion for membership.¹⁰ But women who have given up the name through marriage could be extraordinary members, although they could not be members of the family council (the officers of the Society) nor could they vote at the family assembly. In this case, the by-laws allowed for membership of adoptive and illegitimate children by a special vote of the assembly. The »Ranzauscher Familien-Verein« included members of the lineages of the Herren von Rantzau, the Herren von Rantzau-Horst, the Grafen zu Rantzau, the Grafen von Ranzow, the Grafen von Brockdorff-Rantzau, and the Lehns-Grafen von Rantzau who could demonstrate the right to have one of these names.¹¹ This family, composed of nine branches, decided in 1905 for that year not to send a telegram of homage to the emperor but to give the vote to any of the »Damen« over 21 whose dues were paid up – whether the two acts were connected cannot be surmised from the text. In 1921, the von Quast family dissolved the *Familienverband* from 1881 and registered the new *Verein*.¹² Members could be those of legitimate birth who had the right to carry the name Quast – but they had to be pure from Jewish blood: »This is reckoned as proven if not more than 1/8 Jewish blood is present.« Membership ends if one gives up the noble name, marries a Jewess, (for a female member) marries into another family, or is legally incapacitated. In 1929, the by-laws were amended to exclude anyone with a dishonorable lifestyle that harms the reputation of the family and its name.

⁹ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26477: *Vereinsregister Rieben*.

¹⁰ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26199: *Rappard Familienverband*.

¹¹ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26134: *Familienverein Rantzau*.

¹² Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26491: *Familienverein von Quast*.

The von Natzmer family – which we began with – in 1927 changed the by-laws to put special stress on the family archive.¹³ Up to then, its chief task was celebratory, to gather facts and information about the family and to preserve its documents. But now the archivist was charged with gathering information about those persons who without being members of the *Verband* can call themselves »von Natzmer.« With the aid of the officers of the Society, he was to intervene whenever »our name« is misused. The »Familienverband der Grafen und Herren von Kalckreuth« pronounced as its intended purpose to advance the interests and reputation of the family, and once again membership was through the name.¹⁴ The bourgeois family of Hosemann was just as concerned with the name: its members were the direct descendants of the master mason Johann Friedrich Hosemann who carry the name or did so up until marriage.¹⁵ As long as widows carry the name, they too can belong. One loses membership by losing the name through remarriage. At a crisis meeting in 1938, it was revealed that there were severe problems with the genealogy, and the members could not be traced to a single ancestor – at least the documents were not there to do so. The members decided to accept everyone who could prove descent from someone who carried the name Hosemann. The von Horn family established their registered Society in 1902, but for many years they were concerned with the misuse of their name.¹⁶ By 1930, the meeting was mostly concerned with protection of their name. All members were asked to take on the responsibility to protect it, and it was noted that current law allowed them to intervene successfully when there was such misuse – »as with adoption etc.« In 1941, an addition to the by-laws read that the purpose of the Society was »to protect the common name from dishonor, to guarantee and seek its inviolability, so that its good reputation and ancient fame will be protected and renewed through the contribution of each of its members in selfless service to the Volk and state«. The »Gräfllich und

¹³ *Familienverein Natzmer*.

¹⁴ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 28829: *Familienverein von Kalckreuth*.

¹⁵ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26562: *Familienverein Hosemann*.

¹⁶ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. (failed to note): *Familienverein von Horn*.

Freiherrlich Grote'schen Familien Verband« (1932) was concerned with the keeping the name and reputation of the family pure.¹⁷ There too membership for women ended when they took another name through marriage. The Bieler family described their purpose to be to stimulate all their members to increase the reputation of the name.¹⁸ At the family meeting in 1928, members discussed and approved the application of a woman who wanted to add her birth name (Bieler) to her married name.

It is helpful to put the lineage concept that one finds in all of these German family associations in relief. In the Charlottenburg *Vereinsregister*, there is one Verein registered for a Jewish family from 1902, revising an earlier association from 1892.¹⁹ Many of the same concerns about family reputation and exclusion for dishonorable action are to be found in the »Satzungen des Familienvereins »Achdus« (Einigkeit)«. But the very name of the association contrasts with the German interest in the family name. Here the name itself is made up for the occasion and signifies the unity of families that indeed have something in common but are not characterized by pure blood lineages. Indeed, the union points more to the future than the past: its intended purpose was to support the family interests of the set of people who established it and to encourage its members in their feelings of family solidarity and to improve their social positions – but with an eye to their own descendants. If the Christian German family associations spoke mostly of their position as descendants from one or more ancestors, this Jewish union thought of themselves as the ancestors to coming generations. It is interesting that they do not in their introduction dwell on the fact that the families who were setting up the *Verein* in fact had been intermarried for 200 years. That information comes from a letter of inquiry from an American in 1977, who pointed precisely to the fact that the families had been linked through marriage long before they set up the association. Another peculiarity of this association was the full membership of all descendants of the members together with their spouses, widows,

¹⁷ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 27540: *Familienverein Grote*.

¹⁸ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26579: *Familienverein Bieler und von Bieler*.

¹⁹ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26120: *Familienverein »Achdus«*.

and widowers. If in 1902, membership in the family council was restricted to men, by 1910 a change to the by-laws made it possible for women to be elected to the executive committee. While membership was strictly reserved for Jews, there was no attempt to think in terms of male lineages – all descendants, male and female could belong to the Society.

If membership in most of the family associations was determined by principles of male lineage and concern for the reputation of the family name, that by no means describes the overall purposes of these institutions nor their practical activities. Beyond reputation, respect, and honor – the face to the outside world – they were concerned with developing familial solidarity through lively exchanges and the development of useful networks. They were very much concerned with the possibility that the elderly, especially older spinsters and widows, would fall on hard times – and that was often spoken of in terms of the reputation of the family. They should be helped to maintain a livelihood suitable to their status. On the other hand, the *Vereine* were also concerned with the education and placing of the young – through financial support for schooling and through the concern of the larger kinship group to help them strategically at crucial points during their schooling and search for employment.

A good example of the stated purpose of a *Familienverein* is provided by the »Satzungen des Verbandes der Familie Prümers« from 8 January 1912.²⁰ The by-laws for this bourgeois family date from 8 January 1912. The intended purpose of the association was five-fold: 1) to strengthen family awareness; 2) to clear up and continue the family genealogy and history and develop a family archive; 3) to hold periodic family gatherings (*Familientage*); to support family members with advice and aid, without any family members having legal claims to it; to resolve disputes among family members. Rodgero Prümers had taken the initiative to get everyone together to establish the »Familienverein Prümers«, sending out a printed invitation from his residence in Posen. The text offers a good summary of the concerns voiced in most of the documentation from the *Vereinsregister*. »Since the world is so small«, he wrote, »and the traces of the individual so hard to find, it is now a good idea for those linked by the band of blood

²⁰ Landesarchiv Berlin. *Vereinsregister* B Rep. 042, Nr. 26261: *Familienverein Prümers*.

to hold together in joy and sorrow«. He was well aware that family members were now »strewn in every direction«, and he had given a great deal of thought to ways to bring them all back in contact with each other. He was sending his invitation out to those he called the »Stammesangehörigen (members of the lineage, agnatic kin)«. He pointed out that solidarity among them was breaking down as people lost contact with each other. »Our family, which for many centuries pursued its existence (*ihr Dasein fortführte*) in a quiet rural town, is torn apart by the demands of modernity. One cousin now hardly knows another.« The point of a gathering in Berlin would be to keep the individual members of »our family« in closer contact with one another. There is a report in the file of documents from a family assembly in 1925. Altogether 170 family members gathered in the place where the family originally came from, and they all went off to visit the family farm. The several days offered various activities, including singing, listening to a lecture on the family history and a notice about family members who had died, receiving a report on the family archive, viewing various old documents, and visiting the cemetery. By 1937, the officers were able to report that with all the financial support of the family, they had been able to publish a complete genealogy back to 1650.

The file on the Natzmer *Familienverband* is particularly rich and takes up most of the matters that are to be found in the complete set of files.²¹ The stated purpose of the association was similar to that of the Prümers family: »To awaken and stimulate family feeling in order to further the prosperity and development of the lineage (*Geschlecht*).« This was to be accomplished by supporting the mutual, personal rapprochement (*Annäherung*) of relatives at family assemblies; maintaining the family history and collecting family memorials and making sure that they were properly maintained, even when they were not in the possession of members but are in the hands of the state, church, or communities; documenting the civil status of the members of the *Verband* who had the right to call themselves »von Natzmer« and carry the family coat of arms; gathering all kinds of information by the family officers about mutual family matters; and collecting and distributing common assets of the association.

²¹ *Familienverein Natzmer.*

The articles of association actually called for considerable intervention into the individual activities of family members. The officers had the task of administering the assets and to admonish and caution whenever a member encumbered himself with debts or gambled, carried on scandalously, or instigated unrest in the family. They also had the task of advising and helping individuals as well as the collectivity. They were charged with expelling anyone who persisted in not conforming to the values and customs of the *Verband*. Apparently there was also concern that the *Familienverband* might get into legal disputes (for example, they were constantly monitoring the use of the family name), and so the officers were also charged with representing the association in court. The presiding officer was to appoint a secretary, a financial officer, and an archivist from among other officers. The secretary was responsible for keeping a record of all family events. Every member was obliged to report all important events from his household: education, matriculation, completion of exams, entrance into public service, travels, awards and distinctions, changes of address, and entrepreneurial activity. The secretary was to send out forms with rubrics to fill in the life history of each family members. This information was to be filed in a family book along with the genealogy. The archivist had the task of ascertaining historical facts, finding documents, caring for family heirlooms, and keeping the archives in good order. At the moment the archive was in the hands of one particular cousin. Everyone was to send along to him documents they were willing to give up. The hope was to transfer the archive as soon as possible to an estate secure in the hands of the family. In the event that family members were not willing to part with documents, books, and papers dealing with family history, they were to send a list of the contents to the archives. Every member was to send in a list of portraits, busts, medallions, medals, jewelry, and furniture that are of worth to the family. And every adult member was also to send a portrait to the archive. Members should also send reports of interesting experiences, trips, descriptions of cultural matters, war diaries, or any documents relating to family history. And it was also possible to send sealed documents to be opened only after death. Whenever one broke up a household, it should be considered if there were objects interesting for the family. The members were to accept the moral obligation to maintain any objects that might have value for the whole family. If someone needed to sell

something, it should first be offered to family members or to the association to purchase it. This was especially important for land and buildings. And everyone should be on the watch for literary publications by non family members that might touch on family matters, so that if necessary the family could comment. An important function of the archive was to be able to document the civil status of any member of the family at any moment. Therefore, members were to send in within six months all news of births, marriages, and deaths and all such information of ancestors, notarized if possible. Whenever someone married a »Dame« who is not a member of a lineage that up to now is allied with the von Natzmers, the husband was obligated to report in detail over her family, and it would be particularly useful if there was a printed history. Family heads should report on all individuals who are not members but who have the right to carry the family name. Every family member has the right to look into the archive. At the 1931 meeting of the family, it was determined that an annual family newspaper should be published. The members present heard a lecture: »The Development of the Family: Property and Occupation.«

There are, of course, many ways of thinking genealogically. In the past several decades as evolutionary biology has impressed a popular understanding of genetics upon people, many have been drawing up genealogies that look like a pyramid, with the point focusing on the individual concerned. Medical practitioners routinely ask people for the medical histories of their past relatives in order to ascertain if certain diseases run in the family. And there are even popular understandings of personal identity as composed of the sum total of genes »poured« into their particular selves. Relatives, in this pursuit, proliferate backwards in time, and the representation is more or less a search for all the people who have contributed genetic material to a person. Siblings and aunts and uncles are interesting in this genealogical representation in so far as they can offer clues to the stream of genes down to the individual. By contrast, genealogical pursuit in the early modern period was closely tied to dynastic or lineage concerns that were predominantly or rationally defined by the flow of property or the succession of rights and offices from father to one (usually the eldest) son. This meant a search in the past for only the ancestors relevant to status, property, or prestige. The form of genealogical pursuit that emerged in the course of the nineteenth century

implied not so much the question of all those ancestors who contributed to a person's genetic substance nor those selected for relevance to status, but rather it was a pursuit to find all those people who were linked together by descending from a particular individual. Proliferation in this representation was downwards, and the apex of the pyramid was in the past, back where the lineage began. This search had significant social purpose and came precisely as relationships that had worked well in the past began to weaken with distance as generation succeeded generation. Although the principles of selection had to do with agnatic heredity, the women of each generation, daughters and wives and widows usually remained active members of a *Familienverein*. Their work, of course, was crucial for planning and providing for family festivals and meetings. And they came to play an increasingly crucial role in arranging marriages and for excluding unsuitable marriage candidates from social intercourse (see Sabean 1998: ch. 23). The study of the »official« papers of *Familienvereine* is only a first step in investigating kinship dynamics in Imperial Germany. Some of the rich archives that these associations assisted in putting together would offer considerable data for understanding the practices of kinship interchange and the workings of the agnatic lineages they were so concerned to construct.

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