TOBIAS
EHRENBOLD
URS
HAFNER

Stähelin
Stähelin
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Stehelin

A
BASEL
FAMILY
SINCE
1520

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PREFACE TO THE ENGLISH EDITION

Throughout time, although especially in recent epochs of the family's history, single Stahelins have left Basel (or their homelands) and established residency all over the world, where they build new circles of life. Nevertheless, a large part of the family has remained in Basel and its greater surroundings — where the family has lived in an uninterrupted timeline since 1520 — and in all probability will continue to do so. In most cases, the feeling of belonging to the family (of close family ties) has remained between those who stayed and those who left, and this has been passed down from generation to generation even if, over time, some personal relationships grew looser, or ended entirely.

The recording of this family history, then, serves not only historical interests and the interests of understanding where we come from, but also to maintain and strengthen the awareness of belonging to a common family. This aspect is particularly important nowadays because, in the course of modern globalization, families are increasingly scattered all over the world and direct contact with relatives is decreasing.

This development brings with it the fact that the members of this family no longer all speak a single language. The editors thus decided that in addition to the German edition they would commission one in the English language, that is, in the "world language" that can be assumed to be understood today and in the future by all interested readers. So that the English version is available to all members of the family at any time and from any location, it has been published on the family's own electronic platform and may be downloaded from there at any time. Should a need for a print version of the English edition later arise, that book can be created on this basis.

The English translation of the German version was completed by Dr. Rebecca Schuman of Oregon, USA, who holds the Ph.D. in German from the University of California-Irvine and works as a private translator and professor *pro tempore* of European literature at the University of Oregon. She endeavored to preserve both the original authors' spirit and content in the English edition. The editors wish to thank Rebecca for her careful translation and for her precise and timely work.

The English edition was edited with great rigor by Gavin Bingham of Basel. He took particular care to make local expressions, and events likely unknown to those unfamiliar with the history and realities of Basel, understandable to English-speaking readers.

As he paged through this family history, Gavin found that the German edition of the book required supplementary knowledge to be fully understood, knowledge usually lacking in a reader who is not familiar with Basel's history from personal experience. As a newcomer from abroad, he has experienced for himself how difficult it is to gain access to the inner workings of Basel culture if one lacks this knowledge. Therefore, he agreed to supplement the English translation with a Foreword, entitled "Basel in the Age of the Stähelins," that supplies for the English-language reader the historical and cultural background against which the family story takes place. The editors thank Gavin for his editing, and especially for his welcome contribution to a better understanding of Basel. His portrait is an asset.

Gavin Bingham studied philosophy, political science and economics at Yale and Oxford, and then worked in administration in both the public and private sectors. In 1985 he came to

Basel as a high ranking official for a large international institution. Since then he has lived in the city center. Among his many areas of interest is the history of Basel.

To celebrate the 500th anniversary of Hans Stehelin's Basel citizenship, the Board of Directors and the Publication Commission have commissioned this anniversary book, in German as well as the English translation, for the great global family. May the work deepen the understanding of our own origins, strengthen togetherness across all borders and encourage everyone to make their contribution to the present and future history of our family.

For the Board of Directors: Benjamin Stähelin; *for the Publication Commission:* David Staehelin, Gaudenz Staehelin, Johannes Staehelin, Katharina Staehelin, Luzius Staehelin, Martha Stähelin, Simone Forcart-Staehelin

PREFACE TO THE GERMAN EDITION

Stähelin, Staehelin, Stehelin: A 500th Anniversary Commemorative Volume. This could also be the title of the book that follows. But we didn't use that title, because this is not actually a commemorative volume. The anniversary is simply the occasion to print it. The content of this book is by no means a hagiography with the sole purpose of celebrating the family's great figures and deeds, situating the family in Basel in a special way, or vaunting its positive characteristics or values.

This is not what it's about. So, then, what is it about?

It's starting point is, indeed, an anniversary: in 1520, five hundred years ago, an immigrant from neighboring Germany named Hans Stehelin received citizenship in the city of Basel. The genealogy points to him as *Stammvater,* or progenitor, of the family tree (whose construction will soon be explained in greater detail) of the old Basel family composed of the bearers of the name Stähelin, Staehelin and Stehelin, who today live around the entire world. And it is indeed the "family Board of Directors" that has decided to celebrate this 500th anniversary with a publication and in doing so endow it with a special meaning. Anniversaries should be celebrated, yes. But they can also be used as an occasion to take on a new perspective, to encourage the joy of critical examination of traditions, and thus to arouse curiosity about the history on which the anniversary is based and its connections with contemporary events.

Achieving these goals requires a strong foundation in rigorous research of extensive documents and historical sources, such as the Stähelin-Staehelin-Stehelin family history first published by Felix Stähelin in 1903, which continues to be updated today and is available in the Basel State Archives. It is also necessary to carry out a neutral, scientifically-based, funded interaction with these sources. For this task we hired two professional historians independent from the family, Tobias Ehrenbold and Urs Hafner, and endowed them with the project of creating a family history from the perspective of the year 2020, using the foundation of academic historiographic research.

What results is a work that tells the story of the family, traced along contours that mirror current events. As such, the reader learns a great deal about the family, but also much worth knowing about Basel and numerous interesting facts about socio-historical processes. In addition, the authors determine the areas in which family members actively and productively absorbed the current trends and sometimes also helped to shape them.

A place in the cultural history of Basel was not something that arose by itself; this was the work of the Stähelins' many businesspeople and entrepreneurs, whose success and failure was closely linked to the family members' migration. For the authors, it was also a matter of course to include some family members who were left out of the family historiography (such as the family tree), which includes both family outcasts and many women!

In this way, the book that follows here is not a family history. It is, rather, the story *of* a family that spans a large period of history. An historical representation that traces political, social and ideological developments, both in the small sphere of the city of Basel and on the international level. In the genre of family historiography it is unique and innovative, and this was made possible by the authors' broad knowledge in their field.

The necessary legal and financial framework for this project was provided by the Stähelin Family Fund Foundation; individual family members also supported the project. The board of the Foundation handed over the project support to a publication Commission composed of family members. This Commission was focused on choosing the authors, the review and maintenance of the adherence to both time and budget constraints, and the

communication with Christoph Merian Verlag, the publisher. The editors did not give the authors any content-related specifications, and the family did not introduce any corrections or reservations. The authors are solely responsible for the content and jointly vouch for the entire text. The book is not intended solely for the purview of the family, but rather for anyone who has an interest in Basel, family history, 500 years of socio-historical and socio-cultural coalescence, migration movements, and so much more.

The authors demonstrate the diversity contained in a single family hidden behind a name (and its variants). Developing diversity under a broad Stähelin roof is what this book intends to foster, for both current and future family members. We would like to thank all those who have contributed to the success of this publication. Our special thanks go to the authors for their great work and their ability and willingness to be in open exchange with the Publication Committee. We thank Doris Tranter for the competent and careful editing. The collaboration with Christoph Merian Verlag was also productive and open. We also thank the book designers from Groenlandbasel for the fact that we can hold a beautiful and modern book in our hands.

For the Stähelin Family Fund: Benjamin Stähelin; *Publication Commission:* David Staehelin, Gaudenz Staehelin, Johannes Staehelin, Katharina Staehelin, Konrad Staehelin, Luzius Staehelin, Martha Stähelin and Simone Forcart-Staehelin

FOREWORD:

BASEL IN THE AGE OF THE STÄHELINS[1]

GAVIN BINGHAM

Unlike the metropolitan cities of Europe, Basel has never been the seat of a royal or noble family. However, it did come close. Up until the thirteenth century, kings, princes and heads of other marauding bands in Europe were of no fixed abode. They moved, with their retinues, from one place to another to stake new claims or re-affirm old ones.

The Habsburg family, which takes its name from a fortification in the canton Aargau that is a day's ride by horse from Basel, was no exception. Rudolf, a Habsburg count who was the first of his family to be elected Holy Roman Emperor, visited Basel more than thirty times. It is said that he was tempted to make it his seat, but the family ultimately chose Vienna because of opposition from the Bishop of Basel, who would have lost influence, and because of the need to stave off challenges to dominion over possessions further east.

Because Basel was never a royal capital or even the hereditary seat of a noble family, its social stratification and family hierarchies are different from what one finds in cities and countries with kings, queens and nobility or in domains ruled by princes of the Church who were able to establish a lasting lineage. To be sure, the Bishop played an important role in Basel in the first centuries of the last millennium, but the celibacy of the clergy, as well as rivalry between pro- and anti-Habsburg factions and between the Papacy and the Holy Roman Empire precluded the emergence of hereditary temporal families in Basel similar to those that arose in Italy.

It was trade and commerce, nurtured and governed by the guilds, that gave rise to the social, political and economic hierarchy in Basel. In the absence of a royal court and local nobility, the bourgeoisie or patriciate became the city's highest social order. The lack of life at court did not prevent Basel's merchant class from emulating the culture and customs of the nobility elsewhere in Europe. This was reflected in the architecture of Basel's patrician homes, the adoption of coats of arms and the exploration of ancestry, particularly in periods when historicism was in vogue as in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The elaborate family trees prepared by the Stähelins and other Basel families in this period are tokens of this penchant.

Several specific features of Basel's place in the European landscape shaped life in the city and the lives of the families that lived there. The first is its size and its attitude towards expansion. Although Basel was the largest city in Switzerland at the time this book starts, and for much of the period it covers, Basel was small by comparison with other European cities. With a population of at most 20,000 (of which only 12,000 were citizens), it was dwarfed by metropolises such as Paris, Milan, Naples, Venice, Amsterdam, London, Brussels and Bruges. These cities were five to ten times larger and culturally far more diverse. London had four German churches in 1700, and it is safe to say that it had more German speakers than Basel had citizens.

Apart from being relatively small, the population remained constant or even fell. From the latter part of the sixteenth century until well into the nineteenth, Basel had more restrictive practices towards granting citizenship than other city-states. With a

small pool of prospective mates, very little new blood and social strictures on marrying outside of one's caste, there was a far larger amount of intermarriage over a far longer time than in many other cities. The current volume illustrates what this meant for one Basel family. The story would be similar for others.

Its size, stability and location outside the political currents that buffeted other European cities meant Basel was spared the ravages of war for more than a millennium. The last time the city was pillaged was on January 21, 917, when what has been termed a "Hungarian horde" sacked and burned the city. Basel may have been destroyed by an earthquake in 1356, but it was never again despoiled by invading armies. Of course, wars were waged nearby, sometimes even just beyond the city walls, as in 1444 during the Hundred Years' War or during the Thirty Years' War when Oberwil, a village that is now a Basel suburb, was sacked.

There were also episodes of tension and bloodshed, such as that of 1833 described in the pages that follow when, through an atypical reluctance to find a compromise on an arrangement that would have provided a suitable balance between rural and urban interests, the canton was split in two. Even the family progenitor's brief military escapade ended with his side (the Protestants) sitting down with their foes (the Catholics) for a bowl of soup, with each side bringing different ingredients. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that there are no noteworthy military figures in the Stähelin family or, indeed, in any of the other old, established Basel families. Nor is it surprising that there are so many merchants and traders. The citizens of Basel were able to continue their business operations during European wars despite strictures and blockades, sometimes profiting from trade with the warring powers.

Basel's studied or serendipitous success in remaining outside military conflict also contributed significantly to the establishment of Switzerland's much-vaunted neutrality. The cantons that made up early Switzerland were anything but neutral. The agreements that bound them together were military pacts of mutual defense, and the members of the "eternal alliance" used military means to expand their territory from the 13th to the beginning of the 16th century. In fact, one of the reasons that Basel choose to join the Swiss confederacy in 1501 was its reputation

for the ability to marshal a formidable fighting force. It was only in 1515 that this reputation was tarnished when the forces of Swiss Confederation (including at least 600 soldiers from Basel) were defeated in a battle outside Milan against Francois I, the French king who provided lavish patronage for Leonardo da Vinci. The non-aggression provisions in the treaty ending the conflict are often seen as the origin of Swiss neutrality.

A little more than a century later, the Mayor of Basel (Magdalena Stähelin's father-in-law, Johann Rudolf Wettstein) succeeded in securing recognition for Switzerland's full sovereignty and independence from the Holy Roman Empire. This occurred in connection with the negotiation of the treaties ending the Thirty Years' War. This was quite an achievement in view of the fact that Wettstein left for the negotiations without a mandate to represent Switzerland, but rather only Basel, Zurich and a few other Protestant cantons. Swiss neutrality was cemented in 1815 at the Congress of Vienna.

Peace, prosperity and pragmatism shaped life in Basel. The latter helped foster a balance in a multipolar community where competition and cooperation among different interests needed in roughly equal measure. Checks and balances are associated with the political structures that emerged from the Enlightenment, and Switzerland's federal structure and bicameral parliament are often said to have been influenced by the US model. However, the pragmatic approach to taking competing interests into account predates by a number of centuries the Enlightenment and the American constitution. The first reference to a council *(concilium* in the Latin text) in Basel dates from 1185. It is unclear whether this was a true city council or simply an advisory body that provided counsel for the Bishop. In any case, there is documentary evidence of an autonomous city council dating from 1263. What is noteworthy is that this council and all subsequent ones were structured so as to balance a spectrum of competing interests. Both the composition of the Council and the processes for selecting members and making decisions, which varied over time, prevented the emergence of the sort of radical, corrosive bipartisanship so much in evidence today.

This book describes the practice of drawing straws (sortition) to select university professors. A similar process was once applied

to select city officials, again from a small pool of candidates drawn mostly from the old, established families. Chance determined who held which position and prevented any one family from becoming pre-eminent. Individuals accepted what fate decreed. For example, Isaak Iselin, the founder of the GGG mentioned below and the scion of a prominent Basel family who was linked by blood and marriage to other prominent Basel families, accepted for the rest of his life the fairly modest post of council clerk *(Ratsschreiber)* after fate denied him more eminent positions.

Other selection processes ensured renewal and continuity. For example, the practice of the incumbent having a say in choosing his (never her) successor was adopted in some foundations, such as the Frey-Grynaeus Institute where the Stähelins were active. The outcome was an intricate skein of checks and balances that compelled compromise. No outcome was optimal for anyone, but no outcome was completely intolerable. This led to acceptance, even tolerance, in a society where life was a repeated game.

Basel, like all cities, has been shaped over the centuries by competing belief systems and the values that they impart. The presence of the bishop's crosier on Basel's coat of arms is a sign of how important changing sets of Christian beliefs have been. Faith in the power of holy relics explains why in 922 one of Charlemagne's heirs was willing to exchange his seigneury over Basel for a single item, the Holy Lance, which some believed enabled the owner to defeat the "Hungarian hordes" a few years later.

The Reformation changed religious, social and cultural norms in Basel. Apart from a brief period of strife around 1529 that led to vandalism still evident on the Münster, the Reformation was less strident than in other Swiss cities. In Zurich for example the Reformation's most ardent spokesman, Ulrich Zwingli, was killed in battle against the Catholics. In Basel the Church's possessions were expropriated, but the monks and nuns who had already taken their vows were permitted to live out their lives in property that no longer belonged to the church.

Two factors explain the "velvet Reformation" in Basel. The first is the begrudging accommodation between church and state that had developed over the centuries. The Reformation was a further and arguably final step in a long process of the transfer

of secular power from the Bishop to the city Council, which had come to be dominated by the guilds or, more precisely, by members of families with prominent positions within the guilds.

As the temporal lord of Basel in the first three centuries of the last millennium, the Bishop enjoyed extensive rights and privileges such as the right to mint coins and the right to tax. Over time, the Council gradually appropriated these powers, at first with limitations and only temporarily. The Bishop was naturally reluctant to relinquish such privileges, but the need for money compelled him to pawn his temporal powers. In 1431 Sigismund, the Holy Roman Emperor, granted the Council the right to raise taxes. Members of the clergy were still exempt from taxation, but they became subject to it in 1488 when another Holy Emperor, Friedrich III, also a Hapsburg, granted the Council the right to tax all residents, both clerical and secular.

The second reason for the velvet Reformation was the humanistic and reform-minded thinking prevalent in Basel in the fifteen and early sixteenth centuries. The Church Council that started in Basel in 1431 and lasted almost two decades, attracted a small number of prelates and wide range of lower clergy who were well represented in the discourse and decision making.

The Council deliberated the question of ecclesiastical authority, with many arguing that it rests, or should rest, with church councils and not with the Pope. Aeneas Silvius Bartholomeus Piccolomini was one person espousing such views. He came to Basel at the age of 26 in attendance to the Bishop of Fermo and apparently enjoyed his time in the city. In addition to preparing documents arguing for limits on the Pope's authority, he wrote a somewhat scurrilous novel recounting a love affair between a man in the service of a nobleman and a well-born lady. He eventually took holy orders and was crowned pope Pius II in 1458. Understandably, he began to have misgivings about the ideas questioning papal authority in the documents he had prepared in Basel. He therefore banned his own writings, and is purportedly the only Pope ever to have done such a thing.

Piccolomini did not have misgivings about promoting learning and scholarship. Slightly more than a year after being crowned Pope, he acceded to the request from the Basel's city Council to charter a university, which was modeled on the one

in Bologna. Basel therefore joined Freiburg and a number of other cities in having a newly-founded permanent seat of higher learning. What distinguished it from many of the others was its success in attracting renowned thinkers. For example, the peripatetic humanist, Erasmus, spent more time in Basel than in other, established university towns such as Cambridge and Oxford. Paracelsus and Vesalius also number among the early scholars who were attracted to the city, though Paracelsus left peremptorily in 1528 when he failed to win a lawsuit relating to charges for the medical treatment of a canon of the church.

Basel's attractiveness to scholars was not due solely to the existence of its university, which lacked an endowment and an established reputation. It was also because of the city's strengths in the most up-to-date communications technology of the era: printing. Just as Silicon Valley lures the best and the brightest of the current generation, Basel attracted those who needed the latest communication technology. Erasmus, for example, was drawn to Basel by the high quality of the printing of Greek, so important for those who wished to use the original text of the New Testament as the basis for their commentaries. The technology required engraving, which drew artists such as Urs Graf and Hans Holbein. The printers in Basel prospered and began to collect works of art and cultural artifacts that served as the basis for the world's oldest non-princely art museum (Basel's Museum of Art).

The success of the printers can in turn be attributed to availability of hydromechanical energy provided by millstreams built decades before by various monastic orders. The Benedictine monks of St Albans, the oldest monastery in Basel founded in 1083, built watercourses that still flow today in a part of town where some members of Basel's upper crust families cluster. These families are sometimes termed the *Daig,* which some have said is a permutation of the German word for sluice *(Teich)*.

With its emphasis on reason and tolerance as opposed to faith and obedience, the Enlightenment was a natural extension of the Reformation. It is not surprising that it had adherents in Switzerland's Protestant cities. In Basel it led to the creation of two societies by members of the old established families. One was a society for the encouragement of goodness and charity (GGG)

in 1777. The other was the General Reading Society (ALG) established ten years later. What is noteworthy is not that they were established, as similar institutions were set up throughout Europe at the time in what has been termed the "age of academies," but that they have remained active and contribute significantly to well-being in Basel today.

Pietism, another outgrowth of the Reformation, had at least as great an influence in Basel as the Enlightenment. This volume documents its importance for the Stähelin family, but its impact on social behavior and attitudes in Basel was broader. Visitors to the city repeatedly remarked on it. Nietzsche, for example, who been given a chair in philology at the University in 1869 at the age of 24, noted in the introduction to his inaugural lecture that the good people of Basel only go from home to church. The Pietistic tradition frowned upon theatre and dancing as they were seen to be frivolous at best, and sinful at worst. By contrast, the performance of music and the practice of art were welcomed. The extensive patronage of the arts and the vibrancy of musical life to this day in Basel have their origins at least in part in Pietistic attitudes of more than a century ago.

Pietism had a bearing on attitudes to ostentation, but the modesty, discretion and frugality of the Baslers have deeper roots. The earliest sumptuary laws predate the Reformation, and attitudes to preserving and adding to capital are reflected in statutes governing the foundations established by Basel families centuries ago, such as the ones described here. In a small, stable, closely-knit community, there is no need to demonstrate superiority through conspicuous consumption. The Basel attitude to courtesy and frugality is illustrated by the disappearing practice of delivering notes written by hand with a discreet "zgH" *(unto trusted hands)* on the envelope. It shows that the sender, rather than reaching for a smart phone, has taken the time to write a note and to deliver it by hand. And it has the added advantage of saving the cost of a stamp.

Other idiosyncratic customs and practices developed over time in Basel. One was the choice of pink for baby boys and blue for baby girls. It is just as arbitrary as the converse, but it seems eccentric from the perspective of modern marketing. Still, there may be good reason for it. Blue was the color of innocence and,

in medieval iconography, of Mary, the mother of Christ. And before the drab colors of military uniforms became common a century or so ago, soldiers, such as the Grenadiers from Valais, were often clothed in red.

While Basel displayed considerable stability for the first three centuries covered by this book, it has changed enormously in the last 150 years. It will no doubt continue to do so before the next chronicle of the family is written. It is difficult to know what authors of a volume one century hence will think. Even today, DNA analysis permits the identification of those who are the closest to us genetically, and to trace our ancestry not just over one patrilineal line to someone who lived seventeen generations ago but to over 130,000 men and women who are as closely related to us genetically as a patrilineal progenitor who happens to bear the same name. There are myriad accounts that could be written. What is important is what is recorded and remembered. The narrative woven from strands of fact and fiction shapes our identity.

INTRODUCTION:

WHAT IS A FAMILY?

The Stähelin family, like all families, is a work of fact and fiction. The family is a fact because it exists as a body of individuals — living and dead — who bear the name or are spouses or partners of those who do. The name appears on birth, marriage and death certificates found in the archives of churches and state institutions. Letters, books, photos, houses and company records bear further witness to their lives. The names of many members of the Basel Stähelin family can be found in the family tree and the "family book," originally compiled in 1903 by the historian Felix Stähelin. This information was subsequently extended by family archivists and has now for some years been available in a digital database.

Five hundred years ago, in 1520, the "founder" of the Basel Stehelin family was granted citizenship in Basel. A craftsman by trade, he migrated from Baden in Southern Germany to a city that less than two decades earlier had joined the Swiss Confederation. Thomas Platter the Elder (1499–1582), the Valais-born Basel scholar and humanist, provides a brief account of a certain rope- and cordmaker Hans Stehelin in his autobiography. Yes, the existence of the family *Stammvater,* or progenitor or founder, has been verified. Yes, the Stähelins have existed and continue to exist. Yes, they are a fact.

The family is also a fiction in that, from today's perspective, its contours seem rather arbitrary. The family tree moves patrilineally, following the male descendants and omitting the daughters' progeny. When the women married, they and their children simply vanished from sight, perhaps to reappear in the genealogies of their husbands' families. Had the family tree followed matriarchal lines, the picture would no doubt have been rather different.

The Stähelin family book also provides an account of an origin where there is in fact none. The family *Stammpaar* ("original couple"), Hans Stehelin and Magdalena Mieg, had ancestors. They also had siblings whose descendants are blood relatives but whose names are not recorded in the book. Furthermore, none of the family's presumably numerous illegitimate children were included in the book and some of the legitimate ones may have been omitted as the birthrate in previous centuries was quite a bit higher than the information in the family book suggests was the case.

And yet the existence of the fiction is itself a family fact, which adds another layer of reality to the family history. The way that the narrative was constructed in the final decades of the 19th century, and even the fact that it was constructed at all, say something about the mentality of the people who crafted and disseminated it. After all, when enough people believe in something, it too becomes a fact, or at least an artifact.

Up until the late nineteenth century, it was fairly common for the bourgeoisie to emulate the nobility and to create layered, artfully intricate and extended family trees, ideally dating back to the Middle Ages. These items were intended to provide historical legitimacy and social standing to the contemporary members. Around 1870, the Stähelins created a magnificent specimen of such a family tree, which today lies in the State Archives of Basel.

Family trees do not and cannot reveal the full reality of any family. They do, however, beget a reality of their own. They portray the family as a patriarchal lineage that produces successful offspring: guild masters, merchants and professors — even brave knights. With bloodlines running from father to son, they reflect and propagate a form of male dominion, if not domination.

Family meant something different for the "first" Stehelins of the sixteenth century. While there were surely oral accounts, there is no extant documentation of anything like a family tree. The clan included women, and often more than one woman to a man. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, the Stähelins married many times because women often died in childbirth or post-partum. This produced a patchwork-like system of family relationships that would seem anomalous to the bourgeoisie at the turn of the twentieth century.

For the longest time, the Stähelins, like every other family, had no idea of DNA or genetics and thought of themselves as kin linked by blood and soil. The emotionally intimate nuclear family of today, which grants children a sort of emotional and pedagogical sanctum that reaches into adolescence, would have been alien to them, to say nothing of the many family forms outside of Europe with matrilineal or polygamous structures. (Much to their astonishment, the Stähelins who undertook missionary work or migrated in the nineteenth century came into contact with the latter family forms.)

What "family" means varies over time and across cultures. The Latin-derived term *Familie* first entered the German language in the eighteenth century, replacing the older word *Haus* ("house"), which, like the Latin *familia,* encompassed servants and possessions. And yet blood ties between ancestors, descendants and relatives were and are a "cultural fact." Who is considered to be a part of the family and why, who represents the family to the outside world, who inherits what, who takes care of the family tree, who is remembered and who is forgotten — this varies across space and time. The idea of a "Family" changes constantly and always has. Today's families are shaped by reproductive medicine and may include same-sex parents. Families of the past were shaped by high child mortality and short life expectancy.

Every family is tied up with the politics of the community to which it belongs. This is particularly true for the Basel Stähelins. As the *Historical Lexicon of Switzerland* attests, they are among the oldest recorded Basel families, though Stähelins of ancient lineage can be found in the Cantons of Thurgau and St. Gallen. They number among the celebrated Basel *Daig,* a group of patrician families residing on the left bank of the Rhine

in Grossbasel and traditionally enjoying economic prosperity and exercising political power. Their influence remains considerable, whether through foundations or in history books. Until 1870, for example, the City Republic of Basel was in effect ruled by these families, and the Stähelins, Staehelins and Stehelins were often mentioned in the same breath as the Burckhardts, Merians and Socins, even if they did not reach the same level of influence.

The different spellings of the family name are due to the fact that orthography, particularly of names, was not well established until the nineteenth century. "Stehelin" is the oldest version that has been recorded and preserved. However, some branches of the family distinguish themselves from other branches by writing their name differently, with an "ae" or even the "ä." Most recently, "Staehelin" has garnered the most favor. We, the authors of the book you are now reading, write "Stähelin" when we speak of the family in general, following the practice of the *Historical Lexicon of Switzerland.*

This book follows the history of the family beginning in 1520 when one of its members was granted citizenship in Basel. We do this in full recognition that this beginning is arbitrary and that both the family tree and the family book are selective and idiosyncratic. We have attempted to make up for this by going beyond the family tree held in the Basel state archives in order to gain as full a picture of the family as possible. There is no doubt about the centrality of the female family members, who held jobs, wrote books, organized religious missions, bore children, ran households and constituted the warp and weft of social networks in Basel and beyond.

The current Stähelin database contains information on about 3000 individuals. This book tells their stories on the assumption that they somehow belong together. Single figures — both prominent figures and obscure persons whose biographies are interesting for our purposes — will enter the stage and then leave it just as quickly. Genealogy is not our guiding principle. Instead we have arranged the material thematically, examining the interplay between the family and politics, migration, religion, commerce and industry, and academia, especially the University of Basel.

The Reformation in Basel marks the beginning of our story. It was a transformative event that shaped the bourgeois-Protestant

character of this Basel family and contributed to the social ascent of many of its members from simple craftsmen to leaders of the City Republic.

As strongly as this family is tied to Basel, the Stähelins' reach is also international and global. Today, members of the family live on many continents, with strong representation in France, Canada and especially Brazil, a reminder of the migrant background of a traditional Basel family.

Family members are often linked financially, and the skillful handling of marriages helped the Stähelins acquire wealth and influence. Members of the family dealt in iron and coffee; fabric and locomotives; furniture and stocks. However, by no means were — or are — all members of the family well-to-do.

Until the 20th Century Protestantism, and Pietism in particular, were highly influential in shaping the day-to-day lives of most Stähelins. At that time, the belief in a supreme being had a personal and social significance that seems foreign to many today. In the more recent past, numerous Stähelins have served as professors of the natural sciences and humanities and some have been rectors of the University of Basel. There is a scholarly tradition in the family that might have stunned the illiterate Hans.

In the beginning — at the time of the craft guilds and the Reformation — the contours of the family were clear. Today they are blurrier, and diversity is apparent. The core of the family most active in its affairs is in Basel and is largely well-educated, well-to-do and Protestant, while the Brazilian Staehelins, who are interested in learning about their roots, are predominantly Catholic; members of the family branch in Normandy look to the Basel *Daig* with curiosity and esteem.

Some members see themselves as a part of a dwindling Patrician-Protestant culture; others feel alienated from the bourgeois core of the family; still others have a "free-spirited" view of themselves, society and the family. However, family members who distance themselves from the conservative culture of some of their relatives cannot avoid experiencing how others see them. If you are a Staehelin, your milieu (at least if you move in in the historically informed circles of Basel) will not let you disregard this fact.

Our book is drawn from multiple sources. In addition to oral accounts and an online poll of current Stähelins, the family book and written material in the family archive kept in the Basel State archives provided invaluable material. However, only a few sources dating back before the first half of the eighteenth century can be found in the archive. To supplement them we have drawn on material in other collections and from private households. Finally, we carried a statistical analysis of the family database.

Our book does not follow the traditional format of family histories that present the biographies of a family's most famous and successful members. We seek to provide a fuller and more nuanced account of this Basel family over the span of half a millennium.

Because "family" is a far wider concept, our work has, in addition to the sources cited, benefited from the oral contributions by Caroline Arni, Susanne Burghartz (both from the University of Basel) and Simon Teuscher (University of Zurich)[2], for which we are grateful.

This book is a collaborative work. Tobias Ehrenbold compiled Chapters 2, 4 and 6; Urs Hafner Chapter 1, 3 and 5. Lucas Rappo contributed the demographic analysis. Finally, we would like to thank the Stähelin Family Trust and Publication Commission for their generous support. Our academic and scholarly independence was always respected.

Our book builds on Felix Stähelin's principle that the purpose of his 1903 family book was not to be "panegyric", but rather "purely historical". In it "no hymns of praise for the House or any of its individual representatives."[3] will be found. It is up to the reader to form an impression of the family, to identify amongst its representatives, to experience Basel at different times in its history and venture out to all corner of the world with family members.

1.
FROM THE CRAFTSMEN TO THE PATRICIANS:

THE STÄHELINS IN THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

In the beginning there was Hans, the ropemaker. The tradesman, who fashioned cords and ropes out of hemp, serves as the family "progenitor." Hans Stehelin was granted citizenship in the city republic of Basel after emigrating from Baden, then a part of the Holy Roman Empire.[4] Why start with Hans? In 1903, the young historian Felix Stähelin, having recently finished his dissertation at the University of Basel and who would later serve as a professor of history there, concluded on the basis of extensive archival research, that the "presently flourishing lineage" could be traced back to this particular individual.

In his *Geschichte der Basler Familie Stehelin, Stähelin und Staehelin (History of the Basel Family Stehelin, Stähelin and Staehelin),* Felix distinguishes this lineage from that of all other Stehelli, Stheel, Stehelin, Stähelin, Staehelin, Stehlin, Stahellinus, etc., who had lived in Basel and the Upper Rhine region up until the thirteenth century. Indeed, in his introduction he provides an entire litany of unrelated Stehelins who had lived and died over the years. For example, Felix insists that Bernhard Stehelin, who was ennobled by the French King Henry II in 1554 for "his bravery on the battlefield of Renty" during the Valois-Hapsburg war," did not belong to his family.[5] A tradesman, not noble warrior was the progenitor of the Staehelins.

Hans's position was not a given. Felix relied not only on the relevant historical literature and handwritten archival sources, but also on genealogical sketches, ancestral books and documents that today reside in the State Archives of Basel.[6] The Stähelin family tree, as stately as it was artfully rendered by Basel artist Johann Jakob Schneider-Gyssler at the end of the 1870s, begins with Hans, whose name is inscribed prominently on the thick trunk of the family tree.[7] From Hans, the whole family springs forth.

The use of the image of a tree — sprouting branches, boughs, and twigs –leaves open the question of connections to other Stähelins. Indeed, there is a caveat that the depiction includes members from different lines who spelled their name differently. According to the tree, the oldest Stähelins in Basel were cloth makers who gained citizenship in 1470. They had a coat of arms featuring a red ox. Bernhard Stehelin, who was said to be in command of 4000 Swiss mercenaries in 1552, had a coat of arms commissioned when he was ennobled by the King of France in 1554. It had a lion, three stars and golden lilies on a blue background. Schneider-Gyssler had this coat of arms painted on the family tree, next to the Stähelin crest with its arm with the morning star. Altogether he included three family coats of arms.[8]

Schneider-Gyssler's notes for the family tree were deposited in the Stähelin family archive, which was established in 1913. They show what was eventually appeared in the finished product: Progenitor Hans with four sons: Bartholomeus, Apollinaris, Johannes, Martin.[9] Older genealogical sketches — undated but probably from around the end of the eighteenth century — show

Hans Stehelin as the original ancestor, except here he has two sons (Johannes, Martin) in some places, and in others three (Johannes, Johann, Jacob).[10] There is no mention of knights, kings and nobility, or, for that matter, of clothmakers. And women were not listed at all. Here, the family genealogy is purely male.

At the end of the eighteenth century, members of the Basel Stähelin family recorded a lineage that began with an immigrant ropemaker from Southern Germany. At the end of the nineteenth century, as ancestry research grew in popularity, the family commissioned a local artist to devise a magnificent family tree, which would trace the origins of the family back to Hans but would also leave open the possibility for connections to older Basel Stähelins and nobility. In 1903, Felix Stähelin the historian created the "family book," which has been amended many times since then and is now authoritative. It unambiguously names Hans and his *three* sons — Bartholomäus, Johannes and Martin — as the male progenitors, and Hans's second wife, Magdalena Mieg, as the female progenitor (Hans's first wife remains unknown). It definitively excludes other, older Basel individuals as well as Staehelins from other regions (including those who were ennobled) as possible ancestors. The family book follows a patrilineal and primogeniture-based logic: All descendants of a couple are listed, but only the male descendants are elaborated upon (insofar as they married and had children). Female descendants simply fall away; aside from their names and dates of birth and death, there is no information about from them.

Building on this foundation a family genealogist constructed the second major family tree in 1937, which also now resides in the State Archives. This one is not artistically rendered like Schneider-Gyssler's work but is unadorned and systematic." Instead of the classic tree motif, the document uses genealogical notation. Hans and Magdalena are not listed at the bottom, but rather on the left edge of the picture, and fifteen generations emerge from them, moving rightward.[11] Between then and now, two more family trees have been prepared, and they will not be the last.

In the beginning, there was Hans. The comprehensive research completed in 1933 on behalf of the Zurich Stähelins by Johann Paul Zwicky, one of Switzerland's best-known genealogists who specialized in "prominent" families, did nothing

to alter this view.[12] In his report, Zwicky lists all of the sources and archives he sifted through in his search for the ropemaker's ancestry: the State Archives of Stuttgart, the City Archives of Reutlingen, the Church Archive of Reutlingen, the "Description of the District Authority of Reutlingen," the "Würtemberg Book of Certificates," the handwritten notebook of a high official in the Stuttgart State Library, and so forth.[13] Zwicky found a "Stahellinus," who was the *scultetus,* or mayor in Reutlingen in the year 1267, while in the sixteenth century in Stuttgart, there had been a city clerk by the name of Johannes Stehlin. Zwicky conjectured that that Hans could have been related to the Reutlingen family. The name also appeared in Rümlikon, Memmingen, Rottenburg, Solothurn, Schaffhausen, Villingen bei Freiburg, Börsch, Ulm and Nördlingen. (However, he does not list the Catholic Stähelin families who lived in the Cantons of St. Gall and Thurgau.)[14]

Eventually, in 1988, Andreas Staehelin, State Archivist of the Canton of Basel-Stadt and an associate professor of history at the University of Basel and a keen member of the Stähelin family from Strasbourg who sought to trace the origins of the family back to England, explicitly stated that he considered such research to be senseless. The name, he argued, appeared so often and in so many different forms throughout the Middle Ages, that it was impossible to find out more about the "ascent of our progenitor Hans Stehelin."[15]

And so, it remains. Hans' origins are shrouded in as much mystery as those of his own forebears and of other early figures who bore the name Staehelin. One thing is certain: if Felix Stähelin had focused on the female line, a completely different picture would have emerged. Indeed, the family tree would not have existed since, as far as we know, Magdalena had no daughters. Furthermore, if a son of the Stehelin-Mieg progenitor couple in 1550 had compiled a patrilineal family tree that reached back generations, the family would appear to have a different origin. Hans would not have been at the base of the family tree, but rather a completely different "Stähelin" — perhaps one from Württemberg, Bavaria, Eastern Switzerland or, conceivably, one from Basel. We just do not know.

Hans's position at the starting point of the family also has its origins in local patriotism: in 1520 he was granted Basel

citizenship. The young man — whose date of birth is as unknown as his date of death — had perhaps emigrated from the Swabian imperial city of Reutlingen or from a village named Riedlingen in Württemberg or Bavaria, but one year prior to gaining citizenship, he bought into the gardener's guild *(Zunft zu Gartnern)*.[16]

The best-known contemporaneous account of Hans was penned by a Thomas Platter the Elder, who wrote an autobiography that was widely read by the German literati (including Goethe) and has been translated into English. Platter, who worked Hans for a time making rope, referred to him as the "red ropemaker" — a epithet of unknown provenance, due possibly to the color of Hans's hair, his flushed face or some other feature. Platter says that Hans had the reputation amongst journeyman ropemakers as the "most odious master on the Rhine" and that he and all the members of the household were illiterate.[17]

Platter describes how he used to attempt to read his books on the job, which incensed the ropemaker. It was bitterly cold in the winter in Hans's workshop, which adjoined the living quarters, and there was not enough to eat. What was provided was cheap and foul-smelling, so bad that in the master's absence, his wife held her nose and asked that the loaf be thrown out. Suffice it to say, Platter did not hold Hans in high regard.

Platter's unfavorable sketches left their traces in the family history — it was not just Felix Stähelin who included them in the family book. In 1920, the writer Maggy Staehelin used them as the inspiration for a short play that was put on to celebrate the family's 400-year jubilee. The play took place in Hans's workshop in 1529, the year the Reformation came to a head in Basel.[18] In it, Hans appears not merely as coarse and uncouth, but also as patriarchal and latently violent, interested in neither politics nor faith — definitely not in the ideas of the Reformation – but only in his business and the fatherland.

In the play, Hans is an enterprising, spiritually impoverished patriot. Why does Maggy Staehelin offer such a picture of her family's progenitor? Is it because of the circumstances of her own life? (Bourgeois Switzerland had just crushed the general strike instigated by the left.) Is she levelling a cautious critique at the patriarchal system? If so, she might well have delineated Magdalena more clearly. But Hans' wife is portrayed as a nineteenth century housewife whose sphere is the children and the kitchen, a portrayal that is no less reductive than her husband's.

At any rate, however gruff Hans Stehelin may have been, he was not without means. By 1521 he owned a house on what is now Gerbergasse.[19] This implies that he brought money with him from Germany, either his own or from his first wife, who remains unknown. Even though the gardeners' guild, which included gardeners, landlords, cooks and transporters, stood at the bottom end of the guild hierarchy,[20] membership in it was important for Hans as it would have been for any ropemaker. Guilds provided protection for their members. Any man who wanted to practice a trade would have had a rough time without membership in a guild and would have numbered among the underclass, the recent immigrants, housemaids, servants and residents without citizenship who made up roughly half of the population of about 12,000.[21]

In the preceding centuries the guilds had grown in importance and come to dominate economic and political life in Basel far more than in other Swiss cities such as Bern and Fribourg. Indeed, the German term for a guild, *Zunft,* originated in Basel in 1226.[22] The city's political and cultural life revolved around the fifteen guilds, of which four were merchant guilds *(Schlüssel, Hausgenossen, Weinleute, and Safran)* and 11 craft guilds. Any man who had political ambitions had to belong to a guild. Members had to swear an oath to the guild and to the city. Fellowship and conviviality were important, and members celebrated together four times annually. at *Fasnacht* (Carnival), Pentecost, Michaelmas and Christmas. When a member married, he would present his bride in the guild hall, whereupon members would toast the couple and wish them well. The Guild provided security, sponsorship and camaraderie.[23]

Hans served in the militia, the fire department and as a sentinel. the guard. He was able to participate in the election of the governing board of his guild, and thereby indirectly in that of the Grand Council *(Grosser Rat)* and the Small Council *(Kleiner Rat)*. Basel, which had joined the Swiss Confederation in 1501, was smaller than Strasbourg, but much larger than Zurich or Bern, and more like a German imperial city than a Swiss one: It did not have much territory, and was linked economically to

Baden and the nearby Habsburg dominions.[24] Furthermore, Basel was not only a city of commerce, but also a bishopric, a seat of learning and a center of printing. The university was inaugurated in Basel's cathedral in 1460 after receiving a charter from the Pope. From that point on itinerant students began to shape life on in and around Basel. They discussed theology and humanism, which found a wide audience through printed pamphlets.

Basel was at the cusp of momentous change. Hans Stehelin was like other migrants who were had been attracted by the city's throbbing pulse (or drawn to it by relatives already living there).[25] More political, social and cultural upheaval was in the offing. By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Bishop had ceded almost all of his secular powers to the Council, and the church's spiritual authority began to be called into question. The nobles who constituted the *Hohe Stube* lost their privileges in the Council in 1515, and the four merchant guilds, together with the eleven craft guilds, set the tone in the Council.[26] Hans may have been politicized by his guild as it was were a driving force of the Reformation in Basel.

The Reformation encouraged artisans and craftsmen not allied with the elites to reject the old beliefs and practices, including the threat of purgatory and the sale of indulgences. The members of the gardeners' guild turned against the strict hierarchy of the Church, the unproductive clergy and the arrogant nobility. Followers of the Reformation not only wished to cleanse the Church of pageantry and communicate with God directly, but also to break the oligarchy in the Council and strengthen the rights of the guilds. Hans's guild demanded the abolition of old-style religious services as well as the resignation of any councilmen who did not adhere to the new doctrine. Almost all of the other guilds supported these demands.[27]

In December of 1528, adherents of the Reformation met in the gardener's guild house, and an outraged mob of some 500 people lodged a petition with the Mayor, which called for the immediate abolition of Mass.[28] Civil strife was imminent. The Mayor and his like-minded followers fled. Then, in February of 1529, around 200 armed men stormed the Cathedral and then the parish and monastic churches of St. Peter, the Dominicans, St. Alban and St. Ulrich, intent of cleansing the church of idolatry. While

the priests and monks barricaded themselves inside, statues and pictures were hacked and burned.[29] Now all that remained was the Small Council, which was still split between adherents of the old faith and supporters of the Reformation. With its ban on mocking those of other faiths, the Small Council had until then pursued a policy of moderation and civility. Now, however, it the more radical of the reformers gained the upper hand, and the Catholics had to resign. In 1529, the definitive break came between the city on one side and the Bishop and the cathedral chapter on the other.

Hans Stehelin and Magdalena Mieg were able to witness the dramatic events first hand. They married before 1527, or just before the stormiest stage of the Reformation in Basel. Two years later, the ropemaker went with his journeyman Thomas Platter and eleven other members of the Gardeners' Guild to fight with other Protestants against Catholics from Central Switzerland in the first campaign of the Kappel War. Hans did not participate in the second campaign in 1531, which cost the Zurich Reformer Ulrich Zwingli his life.)[30]

Hans was probably an ambitious, driven craftsman, soon to be wealthy and probably also a man with evangelical leanings — otherwise, he would not have chosen to join the Reformation-friendly gardeners' guild, nor would the guild have chosen him as a leader in 1542. With this move, the Swabian migrant became part of the Great Council. He did not yet belong to the innermost circle of power, but he was nipping at its edges.

This social and political ascent would presumably not have been possible without both of his Basel-based wives, particularly his second, Magdalena Mieg, also the daughter of a craftsman. Her paternal grandfather had received his Basel citizenship in 1470.[31] Magdalena's mother had married the City Clerk of Liestal,[32] and her brother, a miller, sat on the Council, to which other relatives also belonged.[33] And so, Magdalena was no stranger to the workings of social mobility; she was probably attracted by Hans's ambition — and, she likely had money of her own. In 1527, the couple purchased another house, in what is today Aeschenvorstadt, and in 1535 yet another one by the old Rindermarkt, a property that remained in Stähelin possession for many years. The two speculated skillfully with real estate.[34]

As far as is known, Hans Stehelin and Magdalena Mieg had three sons. Two furthered the family's social ascent; one did not. Bartholomäus, likely the first-born, also had the distinction of being mentioned in a Platter tome, albeit one by a different Platter, Felix Platter, the son of Thomas Platter. Felix was a highly respected physician and professor of medicine at the university, who kept a journal that was published. In it he mentions that Bartholomäus was skilled at playing dulcimer and harp.[35] Bartholomäus, the son of the illiterate Hans, came to be a book printer and publisher. In 1547, he married Sara Wolff, who had been married twice before.[36] Her father was a book printer and member of the Grand Council. Her maternal grandfather had been a member of the small and selected body that ruled Basel. Bartholomäus succeeded not only in marrying into a publishing family and taking on the business but also becoming the grandson by marriage of a member of the inner circle.[37] The couple had six children, including four sons, two of whom died in infancy or early childhood.

Not much is known about Hans and Magdalena's second son Johannes. By contrast there is information about *his* son and Hans's grandson, who was also called Johannes (1555–1615). He was a successful spice merchant and a member of the Safran Guild (one of the four merchant guilds). With the help of his father-in-law, he purchased the Safran Guild's building and also owned other properties, including one at the old Rindermarkt. In 1605 he became part of the Grand Council at the Safran guild, and in 1609 its *Meister,* or master, and with that joined the Small Council. In this way Hans's grandson became a member of the political elite, which in the *ancien régime* was closely linked with wealth. He had ten children with Katharina Beckel, his wife. The first nine were girls, but the tenth and youngest was a boy, also named Johannes (1600–1660). This Johannes ascended even higher in the political sphere than his father did. In 1656, he became a member of the "Council of Thirteen" *(Dreizenherrat),* which was the most powerful of the Basel's political organs. With his wife, the third Johannes of this lineage had twelve children.[38]

Hans and Magdalena's third son Martin took up his father's occupation at the old Rindermarkt: he remained a rope-maker. About Martin, the family book does not mince words. In 1555 he was placed under guardianship, and in 1573 he was sentenced for spending all of his days drinking and frequenting taverns. Martin's way of life was a thorn in the side of the informal morality police, of which there were quite a few in the Reformed city. He was married twice, first to a butcher's daughter, and then to the daughter of a wagon-maker. However, he appears not to have had any children.[39] The family book chronicles Martin's downfall. The author, Felix Stähelin, could have simply listed the third son's dates of birth and death, but as he himself wrote, the family book was not meant to be a hagiography, but rather record "historical facts."[40]

Unsurprisingly, family records have always excluded children born out of wedlock, though there must have been some, if only because of the era's rudimentary contraception. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, illegitimate children were part of everyday life, as keeping mistresses was widespread. This became less common after the Reformation, though it did not disappear altogether.[41] At the same time, the infant mortality rate was high; many infants did not survive their first year of life. One reason for this were the many epidemics, including the bubonic plague, which hit Basel particularly hard as it was a center of commerce and trade.

The family book documents the death of many Staehelin babies. Additionally, childbirth and the postpartum period posed enormous risks for the mothers, which is why there were so many multiple marriages, and with them a patchwork of families. It seems highly likely that several generations, single relatives, maids and apprentices lived under one roof in the Stähelin property on the Rindermarkt. The "house" included more than the members of the "family" in today's sense, and this formed a link between life and work.[42]

THE COUNCIL REGIME

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Stähelins numbered among the leading families of Basel, the families from whose members the city government was drawn. In the eighteenth century, members of the family also emigrated and worked as merchants and bankers in Alsace. For their political and economic ascent, the family had the Reformation to thank, and of course the Stähelins were not the only ones to profit from this transformation.

A considerable part of the new aristocracy had been granted Basel citizenship in the sixteenth century, around the time of the Reformation or after it, even though the city became much stricter in granting citizenship after 1550 and remained so up until the end of the *ancien régime.*[43] Besides the Stähelins, the Ryhiner family were naturalized in 1515, the Burckhardts in 1523, the Bachofens in 1546, the Socins in 1560 and the La Roches in 1591.[44] Of these, the Burckhardts were the most prominent. Between 1650 and 1800, the most important government posts were held by members of 58 families, with the ten most influential holding half of these posts, and the Burckhardt family alone holding a fifth.[45] They occupied 25 seats in the Council of Thirteen, the Faesch family eight, the Socin and Merian five each, the Sarasins four and the Stähelins four as well.[46] However, unlike a number of other prominent families, a Burckhardt held the position of mayor.

In the terminology of the time, Basel was a democratic republic and had been since 1515. However, it was the members of the guilds and not the populace at large or even the property owners and taxpayers who exercised the limited right to vote. The guild members selected from among their number the guild master and the six members who constituted the governing bodies of the 15 guilds. Most guild leaders selected their successors rather than allowing the membership to do so. The Gardeners' Guild, to which Hans belonged, was a long-standing and notable exception.[47] The men members of the governing bodies of the guilds in turn sat on the Great Council, which had 282 members altogether. As late as the eighteenth century, craftsmen made up more than half of Basel's Great Council.[48] This was in stark contrast to the ecclesiastical structure of previous centuries and in noticeable contrast to aristocratic structure in such cities as Bern.

In practice this nominally "democratic" Republic functioned like an oligarchy, with most power exercised by the Small Council, the Council of Thirteen and the four Heads. These men were the *Rattsherren* (Councilors). The Grand Council co-opted itself for terms of office of unlimited length — and the same went for the Small Council, from whom the four Heads were chosen. When it came time to pass on offices, it was all in the family, so to speak.

Members of the Small Council dedicated themselves in large part to government affairs. A member of the Council of Thirteen had no time to practice a profession. Accordingly, he had to be independently wealthy, as the positions were unremunerated. Among the 24 mayors and thirteen chief guild masters who ran the city between 1650 and 1800, there was not a single craftsman to be found.[49] The most important conclave in the Small Council was the Council of Thirteen, also called the "secret council." The four Heads of the City and nine members of the Small Council belonged to this exclusive group. The Council of Thirteen carried out daily government business, implemented the decisions of the Small Council and determined foreign policy, which was the most important political domain.[50] The innermost circle of leadership in Basel was an exclusive and complex structure. The upper class rarely married outsiders, and never married members of the lower orders.[51]

The private lives and political activities of the Councilors were closely intertwined. They constituted a coterie impenetrable from the outside that sought to maintain a balance of power within the city. While the families who were excluded from power had little to report, the Councilors had to be careful not to favor or disadvantage anyone in such a way that the system tottered. They had to distribute the offices — not merely the council posts, but the numerous administrative offices, including the bailiffs — as skillfully as possible. Andreas Ryff, who ascended from the Grand Council to the Council of Thirteen, said in 1603 about the "better" members of the bourgeoisie: "They go together like kraut and cheese, scratch each other's backs, stay among their own kind."[52]

Dominance by just a few families (in particular the Burckhardts and Socins), did not go unchallenged. The bourgeois families excluded from power and the grassroots guild membership continually tried to break into the tight inner circle.[53] The 1691 revolt by Basel citizens was the greatest political crisis of the City Republic during the *ancien régime.* Some 600 citizens occupied the grain market, the doors at Martinsgässlein, and the city gates. An overthrow of the existing regime was imminent, but the Councilors quashed the rebellion and survived the ordeal.

The public execution of three of the "ringleaders" on the marketplace, including a doctor, Johannes Fatio, was a clear warning to future dissenters.[54] Benedict Stähelin (1628–1703), Clerk of the Council and the son of a weaver, was charged with proclaiming the death sentences, but he assigned the task to a one of his minions, because he himself had once been treated by Dr. Fatio.[55]

Another opponent of the existing order, Jacob Petri, Fatio's cousin, fled from the city. He was pronounced an outlaw and his picture hung on the gallows. In exile, he wrote the tract *Basel, Babel.* The ancestors of the ruling families, he wrote, had themselves "escaped to Basel I don't know how long ago from Italy/or the Black Forest/or whatever foundling hospital they came from." Petri was referring to the families which had immigrated in the sixteenth century and now ran the city — including the Stähelins.[56]

At the same time, in the wake of the revolt, reforms were carried out that strengthened the Grand Council was strengthened with the consequence that a larger number of families were involved in government. Formally, the Grand Council became the highest power in the city and became responsible for granting citizenship. The Small Council had opened itself a bit as well.[57] A beneficiary of this state of affairs was Martin Staehelin (1631–1697): He was selected to serve as the Chief Guild Master, the second-highest office in Basel. In addition to these duties, he was a goldsmith and also worked as a building contractor and a lumber merchant.[58]

At the end of the seventeenth century, few craftsmen became members of the Council of Thirteen. In order to learn his trade and foreign languages, Martin had completed the bourgeois "grand tour": At the age of thirteen he traveled to Neuchâtel/Neuenberg, and from the ages of 17–30 he lived in Germany, the Netherlands and France. His father Johannes (1600–1660) had been the first Stähelin to be a member of the Council of Thirteen. Like his forbears, Martin diligently acquired real estate (at the Fischmarkt and on the Kellergässlein). His holdings were extensive and just kept growing. Martin was not merely a goldsmith, he also dealt in "spices and material goods."[59] His guild, the *Hausgenossen,* was one of the merchant guilds. He held several offices, including that of inspector of the orphanage and served as the prestigious envoy to the mountain bailiffs in Lugano. His

first wife was a Stähelin whose mother had been a Falkeysen; his second, a Forcart who had been married to a Socin before she was widowed.[60]

Martin's family did not reside in the ropemaker Hans's workshop, but rather in the Reinacherhof on the elegant Münsterplatz. They had six children. One of their daughters married a member of the Small Council. Their youngest son, who was married twice (first to a Buxtorf, then to a Fäsch) started his career in politics, but then went bankrupt. At that point he fled the city and was eventually named to the imperial council in Vienna, as which he presented himself to the Bishop of Basel.[61] And so, the problem child made something of himself in the end, even if his conversion to Catholicism may have caused consternation to his relatives in Basel. The second-youngest son made his career in Strasbourg as a banker and merchant.[62] And the firstborn son, Martin (1665–1728), followed in the footsteps of his father: Goldsmith and Hausgenossen guild member. He married Judith Fürstenberger (1668–1720), whose mother was a De Bary.[63]

In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, only a handful of Stähelins sat on the Small Council or the Council of Thirteen and all of them were closely related.[64] Between 1656 and 1800, there was a total of four; in addition to the three mentioned above, there was also Benedict (1708–1787).[65] The positions on the council were important for the other members of the family, especially for the sons. It was only towards the end of the *ancien régime* that merchants were no longer keen to sit on the council and preferred to devote their time and energy to business.

The political power and prestige enjoyed by the four governing Stähelins rubbed off on the entire family, its relatives, the bearers of its name and even their friends. Anyone who came into contact with them profited from their "social" and "symbolic capital," as the sociologist Pierre Bourdieu has described this manner of property.[66] And the Regents were informed about the fortunes of the Republic, which were handled in secret (hence the "secret council") — and they had offices and benefices to forgive, hence, also "economic capital."

Many of the Stähelins of early modern period made their careers in politics, business, the church or academia. Thanks to this, the family numbered among the most prominent in Basel.

He who had money could afford to sit on the Council; he who sat on the Council could influence public policy, and university professors made the family familiar with the teachings of the Church and State and established their scholarly reputation, hence: "cultural capital." Johann Heinrich (1668–1721) was the first in a long series of Stähelins who have served as professors at the University of Basel, and in 1719 he became Rector.[67]

WEDDINGS AND MARRIAGES

Benedict and Johann Rudolf number among the most politically influential Stähelins of the eighteenth century. Both were merchants, and as such belonged to the class that had the upper hand in the Council.

Together with his brother, Benedict (1708–1787) ran the family's ironmongery. He was a member of the Council of Thirteen, a member of the Weavers' Guild, and Basel's envoy to the Diet in Frauenfeld and Baden. He owned both of the "Neuenberg" buildings in the Market Square. He was married twice, first to Anna Margaretha Sarasin (1719–1743), daughter of a Burckhardt, and then to Susanna Merian (1716–1798), also daughter of a Burckhardt.[68]

Johann Rudolf (1750–1832) was also a merchant, member of the Safran guild, a member of the Council of Thirteen. In addition, he was a supporter of the Helvetic Republic forced upon Switzerland by France. In 1798, the citizens of the city chose him as the "People's Representative." The collapse of the Helvetic Republic in 1803 did not harm him, and he continued his political career in the Small Council. Among other properties, he owned the "Fürstenberg" house on Gerbergasse. With his family, he lived in the "Wilhelm Tell" House in Aeschenvorstadt,[69] where Basel's wealthy resided.

Not all Stähelins were eminent. Among the members of this "council-worthy family" there were men who worked as simple shoemakers and married young immigrant women, men who worked as tanners or who spent fifteen years in Dutch military service and went blind.[70] One Stähelin was sentenced to prison and died there; another an alcoholic and a third who converted to Catholicism, which for this devout Protestant family was as reprehensible as being a criminal or a drunk.[71]

The family also had its share of outcasts and miscreants, for whom every effort was made to situate them in a manner in which they caused as little disturbance, and brought the family as little shame, as possible. Illegitimate children likely disappeared into orphanages and thus from the family's collective memory. Misfits who were from the better circles were given dead-end jobs where they wouldn't advance. The prevailing wisdom among the ruling families was this paternalistic principle: "We know what's good for you." If a man was of no use, it was said: "Now we've lost our patience."[72]

Next to sponsorships, marriages were the most important means by which to forge alliances between families. The leading families of Basel married amongst themselves — the Stähelins with the Merians, Bernoullis, Respingers, etc. Marriage was the fulcrum of the *ancien régime.* Society used it to regulate relations between men and women, the distribution of power and possessions, and sexuality. If the first male Stähelins had not married themselves to well-to-do families, the family's ascent would not have been successful. By marrying daughters of more influential families, the sons increased the reputation and capital of their own family. Marriage was the central agency of socialization; it was a professional and economic community, served as a transfer of capital, and enabled new business undertakings. Marriages networked families together and ensured their lasting power by way of reproducing the legitimate genealogy.[73]

With the Reformation, marriage took on a different role. It ceased to be a sacrament and became an instrument for regulating society. The Stähelins shared this view. Not only had they grown up with the Reformation, as a part of the ruling class, they espoused the institution of marriage, which dictated what was allowed and what was not, what was right and what was wrong. Marriage stabilized the social order and the hierarchy between the sexes. The man, head of house, was the leader, whom the rest of the members of the family unit had to obey. The Reformation even brought forth a new institution: the marriage court. Marriage did not simply wed a man and wife; it wove together church and state.[74]

While marriage was still considered to be the norm, some Stähelins did not marry or remained widows or widowers after

the death of their spouses. Their position within the family unit was not always simple, even though the early modern period was more tolerant of unmarried people than the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

After the death of her husband Johannes, Chrischona Stähelin-Hoffmann (1672–1740) bought the building "Zum Gold," today located at Marktplatz 6, and ran the store under the company name "Johann Stähelin" as an independent fabric merchant. In 1761, the concern was taken over by Helena Stähelin-Merian (1717–1794) after the death of her husband, who had been Chrischona's son.[75] In this way, the two women kept a family business alive.

At the beginning of 1762, Councilor Benedict Stähelin (1708–1787) wrote to his nephew Balthasar (1739–1797) in Danzig.[76] Balthasar was there for training in the Schwartz trading house, having previously lived in Geneva and Strasbourg.[77] Uncle Benedict was writing with good news: "O, what a rich New Year's gift from above!" They had finally found Balthasar a suitable bride: Dorothea Gemuseus (1742–1829), the daughter of Benedict's friend Peter Gemuseus, who was overjoyed about the whole situation. It is not clear why the 23-year-old bachelor should be so pressed for time, but his family was searching intensively for a bride on his behalf: "Your dear Grandmama, your Auntie, your Uncle (my brother), in addition to myself, were without exception quite worried over the fate of your future […] Divine Providence has favored and blessed such attempts, and blessed us with exceptionally happy results." He, the nephew, would likely be surprised, if not terrified, Benedict reckoned, but he should then drop to his knees in gratitude to God for such providence.

And then Benedict gave instructions: "I don't at all doubt that this important news will solicit the quickest possible response from you to all of us, in particular to your dear Grandmama, about your most grateful mind, and impart to Herr and Frau Gemuseus how touched your heart is."[78] The nephew, concluded Benedict, should accept that this arrangement was in his best interest, thank the family, and await further instructions. It went without saying that for the time being all this was to be kept secret.

Did the young man have another bride in mind? Or not wish to marry at all? This did not matter. His influential uncle took care of things, as he stressed in the letter, in the interests of the whole family. The bond with the wealthy house of Gemuseus made sense. Dorothea's father held the influential post of Director of Merchants; among the offices her brothers held positions on the Council of Thirteen, the Court Council and one served as the Bailiff of Homburg.[79] The letter took the marriage as a *fait accompli* and did not entertain objections. Within the year, the young man returned to Basel from Danzig and married Dorothea after a suitable lapse of time; the three-page bill from the parlor servants of the Blacksmiths' guildhall for the extravagant wedding feast has been preserved for posterity. For luncheon alone thirty different dishes were served, including wild boar, sausages, venison, ragout, salads, terrines and every variety of almond slices, gingerbread, pralines and macarons.[80] Aristocratic-looking portraits of the Stähelin-Gemuseus couple were commissioned.[81] In them, both appear to be well-fed, wearing wigs and fine ruffles of silk. She would outlive him by roughly three decades.

In early modernity, weddings and marriages were not private affairs, but rather family matters and, given the political and societal significance of the Stähelin family, also in many ways, affairs of state. A decision to marry without the blessing of the parents would be frowned upon. In the seventeenth century, an "etiquette pamphlet" circulated widely in Basel. It contained the formulas for all conversations to be conducted and rituals to be performed in connection with preparation for the wedding. The ceremony was more reminiscent of courtly culture than that of the traditional bourgeoisie.[82] There was much at stake. A mistake, even if only through a *faux pas,* could cost a family dearly in terms of its standing in the city.

Before the wedding, a "marriage contract" was often ratified. It was the economic basis of the sacred institution. In 1732, when Katharina Bernoulli (1707–1737) married the iron merchant Balthasar Stähelin (1704–1755), the heads of the two families set down a prenuptial agreement three months prior to the wedding "to avoid future aberration". It had no fewer than eight seals and signatures. Balthasar signed and sealed the document as

well, but not Katharina. Among its eight points were how much money each party brought into the marriage — he three thousand Pfund, she five thousand — and what would happen to the estate if one of the were to die, "with or without the legitimate offspring." The prologue to the contract affirms the purpose of marriage: "in praise of God the Founder of the holy Marriage Covenant, for the propagation of the Human Race."[83] The prenuptial contract for the 1739 marriage between Balthasar and his second wife Anna Katharina Respinger (1707–1756) was ratified with even more seals: thirteen.[84]

A large amount of gravity and religious strictness attended a marriage, with for example the introduction of an engagement through one's uncle, the formal prenuptial speeches and the regal ceremonies in the church. What was the reaction in the halls of the guilds allowed such exuberance? At the reception for the marriage of Margareth Stähelin (1751–1832), daughter of Benedict (1708–1787) and his second wife Susanna Merian (1716–1798), to Johann Jakob Vischer, a Counsellor, merchant and banker, two friends recited a poem. A little bit of satire could be read between the lines, but the moral was clear. The "fair Stähelin" assured the friends, would not care for wigs and fashion, but would instead adorn the "soul of a dark house / with such sciences / that robs no fashion and which every wise man shall bless."[85] Or did the young lady derive pleasure from fine fabrics and refined coifs?

2. STÄHELINS ON THE MOVE: CANADA, FRANCE, BRAZIL

On November 3, 1990, Andreas Staehelin dropped a bomb: "Dear cousins," the family genealogist greeted the hundred or so guests who had gathered together at the Family Day. The speaker, the State Archivist of Basel and a professor of history, announced "a true genealogical sensation, the likes of which I have never encountered in my thirty-year career as an archivist." He had discovered hundreds of heretofore unknown Stähelins living in Brazil, whose ancestry led back to Hans the Basel "progenitor." These Brazilians, explained Staehelin, were the descendants of ancestors who emigrated 150 years earlier, and still spelled their names with an "ä".[86]

At the time, those who had moved away left nothing behind in Basel other than the lingering rumor that "there are also Stähelins in Brazil," explained Andreas in his speech.[87] The historian had himself undertaken earlier searches in Latin America, but none of them had borne fruit.[88] The "genealogical sensation" came thanks to Anselmo Stähelin, a Brazilian family member born in 1965 who had registered at the Basel-Stadt civil registry office at the end of 1988. He wanted to solve a riddle that had long vexed him and his relatives who lived in the southern part of his massive native country. Where did their ancestors come from, and were people with their same family name still alive? If they did exist, did they have anything in common with each other, personal characteristics, a similar nose perhaps?

A handful of Brazilian Stähelins had even made the trip to Basel for the 1990 Family Day. Their presence bore witness to the "expansion of our family" that so delighted Andreas Staehelin: "And now, a huge branch of our family tree, so to speak, has fallen from the heavens."[89] By "our family," the genealogist meant anyone who occupied a place in the patrilineally organized family book; that is, male "descendants" of the "progenitor," Hans. The Brazilian branch would later be added to the family tree, which today includes some three thousand biographical entries, only half of which were born in the area that now comprises Switzerland, and a good 15 percent of which were born in Brazil. The genealogical data contradicts the picture of a family that has always been equated with a "real Basel milieu": Stähelins have been born in Australia, Italy or Egypt; many in Canada or the US; almost a fifth in France alone.

ALSACE: LOCOMOTIVES, CAPITAL, IRON ORE

A view held by many archaeologists is that *homo sapiens* left Africa 60,000 years ago at the latest and spread fairly quickly to other continents. Of course, it is not necessary to go that far back to appreciate how common migration has been throughout the course of history. In the beginning, there were immigrants — and this is true not only for Switzerland,[90] but also for the Stähelin family. In the beginning there was Hans, as the family book testifies: a Swabian immigrant from Baden. But after him there were many Staehelins who left Basel.

Simon Teuscher made an observation about the patricians of Bern that also applies to the Stähelin family: The view of a family as locally rooted — in the case of the Stähelins "typical Baslers" — does not preclude migration, but rather went hand in hand with it.[91] One reason for this was economic: hardly any family could support every single child with income produced locally. The art historian Gertrud Lendorff (1900–1986),[92] the daughter of a Stähelin, provided an example in her popular radio program: Her grandfather had left Basel because the family shop could only support his older brother "along with his large family."

As a result, her grandfather left for Paris and founded "Stehelin & Ozanne", a company that exported porcelain and clothing to Mexico from the mid-nineteenth century.[93] He returned to

Basel when he retired, embittered by the death of his only son, who was meant to carry on the business in Paris. In the case of Stehelin & Ozanne, the practice of one the sons, generally the oldest, taking over the family business could not be followed. The pattern, accompanied by the daughters marrying into the city's other bourgeois families, can be discerned in the family book. Younger sons had to search for work, whether in Basel, Paris or elsewhere. As such, migration was common for male Stähelins who had no family business to take over or could not find an occupation locally.

Outside of Switzerland, most Stähelins who left Basel settled in France, in particular in Alsace, a region that historically was closer to Basel than much of what today constitutes Switzerland. The economic, social and cultural ties between Basel and the Alsace are reflected in the numerous marriages between families from the two regions, such as the Koehlins, Rebers or Schlumbergers. Together with the refugee families of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, including Battier (from Lyon), Sarasin (Metz) or Forcart (Cologne) that came to Basel and settled there, [94] the leading families of Alsace were part of a close network that strongly influenced the industrialization of the Upper Rhine.

Beginning in the eighteenth century, the Stehelins in Alsace (who wrote their name without the diaresis) dealt in tobacco, and by the nineteenth century they ran numerous factories.[95] The oldest and most commercially most important business relationship in Alsace revolved around iron, which was in short supply in Switzerland. In order to process ore from the Northern Vosges, mines, blast ovens, wire-making machines and foundries had been established in the seventeenth century. The energy needed to run all of this was initially supplied by rivers and coal made from the wood of the extensive Alsatian forests.[96] Balthasar Stähelin (1640–1686) moved to Alsace in order to study the emerging iron industry. Later he obtained wares there which he sold in Basel. The Stähelin ironmongery in the "Neuenberg" property in the Market Square flourished and remained in the family's possession for almost two centuries.[97]

Hieronymous Stähelin also turned to the production of iron, although in Alsace he went by the name Jérôme Stehelin (1741–1803). He was one of those younger sons for whom there

was no room in the family business. After his older brother took over the ironmongery in the Neuenberg building, Hieronymous attempted to open a hosiery factory with another brother — unsuccessfully. After that, through a firm called "Hieronymous Stähelin," he turned to the iron business a tradition in his family. In 1781, Hieronymous bought the "Rosshof" in Basel. It became the hub of a wide-ranging operation: he built mines and blast furnaces in the Bitschwiller region of Alsace; to unload the ore delivered from the Vosges as quickly as possible, he had an additional gate built in the city wall. The heavy goods finally reached the Rosshof via Petersgraben, the moat in front of one of the city walls that had recently been filled in. In 1795, the building served as the residence of the French diplomat François Barthélemy during the negotiation of the "Peace of Basel" with Prussia, Spain and Hesse-Kasel. His landlord was the industrious Hieronymous, a.k.a. Jérôme.[98]

Hieronymous's oldest son initially took over the Basel-Alsace business. However, the heir predestined to succeed his father was declared to be mentally ill, placed under guardianship and taken out of the city; he died in a mental institution in Avenches.[99] His younger brother Hans Heinrich (1774–1842) took over his father's iron business, massively expanding in both Alsace and the region around Basel.[100] In 1830, this unmarried businessman sold the Rosshof building, and invested a portion of his capital in a business that his cousin Charles Stehelin had developed in Bitschwiller.[101]

Charles Stehelin (1805–1848) was one of those *hommes résolus, efficaces et entreprenants* who had helped promote the industrialization of the Alsace. At any rate this is what is asserted in a publication commemorating Charles's 200th birthday. Charles moved from Basel to Bitschwiller as a young man, where he transformed his father's foundry into a factory for machines and iron machine parts. In 1830, with money from his Basel relatives, he founded a company that he ran together with his cousin Henri Huber.[102] The firm was, appropriately, called "Stehelin et Huber" and employed about 700 workers — almost certainly the largest business that the family ever had.

The factory was located on the Thur river, a tributary of the Rhine. The textile industry was flourishing in this valley, and

Stehelin et Huber produced machines for it. However, such *machines à vapeur* were not Charles Stehelin's passion; rather he served as *figure emblématique de la construction de locomotives*. In fact, the first locomotive in Alsace was built in his factory in 1838. Stehelin had acquired the knowledge needed to do this from his time in Great Britain, where he found his chief engineer and an easily reproducible prototype. Locomotives from his concern were put into service on numerous train lines, including Paris to St Germain route, Mulhouse to Thann, Milan to Venice — and Strasbourg to Basel.[103]

Charles, who had obtained French citizenship in the meantime, sought but failed to obtain a permit for the construction of the first rail link to Switzerland in 1840. The Strasbourg-Basel line remained a French endeavor and this 132-kilometer line did not reach Basel's city walls until 1844.[104]

Stehelin et Huber had two steam locomotives in service, the "Strasbourg" and the "Bitschwiller," and the family-owned company supplied material for the protracted construction of a national rail network, including the track materials for the Swiss Central Railway. Charles Stehelin and his successors in the Alsatian machine factory were able to count on family ties in Basel when bidding for contracts from Switzerland: His cousin, August Stähelin, was a member of the state railway commission and the advisory council to the Central Railway, and from 1871 on its president. He also represented Basel-Stadt in the Council of States, one of the two chambers of the Swiss Federal Parliament established in the constitution of 1848.[105] While the national border separated Basel and Alsace, they remained very closely connected economically and socially.

WORLD TRADE AND WORLD WAR

Stehelins also settled elsewhere in France. Most of them considered themselves to be French. In the eighteenth century, numerous family members served in the French military.[106] At the same time a particularly industrious branch of the family established itself on the Atlantic coast. Four Stehelin siblings — Martin, Matthias, Franz Rudolf and Franziska Margaretha — all played a role in a network that connected the French harbor with businesses in Basel and plantations in the Caribbean. In Bordeaux,

the two middle brothers worked in a trading house that their uncle Johann Georg Streckeisen had built. The sister, meanwhile, married a gentleman who had a similar business in Nantes. In Basel, meanwhile, the oldest brother ran a store that dealt in staples such as coffee, cotton or sugar. Located near one of the few remaining medieval city gates, Spalentor, the store sold colonial wares which were probably obtained in large part from the trading houses that his relatives had set up in Bordeaux and Nantes. (Unfortunately, Nantes and Bordeaux were not merely trading places for coffee, tea and sugar, they were also the two largest markets for enslaved persons in France.[107])

One of the two brothers who had settled in Bordeaux at the end of the eighteenth century lived in the chic suburb of Caudéran, where his son Jean-Baptiste Stehelin (1784–1854) entered the wine business. In this famous wine-producing region, he owned both the Château de Sorlut and the Château La Haye (Médoc) and was known in his community as a philanthropist. The family book notes that the "Faubourg des Chartrons" was renamed to "Chemin Stéhélin" in recognition of his philanthropy.[108] In southwestern France, the family wrote their name with the *accent aigu* on both *e*'s and pronounced it: Stéhélin. They also modified the family crest: Two blue wings flanked the weapon that has been used as the family seal in Basel since the sixteenth century.[109]

Basel had faded in the memories of the Stéhélin branch by the time Wilhelm Richard Staehelin (1892–1956) traveled to Bordeaux in the summer of 1921 and reported his genealogical findings back to the historian Felix Stähelin in Basel. Felix and Wilhelm Richard, who was known by his initials W.R., were not closely related; their lineage had separated back in the eighteenth century. Yet, W.R. wrote "of our relatives" in his letters from France. He had been assured that just 30 years earlier that the "Stéhélins […] would have been involved in everything that was anything in Bordeaux society." However, there were only two sisters left, who hated each other, and had sold the family portraits and signets because they needed the money.

W.R. explains the family's downfall in terms of disease and genetics. The "disease of the pelvic organs" and the "mental devastation" of the Southern France branch of the family

purportedly came "from the syphilis of the father Stéhélin." To make matters worse, this very Jean Emile Stéhélin (1839–1889), "who must have been a 'friend of parties and women of the first order'," married a woman who was mentally ill: Julie Virgine Pepita de Santa Coloma (1845–1906). She was the daughter of the consul for both Argentina and Chile. *"Cette nouvelle a tué mon grand-père,"* one of the surviving daughters reportedly told W.R., adding that Mme. Stéhélin-de Santa Coloma "laughed or cried all day long." The other daughter had married a Parisian. She was nearly blind and lived "in poverty outside of Bordeaux and cared for her daughter, 25 years old and an Idiot," W.R. reported to Basel. "Their four other children, luckily, died young. None of them could reproduce."[110]

W.R. Staehelin would go on to become one of the most famous genealogists in Switzerland. His descriptions from Bordeaux can still be found in the family book to which his colleague Felix tended: "Wine merchant in Bordeaux, squandered their paternal genome." The branch ends with the entry on Jean-Emile Stéhélin-de Santa Coloma.[111]

Family members also engaged in viticulture in Provence. In the mid-nineteenth century, a Basel haberdasher bought the Mont Thabor estate in Bédarrides from a stagecoach operator. It was located not far from Avignon and was run by Stehelins for generations. One of the landlords was named *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur* for services during the First World War.

Alexander Gustav Stehelin received a glittering souvenir of the glamour of the *Grande Nation* in 1834. In that year Prince Louis Bonaparte gave him a finely crafted walking stick. The two had gotten to know each other during their time at the artillery school in Thun. This fine stick would later join the collections in the Basel Historical Museum.[112] After the *coup d'état* of December 2, 1851, Prince Bonaparte became Napoleon III, Emperor of the French. In 1870, his aggressive foreign policies would culminate in the Franco-Prussian war, which hit the population of Alsace-Lorraine — including the many Stehelins there — particularly hard.

Another Stehelin, Léon (1843–1905), took part in caring for the large number of people injured in this war. After Colmar and Strasbourg fell, he moved to Belfort, where the mayor entrusted

him with the organization of shelter and sustenance of the beleaguered population. The *"expérience qu'il a acquise au siège de Strasbourg"* was more than enough qualification.[113] The situation in Belfort was precarious. During the 103-day siege by Prussian troops, around 5000 French soldiers died. The ambulance (commandeered by León) had to care for countless wounded and sick, as typhus and hunger tore through the city. Belfort was the last French bastion in a war that sealed the changing of the guard in continental Europe. In 1871, Wilhelm I was declared Kaiser in Versailles' Hall of Mirrors, and almost all of Alsace-Lorraine was incorporated into the German Reich; Belfort was the exception. The city was left to France and León Stehelin became Prefect. In 1897 he was declared a Commander of the French Legion of Honor. His daughter, Louise Marie Madeline Stehelin (1889–1992) still holds the unofficial title of the oldest known Stehelin. She lived to 103.[114]

The Alsatian Stehelins had different reactions to France's defeat. Some moved to French territories; others knew how to come to terms with German rule. After the war, one particularly successful owner of a felt factory moved from Bitschwiller, which now was called Bitschweiler, to Baden-Baden, the sophisticated German spa town.[115] The political ascent of Germany also changed things in Basel, for now some Stähelins did something that heretofore had been unheard-of: they married Germans.

The empathy that Rudolf Staehelin (1875–1943) had for Germany sprang from the country's exceptional scientific and academic reputation. This Basel doctor had studied in Tübingen and Munich. From 1907–1911 he was a senior physician in Göttingen and was appointed Royal Prussian Professor at the famous Charité hospital in Berlin.[116] It was in Berlin, more precisely in the district of Schöneberg, that he met Johanna Helene Emma Kracht, daughter of a moneyed insurance director and publisher. They married and moved to Basel, where her husband became a Professor of Internal Medicine and Director of the University Medical Clinic. In that capacity in took on his sister-in-law, Malta Kracht, as a student nurse. She would later become his second wife, after her sister died of influenza. Her path from "Auntie Malta" to *Frau Professorin* and then, finally, to *Grossmalti* (or "Grandma Malti") is described by relatives in her obituary.[117]

During the Second World War, Professor Staehelin accepted an invitation from the German Foreign Office. This led to what was dubbed the "Stähelin Affair," which animated the Swiss. Why would a doctor from Basel accept an assignment from the National Socialist regime? Surely, he would have been able to offer good reasons why he should not have to travel to the Eastern Front in September 1939 when the German Army was invading Poland. The purpose of his travel to the war zone was to conduct research on poisoning in the German Army. Others had written about the topic in the *Handbook for Internal Medicine,* which he edited and which was the standard reference, but he himself was a specialist in tuberculosis and numerous other diseases.[118] In his report, he wrote: "On September 20 I examined ten German soldiers in Jaslo, and in nine of them with certainty have identified the symptoms of 'yellow cross' poisoning […]. The predominance of skin symptoms leads to the assumption that the poison must be the so-called 'lost warfare agent' (dichlordiaethyl sulfide yperite)."[119] Polish troops had deployed this chemical weapon, better known as mustard gas, on September 8.

Staehelin's findings were used in Nazi propaganda, which characterized him as a neutral "key witness." "The reliable report," the *Frankfurter Zeitung* newspaper asserted, proved unequivocally "that the Poles have used English toxic gas in warfare." As a result of the public report, Staehelin's trip, became the subject of open debate, in both the Basel's cantonal parliament and the public sphere. "We do not wish to declare war on the person of Herr Prof. Staehelin," wrote the *Arbeiter-Zeitung.* But one could only speculate about the doctor's motives: "We don't know if it was naïveté that moved the Basel professor to undertake this mission, or perhaps the enticement of a high honor, or false ambition, or particular sympathies to the countrymen of his wife." Finally, the political left settled on a mild judgment: naïveté. "The debate in the Great Council has shown that nobody can seriously doubt that Prof. Staehelin has been misused in the service of a clumsy deception maneuver."[120]

The political department in Bern considered the "Stähelin Affair" to be unusual. It took the view that the whole thing "was

about a private matter", and the Federal Councilor Guiseppe Motta responsible for the matter stressed Stähelin's scientific abilities and integrity.[121] In the face of a war of annihilation that had become worldwide, interest in the affair quickly died down. A year after the report, Professor Staehelin showed the Swiss general Henri Guisan his hospital in Basel. Rudolf died in 1943, two years before the end of the war.[122]

The Second World War moved dangerously close to Basel, but apart from two accidental bombings, the border town was spared. Hatred of the Germans and their *Führer* Adolf Hitler had was intense in the city, remembers Christine Staehelin-Telschow, who was born in Berlin in 1933 and moved to Basel to live with relatives during the war. She learned the local dialect as quickly as possible, so as not to be mocked as a *Sauschwob,* or "Swabian swine." Evidence of her assimilation was marriage to a member of the city's bourgeoisie.[123] However, due to her German birthplace, like Malta Staehelin-Kracht she belonged to a minority in the family. Only two percent of the individuals recorded in the family book were born in the area that today constitutes Germany — one, of course, being the family progenitor, Hans Stehelin.

THE EXOTIC AND FOREIGN IN BASEL

In addition to those who immigrated or emigrated, there were also many Stähelins who traveled abroad. From the seventeenth century onwards, numerous members of the family visited metropolises such as Amsterdam, Paris or London, some for studies and teaching, others for a *Bildungsreise,* or educational grand tour, through Europe.[124] After their return, conditions in Basel — and other Swiss cities — seemed provincial. Until the nineteenth century, the population of Basel remained fairly consistent around 15,000. In contrast, in the eighteenth century there were about 250,000 people in Amsterdam, and in Paris well over 500,000; 1800-era London had a population of one million. These cities were the capitals of empires whose dominions could be found in all corners of the world in the nineteenth century. Although Switzerland held no colonies, the Swiss were already traveling widely to such places.

Many Stähelins longed to travel overseas. Some could afford expeditions to the Andes or Polynesia.[125] Many traveled the

world in the name of religion. One Stähelin was responsible for the Basel mission in India, another for the Brotherhood Mission in modern Guyana, and another went on a mission in Sendai (Japan) and El Biar (Algeria). Family members traveled as wives of the clergy to Belgium, South Africa or Denmark; one founded the evangelical bookstore "Stähelin & Lauenstein" in Vienna. Religion also played a role in the geographic separation of families: Clergymen's children grew up in Hurgtwilen-Uesslingen in Thurgau or in Thalheim in Aargau.[126]

Meanwhile, the family's numerous diplomats and ambassadors also concerned themselves with international relations, albeit in the political realm. Business trips became more common, for example for the chemical and pharmaceutical industry, which in the twentieth century rose to become the leading industry in Basel and the most important Swiss export. In the name of "Basel chemistry," Stähelins traveled to China or Syria, further educated themselves at Arsley in New York, led quality control in Jakarta or a division in Bogotá.[127] They were managers of multinational concerns. Today they would be called "expats."

Many of the letters that Stähelins wrote back to Basel from abroad have been preserved. This international correspondence is wide-ranging, and often so densely written as to appear bereft of white space. There had been much to report. The family members who remained home sometimes answered seriatim in the same letter: mother, father and siblings would write their lines after one another. This had a similar effect abroad as it did in Basel: Life was shared in letters. In its correspondence the family functioned as a "translocal network."[128] Those who had moved away kept a place in their hearts for their family in Basel. At the same time, they sent welcome dispatches back to Basel: descriptions of newborn babies, gossip from foreign lands, treasures from the depths of the jungle or "primitive" art.

Ethnology and zoology were of topics interest with Basel's upper middle class in the nineteenth century. Among these pioneers were Fritz and Paul Sarasin, two cousins who visited parts of South Asia and collected numerous objects, classified them and brought them back to local museums.[129] Stähelins also took part in building the collections in Basel.[130] In the catalog of the Museum der Kulturen (Museum of Cultures) there are over a

dozen donors with this name. Among the over 300,000 objects which comprise one of the most important ethnographic collections in Europe, one can find a wide range of objects donated by Stähelins such as pots, arrows and statues, hides from Ethiopia, human bones from the South Pacific or an exquisitely crafted leather saddle with matching cowboy hat from Mexico. Objects from all over the world were not only donated to museums and collections, they also decorated private homes. One of the nephews of the widely traveled Alfred Stähelin (1853–1941) wrote that one could "wonder at the exotic treasures, butterflies, Indian jewelry etc.," that adorned his home.[131] In 1885, Alfred published *Sommer und Winter in Südamerika (Summer and Winter in South America),*[132] Later he traveled to Palestine or in the Maghreb and was a member of the commission for the "ethnographic collection" in Basel. Today, such collections must increasingly justify themselves in terms of provenance — however, countless "exotic treasures" remain tucked away in private households.

The Stähelins were also involved in the establishment of the Basel Zoo and served on its Board of Directors.[133] At the zoo spectators gawked at camels or elephants such as the city-famous "Miss Kambuk," or went to the antelope house, to the giraffes or to visit the okapis. At the time, one of the major attractions at zoos were the *Völkerschauen* or exhibits of live humans. Basel was no exception. It had become industrial and people were interested in "primitive" life in faraway places. As late as 1935, Basel had a *Negerdorf aus dem Senegal,* or "Negro village from Senegal." The cultural historian James Clifford noted that the thirst for knowledge and "restless desire and power of the west" led to efforts to "to collect the world."[134]

THE "NEW WORLD" AND NEW FRANCE

In 1710, Christoph von Graffenreid, a member of one of the distinguished families of Bern, founded a colony in North Carolina, which he christened New Bern.[135] The settlement primarily attracted immigrants from Germany and Switzerland. One of them was Martin Stähelin (1714–1756), who had led a restless life. He started as a merchant and tobacco manufacturer, went bankrupt and was incarcerated. After his downfall in Basel, he tried unsuccessfully to gain a foothold in Bern and Loerrach. In

1753, he crossed the Atlantic while his four children remained behind in Europe. Three years later he died in New Bern.[136]

New France was a settlement in Nova Scotia founded at the end of the nineteenth century by Emile Charles Adolphe Stehelin (1837–1918) and Marie Thérèse Buisson (1849–1910). In 1983, Paul Stehelin, grandson of the colony's founder, published a book with the long subtitle *The Stehelins of New France: The fabulous true story of a legendary family who carved out of the forest wilderness a beautiful life and prosperous business* […]. There was quite a story to tell. The life led from Alsace via Normandy to Canada.

The grandfather had run a felt factory in Bitschwiller, and after the Franco-Prussian War had sought out life in a new homeland. "In a melancholy mood, he crossed into Switzerland to visit relations and family landmarks in Bâle,"[137] his grandson writes. Emile moved his business to Normandy, and in 1892 he sold the felt factory in Gisors. In 1895 he bought forests near Weymouth in Canada. This is where the Stehelins' settlement came into being. It wasn't called New Basel or Nouveau Bitschwiller, but simply: Nouvelle France, or New France.[138]

The country there really was beautiful, wrote Emile shortly after his arrival to a daughter who lived in Paris. He found the "solitude" charming, and the construction of a forestry enterprise was going well. The family already owned a mule, a chicken coop and lodgings for the workers; a stall for twenty animals (horses, sheep, pigs, oxen) was under construction at that moment, along with a second house for the family. "Madame ran her house from her *fauteuil* in the living room," wrote Stehelin, and she had to teach the servants "the European way of keeping the house and cooking." All sons had to shave and wax their mustaches daily, and "the girls wore skirts to the ankles, blouses to the wrists and practically up to their chins." Morality and religion were important in New France, and in 1898 the colony received a chapel.[139]

In Canada, the Stehelins turned to the lumber business. By 1895 their mill sawed two hundred battens daily, each batten measuring fifteen to eighteen meters long. To distribute their products, their patron invested in a locomotive and the construction of a rail line that was over ten kilometers long. The "Weymouth and New France Railway" was built with support

from the state and inaugurated in 1897. The family organized the distribution of their lumber from Weymouth, a large village on the Sissiboo river, to destinations that included the Caribbean and South America. In addition to wood, the Stehelins of New France also produced electricity. The hydroelectric plant there brought the location the nickname that the grandson Paul Stehelin would later choose as the title of his book: The Electric City.[140]

During the First World War, the male Stehelins served in the Canadian army. Sales had already begun to lag, and after Emile's death, his heirs had searched for a buyer for New France. The family owned "nine thousand five hundred acres of forest land," wrote Stehelin, including "dwellings, a barn, an office, water sawmill, an electric plant and other buildings," as well as property in Weymouth and a quay, "the Stehelin wharf." The forests of New France covered the equivalent of 38.5 square kilometers, roughly the same area as the canton of Basel-Stadt. In 1923 a company bought the land at a price well below its true value, as the author of *The Electric City* stressed, because of the decline in forestry. Today, there are fifteen great-grandchildren in the Stehelin-Buisson family, nine in Canada, five in France, and four in the U.S."If one returns to New France today, he would find but a lovely, very still clearing in the middle of the forest," writes Paul Stehelin at the end of the book.[141]

CATHOLIC STÄHELINS IN SANTA CATARINA

The family also has members who settled in France and North America. Genealogists also suspect that there is a branch in Great Britain, though it remains undiscovered.[142] By contrast, Stähelins in Brazil are well documented and were warmly welcomed into the family circle in 1990.[143] As Andreas Staehelin explained on the Family Day in that year, the "Brazilian progenitor" was Arnold Alfred Stähelin (1822–1892). The emigrant is described as a "naturalist" on a family chart from the nineteenth century. He was, then, a "nature researcher" or *Naturkundiger,* as it was termed in dictionaries of the time. Naturalists proceeded "not from art or school, but rather simply according to natural facilities."[144] As such, Arnold Alfred stood apart from the sciences whose systems the naturalists mocked. In the Stähelin "family of scholars" he was the odd man out. His Basel relatives taunted

him: Was a "naturalist" simply a dilettante, or just crazy? Arnold Alfred may also have had differences with his father, who held a master's degree and was a pastor in Kleinhüningen, a fishing village near Basel that would later be incorporated into the city.[145]

Unlike the Stehelins who had relocated to the forests of North America, those who left for Brazil did not have a large fortune. Arnold Alfred was not directly related to any of the wealthy Stähelins, and he did not mingle with the local upper class. The lives of his brother and a nephew suggest that the socio-economic situation of this branch of the family was rather difficult. They, too, kept nothing and knew nobody in Basel; they tried their hands as chefs and innkeepers; porters at a monastery and tram conductors; they moved to Italy before eventually following Arnold Alfred to Brazil.[146]

The first Stähelins to move to Brazil did not number among the merchants who established outposts in South America for the Swiss cotton or watch industry. They were also not as destitute as the Swiss who founded the settlement Nova Friburgo near Rio after the famine of 1817, or those who were hired around 1850 on coffee plantations near São Paulo.[147] In Brazil, Arnold Alfred, the Basel "naturalist," became a farmer. In 1849 he married Maria Magdalena Minnich, and the couple had twelve children.

The family lived in the southern part of the country, its "place of origin" being São Pedro de Alcântara in Santa Catarina. In the nineteenth century, this federal state attracted emigrants from Italy, Poland and Belgium, and the Germans left a particularly strong imprint. Modern towns such as Blumenau and Joinville were founded, in 1850 and 1851 respectively, as German colonies. The Stähelins' residence was also a colony: São Pedro de Alcântara was founded in 1829, is considered to be the first German-speaking settlement in Santa Catarina.[148]

The Brazilian Stähelins had their own genealogists as well. In 1994, they shared this information covering more than a hundred people with their Basel relatives. Today, the digital database of the Stähelin family contains information on 203 individuals who were born in Brazil. Almost all of them — 197 — first saw the light of day in the federal state of Santa Catarina, and their connection to São Pedro de Alcântara, a town of about 5000, remains particularly strong. Ernei José Stähelin, an economist

born in 1958, is currently the mayor. He is a member of the centrist party Movimento Democrático Brasileiro (PMDB).[149] Ernei José is one of the numerous Stähelins who now belong to the Brazilian upper class. One finds farmers, craftsmen and many European names among his forefathers.[150]

Celestine Stähelin (1854–1871), one of Arnold Alfred's daughters, married Jacob Gödert, founder of Betânia, another German colony in Santa Catarina. Immigrants also farmed there, and soon built a small chapel. It was dedicated to São Sebastião.[151] The Brazilian Stähelins adopted the Catholic faith; Protestantism, to which the Basel family members had adhered since the Reformation, no longer played a role for them. Agostinho (1924–2018), known as Monsenhor Stähelin was a highly respected Catholic cleric. He served as Priest of Nossa Senhora de Fátima e Santa Teresinha do Menino Jesus, a parish in Florianópolis, the capital of Santa Catarina.

In his younger years, Agostinho had visited the Vatican. To spread the word of God, he later took part in a televised mass. When he was over 80 years old, Monsenhor Stähelin took over the small parish of São Pedro de Alcântara, where he was born and where the first Stähelins of Brazil had settled.[152] Agostinho is a key figure in the story of how distant relatives were brought together. He was among those who made the trip to Basel in 1990. The Baslers presented him as the patriarch of a well-situated family. Padre Agostinho Stähelin, as he is called in the family book, had a document in his possession – one that he treasured: the nineteenth-century pedigree that had been created in Basel by the naturalist Arnold Alfred. The heirloom was the key. Without the yellowed piece of paper, no one in Brazil would have come up with the idea that there were also Stähelins in Basel.

3. 'O LORD! MY ROCK!': PIETY AND PIETISM

Why do humans believe in the divine? Some sociologists maintain that it is through religion that humans attempt to navigate the shoals of everyday existence in a meaningful way. When famine looms, the shaman makes a sacrifice to the rain spirit and the sun god; when wars threaten, citizens accept the will of their divinely legitimized rulers. And in the face of illness and death, humans (assisted by their minister) pray for healing, ask for salvation and hope for survival.[153]

Religion, of course, is always located within an historical context. Faith, piety and spirituality are inseparable from power struggles and social conflicts. In the words of the 19th century Basel historian Jacob Burckhardt, religion, state and culture — the "three powers" — are mutually dependent.[154] None of these powers can be understood without comprehending both of the others, and it is within this context that families such as the Burckhardts and the Stähelins acquired power and influence, thanks to the Protestant Reformation.

In Basel, as in Switzerland's other major cities, the Reformation produced a symbiosis of political, economic and religious influence exercised through the Protestant Church that was closely connected to the state. Religious orthodoxy offered the population a moral compass, and the reading of the Holy Scripture stood at the center. "Heretics" and those with other beliefs — Baptists, Catholics, Jews — were persecuted and marginalized. The first post-Reformation Catholic mass approved by the Council did not take place until 1767, and it was for an imperial envoy in his private chapel. Catholics were denied right of citizenship, and the members of the Catholic clergy, who often came from Alsace, moved their parishes to the surrounding areas.[155] In the 16th and 17th Centuries, Jews often worked as proofreaders for Hebrew printers in the city, but their tenures were sharply limited, as Jews had neither rights of establishment nor citizenship.[156]

In Basel, the links connections between the political-economic elite and the leaders of various religious institutions were closer than in other Reformed cities of German-speaking Switzerland. As a result, it was common in the nineteenth century to speak one spoke of the *fromme Basel* ("pious Basel") of the 19th Century, whose beginnings date back to the Reformation.[157] (The Basel of the twenty-first century is now the most secular city in Switzerland, and one would be hard-pressed to find a city with more citizens unaffiliated with a church.)

In the Basel of the early modern period, the doctrines and practices of the Reformed church were ever present. They shaped the everyday life from cradle to grave, from baptism to burial, with marriage (that was meant to ensure reproduction) standing at the center. Baptism performed by the clergy marked the entry of a child into a religious community on Earth. At this time, the child (or, rather, the parents) were given a *Taufbatzen,* a folded piece of paper inscribed with handwritten well-wishes and prayers. In 1704, Benedict Socin, godfather of the newborn Balthasar Staehelin, wrote the following rhyming verse: *Gott segne dich an Seel und Leib, / mit seiner Gnad er bei dir bleib, / Der hl. Geist und Christi blut / Woll sein dein allerhöchstes gut,* which roughly translates to: *God bless you in soul and body / may you remain in His grace / may the Holy Ghost and blood of*

Christ / be your greatest good.[158] The godfather wished that the newly baptized baby be blessed in body and soul, and his whole person remain under the protection of a benevolent God, and that young Balthasar would strive for the spirit and blood of Christ more than earthly goods, although this of course did mean that they had to be foregone.

As the ethnologists remind us, baptism is a rite of passage,[159] one that touches the life of the individual and is closely bound with the customs of the community. After the Reformation, the church had a major impact on society and the state in Basel. Church leaders were not afraid to attack secular authorities who flouted religious teachings. With the Reformation Regulations of 1637, they introduced a repressive moral regime that regulated such matters as church attendance, the use of profane language, and the display of material luxury. The marriage court, introduced in 1529, would survive until the new constitution of 1875.[160]

Church burial was the final threshold between earthly life the next one, offering the community of believers an opportunity to bid farewell to the deceased. The dead, however, were not forgotten. Testimony for this can be found in the elaborate gravestones erected by the well-to-do in Basel as well as the so-called *Leichenreden,* or funeral orations, at the funeral. The leaflets printed in connection with this ceremony contained a copy of the sermon given at the funeral, usually an interpretation of a passage from the Bible, and a list of personalia, i.e. the genealogical origin over one or two generations on both the paternal and maternal side. They also contained an obituary and mourning verses composed by relatives.

The obituary was often written in advance by the deceased him- or herself, and then supplemented by a relative or pastor. For example, the booklet in honor of Katharina Staehelin, who died in 1704, bore the following title: "Funeral Oration for Catharina Forcardin, formerly wife of the highly respected, noble, austere, pious, eminent, prudent and wise Herr Martin Staehelin, Chief Guildmaster of this City, who left her a widow before her Death."[161] Staehelin, who was her second husband — previously she had been married to a Socin — takes up quite a bit of space in this tribute to her, as befitting his stature. It is also notable here that Katharina is again referred to as "Focardin,"

her maiden name. Meanwhile, the funeral oration of Benedikt Staehelin, whose last rites were performed in 1787 at the Münster, stated explicitly that the deceased had composed his own obituary: "Handwritten essay by the [blessed] Lord Master: I, Benedikt Staehelin, first beheld the light of the world on […]." However, given that Benedikt became gravely ill at the end of his life, he was unable to finish his autobiographical record. At the end, the funeral oration states that he was cared for "by his now grief-stricken widow, as well as his gentleman sons, lady daughters, gentleman sons-in-law and lady daughters-in-law […]."[162] Here the importance of family bonds, including those created by marriage, are evident.

Furthermore, the epitaphs — the memorial stones hung on the walls of a church — also testify to the importance of religion for the Baslers of this era. The most elaborate epitaphs were engraved in the seventeenth and eighteenth Centuries. By the nineteenth, they became simpler. Many members of the Staehelin family were buried at the Church of St. Leonhard, one of the largest churches in Basel, not far from Barfüsserplatz, as the family had burial rights in the cloister.[163] The moving epitaph of Johannes Staehelin, who died in 1660, includes the names of all three of his wives (Katharina Mentzinger, Margaretha Burger, Magdalena Götz) — and the Lord: *Das zeitlich Band der Ehe wird offt / zerbrochen ehe man es verhofft / Die Himlisch Ehe mit Jesu Christ / Ewig und unverbrüchlich ist: / Drumb sind in Jesu gescheiden nie / Welche der todt gescheidet hie,* which roughly translates to: *The temporal bond of marriage is often / broken before one hopes / the heavenly marriage with Jesus Christ / is eternal and unbreakable: / therefore, there are no divorces with Jesus / such as those that death divorces here.*[164]

Somewhat less spiritual was the epitaph of Johann Heinrich Staehelin, a professor of botany and anatomy who died in 1721. The text betrays an astonishing degree of realism. It appears to have been composed by his wife, Margaretha (née Birr) and their nine children. In translation from the Latin, it reads: "The extraordinary adeptness of his medical counsel, but even more extraordinarily — and this is rarer — the adeptness of his hands in the service of the wellbeing of many, he swallowed bravely and steadfastly the anxieties and discomforts that all too often

have to be accepted in the practice of this profession; for all these years he was an observer of human pain, until he himself succumbed to lung disease."[165]

SISTERS OF THE BROTHERHOOD

Around the middle of the eighteenth century, Pietism took hold in Basel, and its influence was greater there than in any other city in Switzerland. It was a separatist "revivalist" movement, which sought to re-create Protestantism anew out of an early Christian spirit. The first Pietists, who organized in rural areas, were arrested by the government, pilloried on the grain market and expelled. They rejected the rituals and traditions of the church and expressed their longing for a personal and authentic experience of God. For them, divine rule superseded secular rule, and Biblical commandments were more binding than political ones. They saw themselves as pious, and the authorities as Godless, and believed that true believers should have a greater say and more weight in determining the correct way to conduct life. The Pietists stood in opposition to the rationalism and pantheism of the Enlightenment.[166]

However, there was no radical shift in government or society. Government discipline was maintained. The Pietistic movement made adjustments, and was assimilated into the established church, which itself took on some of the doctrines and practices of Pietism. This new movement attracted many followers, especially among the upper echelons of society. As such, in the nineteenth century, a unique pietistic-political landscape emerged in Basel, one that not only revitalized religious life, but also charity, education, proselytization through missions (both domestic and foreign), and, finally, the piety of many citizens. The Staehelins, men and women alike, were prominent in this movement. Women were attracted because, though still patriarchal, it provided them opportunity for action. In some societies, conflicts arose as to whether women could offer communion or were limited to reading aloud from the Bible.[167]

Pietism spread thanks to the efforts of numerous societies and movements, which initially had their roots primarily in Southern Germany. Around 1750, the *Herrnhuter Brüdersozietät* (Herrnhuter Brotherhood) first drew men and women of Basel

from the long-established circle of craft- and tradesmen to these new beliefs. In both the city and the countryside, they built a family-centered network in which members met for prayer and singing.[168] Some sixty years later, a Herrnhuter was appointed the pastor of St. Martin's, and later was even installed as mayor. In 1811, Benedict Staehelin (1766–1841) led the construction of a new hall for the Brotherhood, which he had designed himself. His son Balthasar became a Pietistic pastor at St. Jacob's and at the penitentiary.[169]

What did a bourgeois life look like when it was lived in the spirit of Pietism? Dorothea Gambs (née Staehelin) was born in 1791 and died in 1877 as a widowed *Schwester,* or "sister," of the Herrnhut. At the age of four, she already had a strong desire to join to the Brotherhood, like her mother. Her father did not join until later, but he had attended the congregation's meetings, which Dorothea related in the obituary that she herself had composed. The eulogy seemed as if it had been written by a member of the Brotherhood and bears witness to her total devotion to God.[170]

Here God was praised in the highest and most intimate tones: "O Lord! My rock, my castle, my Savior, my God, my refuge in whom I trust!" The author also alludes to crises and apparent sins, albeit not openly. A crisis in life, after all, was no more than purification on the way to the Light, to the Lord, on whom one could always rely: "[…] But even there, the Lord helped wonderfully." Towards the end of her autobiographic sketch, Dorothea writes that she experienced daily the truth of this verse: *Vor Jesu Augen schweben, ist wahre Seligkeit, / Ein unverrücktes Leben mit Jhm schon in der Zeit: / Nichts können, und nichts wissen, nichts wollen und nichts thun, / Als Jesu folgen müssen, das heisst im Frieden ruhn,* which roughly translates to: *Floating before Jesus' eyes is true bliss, / an undisturbed life with Him will come in good time: / Able to do nothing, knowing nothing, wanting nothing, doing nothing, / following Jesus means resting in peace.*[171]

One gets the impression that Dorothea was not so happy at home. Her true home was the Herrnhuter, and the religious society seems to have been her true family. She had attended the *Mädchenanstalt Montmirail* (the Montmirail Girls' Institute) in Neuchâtel, which belonged to the Herrnhuter. She wasn't the only one, either; many of the Stähelin daughters of the attended

this Institute. At fifteen, Dorothea was finally accepted into the Society. Soon thereafter, a Basel pastor proposed to her, but she followed her Savior and turned him down. It was only when her destiny was decided by the Brotherhood that she married: her groom was the "Inspector and Pastor" Daniel Gambs, whom she followed through Saxony and half of Europe, until they finally settled in Herrnhut. She was saddened, she wrote, that her "Brothers and Sisters" were a little lax in attending daily meetings.[172] Dorothea corresponded regularly with her family in Basel. Keeping up to date through copious personal correspondence allowed the Pietists to hold their community together.[173]

Dorothea's role model in her youth had been Henriette Maria Luise von Hayn. This poet, who died in 1782, was also a member of the Herrnhuter, and led the Girls' Institute and the Sisters' House there. Almost fifty of her songs were accepted into the Brothers' song book in 1778. Her best-known hymn, *Weil ich Jesu Schäflein bin* ("Because I'm a Lamb of Jesus"), has been translated into many languages and is still sung today in Reformed congregations and other churches.[174] Dorothea would have read Hayn's texts intensively; they led on her path to Pietism.

MISSION, SOCIETY, BROTHERHOOD

The *Christentumsgesellschaft* (Society of Christianity) gained a foothold in Basel a little later than the Brotherhood. It had been founded in 1780 as part of the Anti-Enlightenment. The Society's original name had been the *Deutsche Gesellschaft zur Beförderung reiner Lehre und wahrer Gottseligkeit* (German Society for the Promotion of Pure Teaching and True Godliness). The church historian, Ernst Staehelin (1889–1980), who was a three-time Rector of the University of Basel, sponsored the production of two volumes that brought together source material on the Christentumsgesellschaft. In the foreword he writes that the piety of the Christentumsgesellschaft, which had begun as a simple Bible study group, contained some questionable elements, but nevertheless had "a great seriousness" and, being completely free of the influence trends of the trends of the time, grappled with questions of true Christian existence.[175] As such, there was some sympathy for Pietism even as late as the second half of the twentieth century.

The Christentumsgesellschaft begat a multitude of important Pietistic institutions: The Basel Mission Society (1815), Beuggen Institute (1820), Society of the Friends of Israel (1831), Riehen Institute for the Deaf (1838), Pilgrim's Mission of St. Chrischona (1840), Riehen Deaconesses' Institute (1852), Basel City Mission (1859), Society for Sunday Sanctification (1862), the Christian Union House in Basel (1864) — and many more. Altogether some forty institutions sprang forth from the Christentumsgesellschaft.[176] Their most important outgrowth, however, was the *Basler Mission,* or Basel Mission. This organization expanded quickly and provided education for Christian missionaries who spread the Gospel, first in the Caucasus and then in West Africa, India and China.[177] They also provided missionaries to other institutions, such as the Anglican Church.[178] Eventually, the Basler Mission would spawn the great Basel Trading Company *(Basler Handelsgesellschaft),* in which several Stähelins were shareholders.[179]

The Basler Mission was a network that spanned almost the entire world, driving the circulation of "cotton and Bibles," as Hansmartin Siegrist has put it. It was a matter of faith — but also a matter of commerce. The synthesis of Pietism and global trade enabled the tiny country of Switzerland, including Basel and its commercial bourgeoisie, to operate in the shadow of the colonial powers in the tropics.[180]

The idea of the Mission enjoyed great popularity among the citizens of Basel. In 1874, Julie Benigna Staehelin (1829–1889), née Linder, published a booklet of pious verses, "the best of the Mission," through the Basel printing house C. Dettloff: *Lily of the Valley from Basel's Still Life.* Today, almost 150 years after they were written, the text seems curiously alien. The idea that Christianity and a Western way of life are a boon to the rest of the world is no longer held with unwavering certainty. The publication was aimed at devout philanthropists — *Damit der armen Heiden / Jhr eingedenk möget sein!* Or, "So that you may bear the poor heathen in mind" — and to the "departing missionaries" to whom the "heathen world" cries out: *Kommt, helft uns vor'm Gerichte, / Vom Heiland uns erzählt* ("Come, help us before the Judgment, / Tell us of the Savior).[181]

An important missionary in the family was the Herrnhuter Friedrich Stähelin (1846–1922). After attending the theological

seminary of the Brotherhood in Gnadenfeld, he served as a pastor in Neuchâtel, and then as missionary in Suriname, which was then a Dutch colony in South America. There he rose to become a Bishop in the Brethren Church and was made a member of the Order of Orange-Nassau, a Dutch military and civil order of chivalry. He married twice, but not to locals. He also wrote an extensive history of the Herrnhut Mission in Suriname and Berbice (modern Guyana).[182]

A CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

As Ernst Staehelin's collection of sources shows, the Stähelin family was heavily involved in the work of the Christentumsgesellschaft. Anton Friedrich (1752–1829), for example, a cantor and Latin teacher at the Münster,[183] contributed to the construction of the organization's site in Basel; the society was also further represented in Altona, Frankfurt am Main, Magdeburg, Nuremberg, Berlin, Dresden, Halberstadt, Flensburg, Prenzlau, Osna and Stettin/Szczecin.[184]

Another Stähelin who engaged with the pioneers of Pietism was the merchant Phillip (1763–1823), a partner in the Stähelin firms that traded in iron and mousseline fabric. His wife was Ursula Reber (1767–1844), whose mother hailed from a wealthy Huguenot family, the Passavants.

Ursula boasted friendships with a litany of well-known Pietists, including Johann Caspar Lavater, the idiosyncratic pastor and physiognomist from Zurich, Johann Friedrich Oberlin (pastor and Reformist pedagogue), Johann Heinrich Jung-Stilling (mystic and eye doctor), and Carl Friedrich Adolf Steinkopf, priest and initiator of the *Württembergischen Bibelanstalt* (Württemberg Bible Institute). This illustrious group testifies not only to Pietism's great allure at the time, but also to a stimulating intellectual milieu. On the one hand, Pietism was politically conservative and its Fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible irritated liberal theologians, who offered numerous historical-critical arguments. On the other, it produced dissidents such as Lavater and Oberlin.

In 1820, Christian Friedrich Spittler, the industrious secretary of the Christentumsgesellschaft and founder of numerous Pietistic social and missionary operations — and also an

acquaintance of Ursula Staehelin-Reber — established the Beuggen *Rettungsanstalt,* or Rescue Institute, on the site of a former castle located on the German banks of the Rhine near Basel. Beuggen remains a legendary pioneering pedagogical institution. One of its co-founders and financiers was the bourgeois merchant Balthasar Staehelin (1771–1855), brother and brother-in-law of Phillip and Ursula, and married to Anna Margaretha Christ. He served as a judge in the Matrimonial Court, councilman and church leader at the Münster.[185] In 1854, a Pietist who ran a children's home in Mannheim wrote to Spittler: "Thank you for the money! I shall send receipts to […]. There is now a total of 84 guilders from the 84-year-old Papa Stähelin, to whose life I wish I could add 84 more years!"

Beuggen had two objectives. The first was to educate Christian elementary school teachers and educators of the poor. The second was to raise orphaned and impoverished children so that they would be "saved" from poverty and from a pagan life of sin and shame in the depraved city. Industrialization had led to the impoverishment of the peasant class and an increase in children living in and moving about the city without parents. Beyond that there were the urban poor living in precarious conditions, whose lifestyles were strongly condemned by the Pietists as they were seen to consist only alcohol, misery and prostitution. Strong language was used at Beuggen's opening ceremonies: "A so-called Christianity without Christ, without faith, without love, without comfort and without vitality spread like a flood and because it had provided no protection, or because the protection had grown weak– opened the gates to moral corruption which, like a spiritual rot, threatened to consume the whole body of the Christian people."[186]

Beuggen, which soon spread throughout the German-speaking world, stood for quite a lot: for Reformed pedagogy — the classical Nuremberg *Trichter* method (funnel learning) was rejected, just as conventional catechism on the grounds that the students simply regurgitate what the teacher has fed them. The ideology called for fighting poverty, philanthropy and for downright fanatical piety. The movement blamed the neglect of children and the lack of religious education for poverty. The institution organized itself in the manner of its ideal family. The

housefather and housemother made up the "parents," while the pupils were the "children."[187] When the pedagogue Johann Heinrich Pestalozzi, also a Pietist, visited the home in 1826, he was said to have been extremely impressed.

Many more Pietistic Stähelins than those already mentioned worked for the faith: the professor, theologian and Old Testament scholar Johann Jakob (1797–1875) for example, took part in the founding of the "Greek Institute," also located at Beuggen. Even before that there was committee in Basel that supported the Greeks' struggle for independence from the Ottoman Empire. This struggle started in the 1820s and resonated enormously among liberal-minded citizens in Europe. In 1826, the Basel Pietists founded a "Union for the Moral-Religious Influence on the Greeks," which sought to liberate children from "Turkish slavery" and educate them as good Christians at the Greek Institute.[188]

The Union took about twenty Greek children, including one girl, to Beuggen via Marseille. They were schooled intensively, particularly in ancient languages. However, the "leadership and teaching" of the children proved much more difficult than the philanthropists had imagined. The children had not, in fact, been enslaved at all, and as such were neither needy nor grateful. They are said to have rebelled because of their dissatisfaction with their condition. They remained in Basel for around five years, but as interest in the Greeks waned, they were either sent back or placed in foster homes. The Staehelin-Bischoff family took a boy named Soterus, and Johann Jakob Staehelin found a home for Nicolaus Pestalis with a fellow professor.[189]

The institution survived despite its various crises, thanks in no small measure to Johann Jakob's son Ernst Staehelin (1829–1888), a pastor in Basel and a member of the Beuggen committee. In 1880, he delivered the closing prayer at the hundredth anniversary celebration of the Christentumsgesellschaft.[190] One of its last board members was the Rev. Richard Staehelin (1896–1962), and still more Stähelins were involved in the founding of a Christian-Pietist writing series, the *Traktatverein* (Treatise Association), the deaconesses' institution in Riehen and the refuge for "Roman converts" on St. Chrischona.[191] The descendants of the merchant Benedict Staehelin (1796–1886) are

said to have constituted a Herrnhuter parish dynasty, and the Society of Friends of Israel was able to provide postal services free of charge thanks to the generosity of the company that Benedict Staehelin (1766–1841) owned.[192]

THE SOCIAL QUESTION

Pietism entailed philanthropy, and the wealthy citizens of *fromme Basel* provided substantial donations. Philanthropy, however, was not purely altruistic. It was a means by which citizens sought to alleviate economic inequalities without having to establish a state social safety net. They wanted to prevent the working class that consisted mainly of immigrants from demonstrating or striking and to encourage them to pray and work as the bourgeoisie did — and to be grateful for the alms they received. When workers in the silk ribbon industry began to agitate in 1869, Rev. Ernst Staehelin, together with Councilor Adolf Christ and the successful businessman Karl Sarasin, convened a "Conference about the Social Question."

These three gentlemen represented the realms of religion, economics and politics, and they numbered among the most influential persons in Basel. Christ, Sarasin and Staehelin shared the view that the well-being of the working classes would be improved through a three-point plan. The "strengthening of the feeling of personal responsibility for one's own well-being," made possible by "instruction or assistance as to the best possible use of the means available in the given circumstances," and finally through "Christian influence on both employers and workers. Without faith in God, and without hope for an afterlife, the former will always be stubborn and averse to helping and the latter will always resentful in their hatred and mistrust of their superiors."[193]

This, of course, was pure paternalism. The bourgeoisie sidestepped the social causes of the workers' discontent, not to mention their dire material needs.[194] There was a world of difference between the views of the bourgeoisie about the "social question" and the analysis of the labor movement about the condition of the proletariat. The conservative bourgeois armed themselves against socialism, but also against the radical liberals who had gained the sympathy of the immigrant population.[195] Nevertheless, in that same year, 1869, one of the first factory labor laws in Switzerland was passed. It capped the workday at twelve hours and restricted child labor.[196]

Not every Stähelin of this time was so pious or so Pietist, but almost all of them could have been devout members of the Evangelical-Reformed Church of Basel in the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The historian Urs Hofmann has written about how lively and influential the Protestant milieu was in the first half of the twentieth century. It retained its influence for decades despite the adoption of a new Constitution in 1875 that separated church and state, made the church subordinate to the state and provided for representative democracy in the place of the so-called *Ratsherrenregiment* (Councilor's Regime). The mainstream Protestants and Pietists, most of whom were part of in the old-established urban bourgeoisie, held sway in this milieu. They had more influence than the more liberals and radicals.[197]

This milieu included approximately 75 Protestant clubs, extending from the Abstinence Union of the Evangelical Community of Basel to the Basel Zwingliverein and included a club devoted to the teachings of Huldrych Zwingli.[198] Almost 1100 people were active in these clubs, worked as clergy or were members of the Evangelical *Volkspartei,* or Evangelical People's Party. Some 280 of these, mostly men, were members of two or more such organizations. Eight members of the Stähelin family numbered among the most influential people in this environment.[199] One of the most influential was Ernst (1861–1949), pastor of St. Theodor church, which was located in the workers' quarter of Kleinbasel. He was married to Sibylla Merian and the father of seven children.[200]

Ernst was a leader in about a dozen Protestant institutions, including the Pietistic Evangelical Society for the City Mission, the most important institution in Basel for the "inner mission" (meaning within Protestantism), as well as the Klein-Basel Section of the Blue Cross Society, which had been started by the Christentumsgesellschaft. Ernst was also the President of the Basel Women's Collective, which supported Evangelicals in the diaspora, and a member of the Society for Christian Theological Science. This Pietistic society was set up in reaction to the appointment of a liberal to the chair of theology at the University.[201]

Ernst's charity was said to be legendary among the workers of Kleinbasel and although he was quite wealthy, he lived very modestly.[202]

SECULARIZATION

Pietistic beliefs and behavior were still in evidence in the second half of the twentieth century, though then it was more ecumenical and socially open. An example of this change is Gertrud Staehelin-Kutter (1901–1980), nicknamed Meieli, a daughter-in-law of the Rev. Ernst Staehelin.[203] As the daughter of a prominent Zurich theologian and reverend Hermann Kutter, she grew up in the midst of the socioreligious movement her father began, which was essentially Pietism with a social conscience. Meieli broke out of Pietism's strict conservative corset, so to speak. She was married for almost sixty years to Ernst Staehelin the younger, a professor of religious history in Basel who was predisposed to nineteenth-century style Pietism. He died in the same year as his wife, 1980, three months before she did.

In 1946 Meieli wrote to her husband from the mountains after one of their rare fights (if one is to conclude from their voluminous correspondence): "My love, it behooves me to send you greetings before I lie down tonight […], in hopes that you, too, will find peace tonight. 'For worse and better,' we belong together, and if, for example, we have once again and painfully had to recognize the limits of our human condition, then we may become even more joyfully aware of the connection in the divine reality, and in this, only in this but also consciously in it, take every new day anew and forget what lies behind it. And so, I will go to bed tonight and take joy in the treasure that God has entrusted to me in you."[204]

This passage speaks volumes. *Frau Professorin* (as the pubic addressed her, in addition to *Frau Rektorin)* wrote to her husband every day whenever they were apart, a conclusion easily substantiated by the sheer number of letters and postcards now held in the Basel family archives. The converse, however, does not seem to have been the case, which Meieli sometimes laments.

Secondly, it is apparent that Meieli puts herself in her husband's shoes every day — feels with him, thinks with him. Perhaps he did the same — looked at the world through her eyes. In

any case this marriage, with its five children (who resided in the theological Frey-Grynaeus Institute at the Upper Heuberg over which he presided), was ultimately the foundation for what this internationally renowned theologian did. When Meieli reports of her concerns about the children, she almost apologizes for bothering him. She writes of "our students," for whom she cared when Ernst was away, handles correspondence on behalf of them both, and signs with "your Mrs. Placeholder." She also performed charitable work. During the Second World War, the couple took in refugees and migrants, and afterward Meieli organized interdenominational encounters in her home *Zu den drei Mönchen* or "house of the three monks".[205]

Finally, it is apparent that there is a third party that is ever present in Meieli's marriage: God. *And so, I will go to bed tonight and take joy in the treasure that God has entrusted to me in you.* In times of crisis, God seems to have taken on the role of mediator or therapist. The couple commemorates their togetherness in God and leaves grief behind.

God, religion and faith are not only omnipresent in Meieli's letters, but also in her richly illustrated *Lebensbüchern,* or journals, which she kept from 1917 to 1979. Whenever she went on outings, her destinations were always monasteries, churches, chapels and Christian homes. During holidays in the Alps she always visited parish families who were friends, went to sermons, read the scriptures and took part in religious study sessions. She taped into her journal reviews of books by her husband and brother, Hermann Kutter, that appeared in the Basel papers. Examples include Ernst's collection of Lavater's works or Hermann's book about their father *(Hermann Kutters Lebenswerk).*[206]

Meieli also clipped out of the Basler Zeitung a large review of Ernst's biography of the Basel theology professor and university rector Friedrich Lachenal, who gave up his post and spent his remaining evenings engrossed in mystical verses of the Bible. He had succeeded the fanatical Pietist Barbara Baroness Julie von Krüdener, who herself had been quite a character. She had traveled through Southern Germany and Northern Switzerland between 1816–1818, working as a nurse and announcing her visions to thousands of spectators. This had proved too much

for the authorities, and she was cast out of Basel.[207] Ernst's book rehabilitated Lachenal.[208] It must have been a source of satisfaction for Meieli to read in the *Basler Zeitung* that Ernst's booklet *Fifty-six Theses on the Kingdom of God* had developed Hermann Kutter's thought "in a congenial yet independent spirit".[209]

With Fritz Lieb (1892–1970), Meieli and Ernst's brother-in-law, the family's Pietism took a socialistic turn.[210] Fritz studied theology with Hermann Kutter and Leonhard Ragaz, the pacifist and the most important religious socialist in Switzerland. In 1915, Lieb — who was Ruth Staehelin's husband — joined the Social Democrats and was active in trade unions in the 1920s. He held a chair in theology at universities in Basel and Berlin and was a supporter of the so-called dialectical theology of Karl Barth. Barth, also from Basel and one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century, was a socialist and professed opponent of National Socialism and anti-Communism, as well as a proponent of ecumenism.[211] Meieli expressed some reservations about Barth's approach to theology in her memoirs because she lacked deep feelings for his work.[212]

By the time Fritz died in 1970, a process sociologists call "secularization" was underway. The concept, which had been the subject of heated debate for decades, referred variously to two processes relating to the role of religion in Western culture: the distancing of church from the state, as well as the dwindling power of religion as a normative guide for people's lives and a source of meaning.

Today's Basel is largely secular society. Churches are threatened with the loss of their last remaining privileges, such as receiving state subsidies as public institutions and being tax-free. Aside from this, they have lost virtually all of their influence in society. Up until the beginning of the twentieth century, anyone who held views contrary to religious teaching had to justify themselves; today it is the churches that are compelled to justify their moral behavior of the clergy. More and more Christians are interpreting religion quite freely, cultivating a diffuse private belief system and doubting church dogma.

In Basel, the distancing of people from institutionalized religion is particularly strong. In 1915, the city boasted over 60 Protestant societies, in which some 40 members of the clergy

were active; in 1980, there were 40 societies and ten members of clergy. Additionally, the number of Protestant publications has shrunk.[213] Another indicator is the acceleration in the rate of attrition in membership of the Evangelical Reformed Church. Between 1920–1966, numbers remained fairly constant, with around 500 departures annually being compensated by new admissions, for example in the wartime year of 1943.

However, then the decline in membership skyrocketed. In 1978 alone, some 2000 individuals left the church. Between 1960 and 1970, the Protestant population of Basel shrank by over 30 percent.[214] In 2017, the share of the Basel population who self-identified as Evangelical Reformed was barely sixteen percent. Thanks in large part to immigration from Southern Europe, seventeen percent of the population declared themselves to be Catholic. This means that there are now more Catholics than Protestants in this former stronghold of the Reformation and Pietism.

Most Basel residents — almost 50 percent — identify themselves as areligious or not belong to any religious denomination.[215] Basel once again stands out from the rest of Switzerland: For the country as a whole, the share of those without religious affiliation is about 25 percent. This spiritual and religious diversity or indifference is reflected in the beliefs of the current members of the far-flung Stähelin family, which, as the family book attests, so strongly identified with Protestantism.

How is it possible that Basel, a city so strongly shaped by Protestantism, has transformed in such a short period of time into the least religious city in Switzerland? Why did Basel secularize like this? Even when one takes into account that not every nondenominational person is an atheist, this development calls for an explanation. One possible explanation can be found in Max Weber's analysis. He observed that the way of life in the Reformed bourgeois cities of early modernity revealed a particular "Protestant ethic," which explains why the West produced the capitalist economy, modern sciences, the bureaucratic state, etc. In the beginning, argues Weber, there were pious bourgeois citizens who, according to the doctrine of predestination, saw their wealth as a sign that they had been chosen by God.[216] In this view, secularization results from the ever-wider adoption of the

behavior and thinking implied by the Protestant ethic without, however, any link to the churches from which it sprang.

This explanation is often disputed. But there is no doubt that in Basel and other Reformed cities, the lifestyle was ascetic and God-pleasing and that it was practiced in particular by the wealthy citizens: Pray and work, but do not flaunt your prosperity; save and give to charity – when necessary! Weber developed his thesis primarily with reference to Calvinism, but he included Pietism as well: "The practical effect of Pietistic principles" was, he wrote, "an even stricter ascetic control of the way of life in one's profession."[217] It is also true that Protestantism has led to a "disenchantment of the world." The sociologist Ulrich Oevermann, for example, has concluded that Protestantism works like no other religion when it comes to its own dissolution.

4.
REPRESENTATIONS:

THE FAMILY IN PICTURES

SILHOUETTE OF A FAMILY

This silhouette comes from the notebooks of Julie Benigna Linder (1829–1899) and Benedict Stähelin (1825–1891), who lived on the Leonhardsgraben in Basel. The couple had two daughters and four sons. It is, then, not their family that is shown here, as this silhouette shows at least three daughters. They are wearing bonnets and going about their housework: knitting, spinning yarn, reading aloud. The mother carries an infant in her arms; the father smokes a pipe. The oldest son holds a sword. This family represents the ideal of bourgeois domesticity in the nineteenth century.[218]

A LITTLE PORTRAIT FROM THE STATE ARCHIVES

This small drawing from 1859 is a part of the Family Archive, which is overseen by the State Archives of Basel-Stadt. The baby is the daughter of Bertha Stähelin, married name Müller (1824–1895).[219]

THOMAS PLATTER'S AUTOBIOGRAPHY

In 1572, Thomas Platter the Elder described his route from goatherd to publisher and scholar. The book is one of the most important autobiographical sources of its time.[220] On this page, Platter describes his work in Hans Stehelin's workshop:

> I took my bundle, pulled the gate open, and in one day went from Zurich to all of Muttenz, after that all of Basel, in search of someone to hire me, came to Master Hans Stehelin — they called him the Red Roper — on the Rindermarkt, they said he was the most ill-tempered master on the entire Rhine, and his servants couldn't stand to work with him (…) When he hired me, I was lost in thought a bit instead of paying attention to the hemp. Then he showed me his true self, started yelling and screaming, "Go," he said, "and gouge out the eyes of the master who taught you; what can I do with you, you're useless!"[221]

This characterization remains unflattering on the pages that follow. Still, there were members of the family who felt tied to the "disloyal Swabian," as this verse recited at a mid-twentieth century family celebration shows: *Em Thomas Platter / haut er eis uff's Gatter / Unsere Stammesvater,* or, roughly: "That Thomas Platter/Slandered our Forefather."[222]

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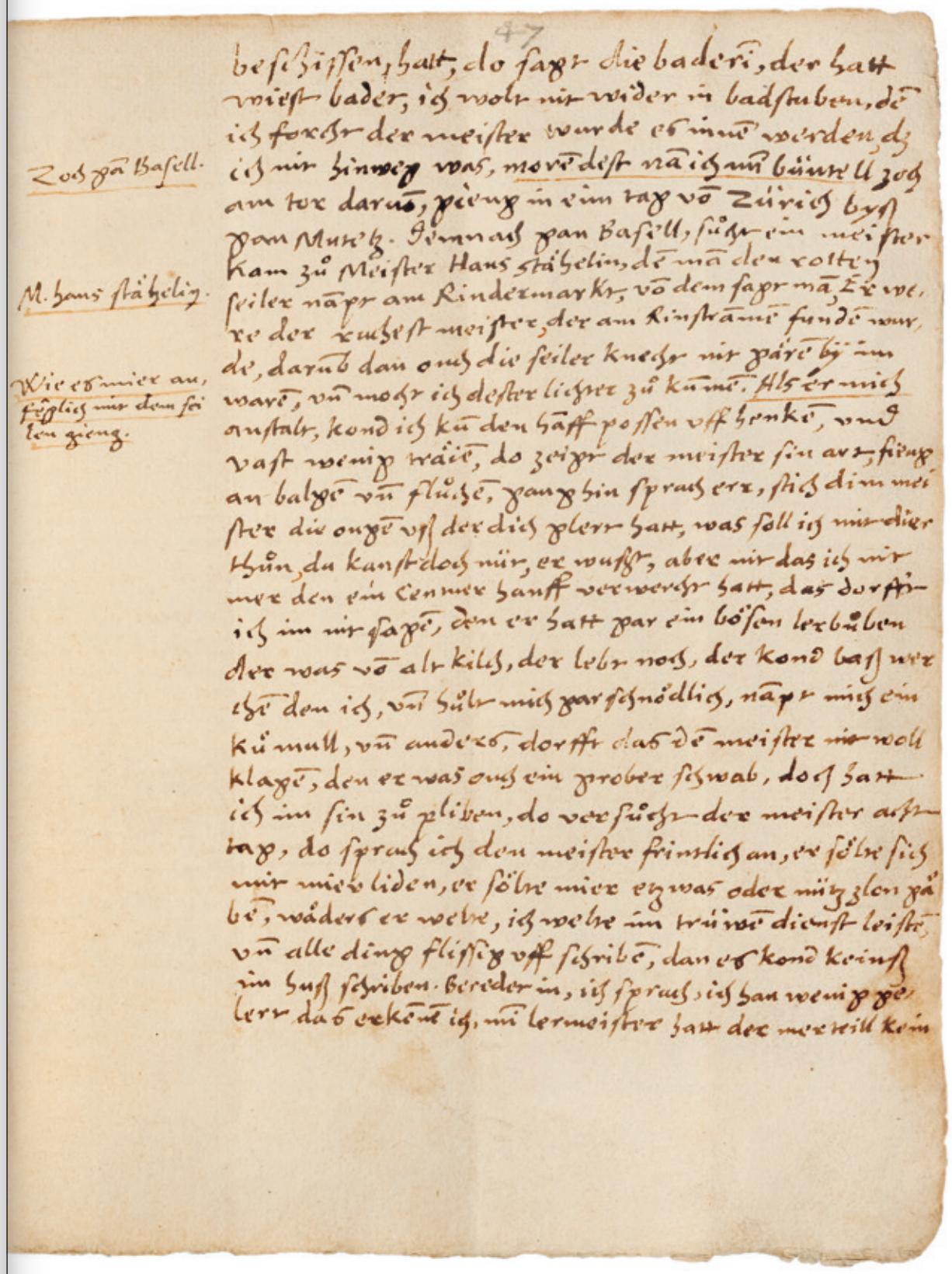
BASEL WEDDING ALLIANCES

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the family in Basel endeavored to marry their children to established bourgeois families such as Merian, Preiswerk or Vischer. Pictured here is the wedding party of Theodor and Marguerite Staehelin-Burckhardt in 1898.[223]



→ SEITE 89

SPECULATION ABOUT A PHOTOGRAPH

This photograph by Jakob Höflinger was printed in the 1936 compendium *Das Stadtbild nach den ältesten Photographien (The Cityscape According to the Oldest Photographs)*. A contemporary witness identified the subjects: On the right stands Karl Eduard Stehelin (1824–1892), next to him a real estate agent in a top hat, then the children's nanny with a baby, and at the far left a girl named Emma, probably Stehelin's daughter (1852–1880). The picture was taken in 1863 on the former Rondenweg, not far from the Spalentor where Stehelin ran a colonial goods store. But what is happening in it? State archivist Esther Baur speculated about the business that Stehelin may have been discussing with the agent, a so-called Sensal, in a 2019 article: "Was the purchase of dilapidated properties an interesting investment with the imminent opening of the city?"[224] One thing is clear: Stehelin ran a trading house that had been in the family for almost 100 years, and purchased its goods through French ports. In 1878, he passed the company down to a son and moved to the South of France, where he purchased the Mont-Thabor winery near Bédarrides.[225]

OUTSIDE THE BASEL GATE

Around 1800, Stähelins in Basel's neighboring villages of Neue Welt and St. Jakob produced iron wares and textiles. In 1834, family members sold their locations (marked here with a cross) to the neighboring landowner Christoph Merian.[226]

‘GOD’S GRACE’ FOR A BAPTISM

In the Basel upper classes, godmothers and godfathers wrote their wishes for the newborn child on little slips of papers. Enamuel Ryhiner, the “Your faithful Godfather,” wrote the following lines to Elisabeth Stähelin in 1701:

Gottes Gnadt erhalte dich
Hier zeitlich undt dorth ewiglich
(May you receive God’s grace
Now and eternally)[227]

A RHYME FOR THE STAMMHALTER

At the 1942 Family Day, a *Schnitzelbank* (or humorous rhyming song) with a Fasnacht theme was presented. The verse on the large-format posters *(Helgen* in Basel dialect) acknowledged sixteen characters from the family history, including Johannes Stähelin (1556–1615), husband of Katharina Beckel (1558–1630):

Der Herr Stächeli-Beckel,
Dä het — oh verdeggel —
Nach nyn Maitli zuem Gligg nonig Rueh.
Wär z'letscht dä Bueb nit ko
Wär hit kai ainzigs do,
Von-n-euch alle, wo do loose zue.[228]
Herr Stächelei-Beckel
Who had — oh my! —
After nine girls, thank goodness, some rest.
At first no boy had come,
There wasn't a single one,
Out of all of you!

The verse is aimed at the patrilineal *Stammhalter,* or origin-bearer: The couple's first nine children were girls, who were not able to pass along the Stähelin name; finally, the tenth was a boy. Without him, by the logic of the family tree, the family would have died out as early as the sixteenth century, and there would have been no Stähelin Family Day.

HERALDRY, MADE IN THE USA

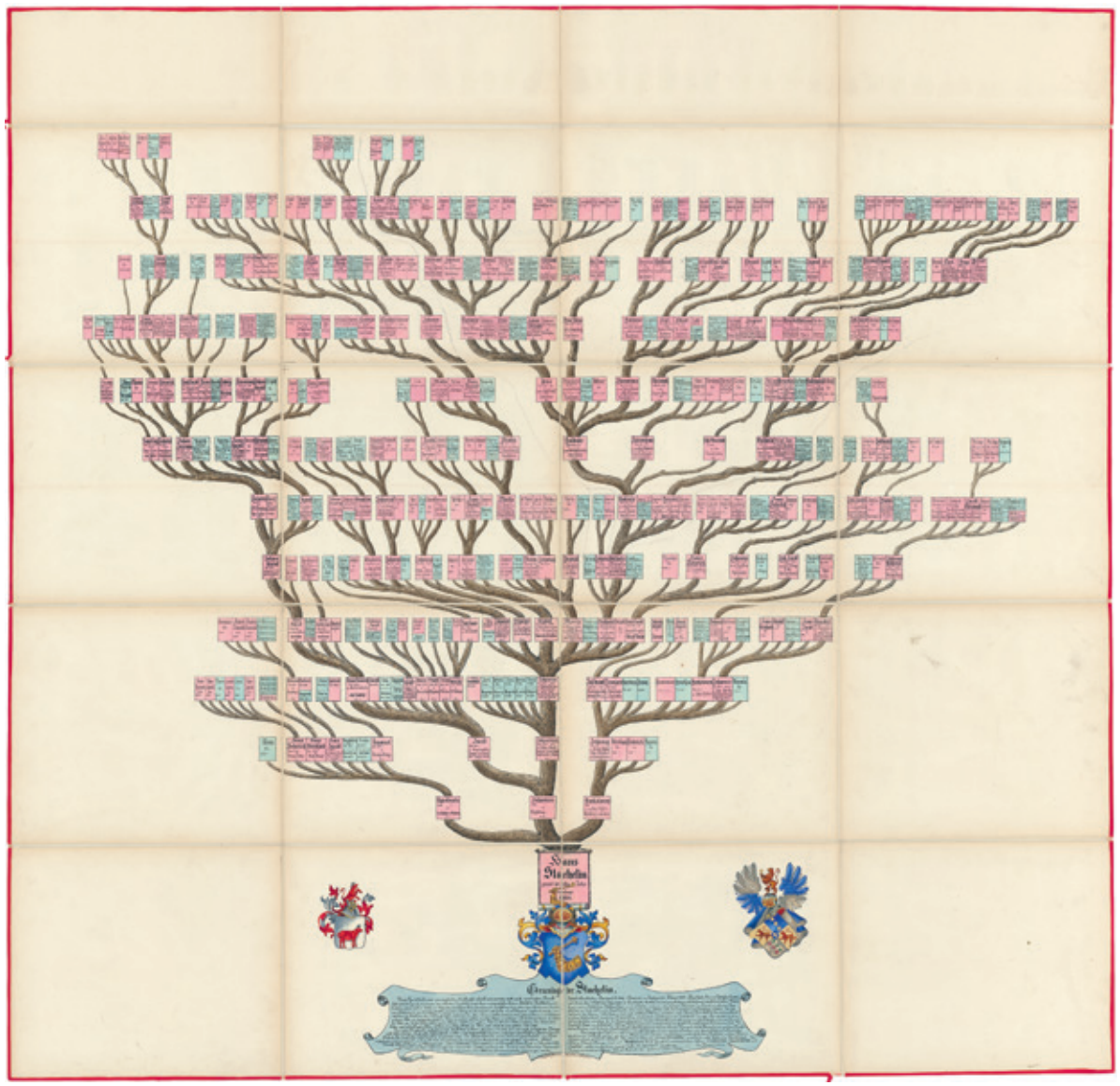
This coat of arms, which one of the family's numerous emigrants commissioned from an American company in 1974, has no weapon at all. Andrew Staehelin, who lived in Boulder, Colorado, sent it to Basel, whereby he ensured his far-flung relatives it had actually been a *Jux,* or lark, that cost two dollars. The new "Staehelin coat of arms" consisted of the initial "S" and two eagles, about which, the artist explained: "An eagle symbolizes freedom, superiority and power. (…) Information available indicates that in 1973 there were less than 50 households in the U.S. with the old and distinguished Staehelin name. In comparison, some family names represent over 400,000 households in the United States."[229] Perhaps more than anywhere else, in the United States genealogy is a popular hobby — and big business.

SWISS IN BRAZIL

The Praça dos Suíços is located in the center of the Brazilian city of Joinville. The square is dedicated to the Swiss who emigrated there in the nineteenth century. Today Joinville is home to more than 500,000 inhabitants, one of whom is Nelson Rodério Stähelin. He photographed the iconic monument on the Praça dos Suíços: Under the column with ten white Swiss crosses are panels made of steel. On it are the names of the immigrant families, among them Weber, Volgelsanger – and Stähelin. Although the first Stähelins in Joinville came from Schaffhausen rather than Basel, the descendants of Swiss emigrants may claim the monument for themselves and their families.[230] Nelson, born in 1955, describes his Swiss roots as *muito forte:* "I'm very proud of it."[231] His great-great-grandfather Arnold Alfred Stähelin emigrated from Basel to what is today Florianópolis in the mid-nineteenth century. Today, more Stähelins live in Brazil than in Switzerland.

IN THE FORESTS OF CANADA

At the end of the nineteeth century, members of the family emigrated from France to Canada. On the country's East Coast, Stehelins founded the colony of Nouvelle France and built a trading house out of wood. "Our homestead was cut right out of the forest, that is to say, the land we opened to form a yard of about three hectars was forest one year ago," read a letter from 1895.[232]



A MASSIVE FAMILY TREE

This "Staehelin Family Tree" (above and magnified below) was painted by the Basel artist Johann Jakob Schneider-Gyssler. The first edition likely appeared at the end of the 1870s. The work measures almost two meters and was arranged so that the next generations' descendants could be included on the upper end.[233] The names of the women are highlighted in light blue; those of the men are in pink. This genealogical work was probably based on anatomy: the blue veins carry no oxygen, the red arteries pump life into the body. By this logic, the men pass on their name to a son; otherwise the branch disappears.[234] However, it wasn't the stunted branches that made this family tree problematic. As the family historian Felix Stähelin remarked around 1900, Apollinaris Stehelin (who had been pictured in the second generation) was not actually a son of the *Stammvater* Hans. The genealogist had discovered that he was a brother of the Knight Bernhard Stehelin, and Hans was not their father.[235]

Johannes
Nat. 1724 + 1754
ux. 1749 H. Marie Perrenod
ux. 1756 H. Zoé d'Alvares
Kaufmann
in Bordeaux
54.2

Balthasar
N. 1730 + 1780
ux. 1752
Maria Merian
Kaufmann
53.2

Johannes
Nat. 1754 + 1838
ux. 1781 M. Elisabeth
ux. 1794 M. Weitbrecht
ux. 1803 Marie Perrenod
Pfarrer in Bischofszell
56.1

Peter
Nat. 1763 + 1840
ux. 1795 E. Bischoff
ux. 1797 J. Bischoff
Pfarrer
in Frauenfeld
56.2

Anna Catharina
N. 1767 + 1844
ux. 1795
Dorothea N. 1790
ux. Gambs, Pfarrer
Sara N. 1795
ux. Rilliard, Pfarrer
Marie N. 1801 + 1881

Johann Christoph
Nat. 1804 + 1857
ux. 1829 M. Bischoff
Pfarrer in Richen
57.1

Emanuel
Nat. 1812 + 1859
unv.
Kaufmann.

Maria Magdalena
Nat. 1771 + 1850
ux. 1793 Joh. Caspar Edel

Lucas
Nat. 1772 + 1774

Martin
Nat. 1733 + 1816
ux. 1760 Urs. Bischoff
ux. 1773 M. Sal. Mayer
+ 1827 Aug.
40.2

Mathias
Nat. 1735 + 1769
in Bordeaux.

Franz Rudolf
Nat. 1749 + 1813
ux. 1777 C. M. De Lamar
Kaufmann in Bordeaux
44.1

Margaretha
Nat. 1755 + 1780
ux. 1778 Jacob Brunner
Spezierer in der
Eisenplatte

Peter
Nat. 1793 + 1820
ux. 1815 Sara Bischoff
+ 1863
Spezierer
49.2

Johannes
Nat.
1728 + 1728

Lucas
Nat. 1725 + 1796
ux. 1. N. Cath. Feer
+ 1809
2. 1809
Baumeister
35.1

Johannes Rudolf
Nat.
1729 +

Cath. Elisabeth
N. 1735 +
ux. 1. 1759
Maria Magdalena
Edel + 1772
ux. 2. 1773
Jac. Scherer
Posthalter in Zug

Martin
Nat.
1710 + 1711

Johannes
Nat.
1711 + 1711

Marie
N. 1712 + 1777
ux. 1758 I. Brack
Stadtschreiber
Johanna
N. 1707 + 1747

Martin
Nat. 1714 + 1756
in New Bern, North Carolina
ux. 1750 Mary Kirkpatrick
Handelsherr.
40.1

Johann Rudolf
Nat. 1814
ux. 1840
Manger, Stockhalter
ux. 1845
Handelsherr, Inhaber
der Firma Peter Stehelin
54.1

Johannes
Nat. 1821
ux. 1855
Cecilia Heusler
Handelsherr
54.2

Maria Dorothea
ux. 1853 Andr. Sulzer

Sara Elisabeth

Angelika Elisabeth

Charlotte N. 1822
ux. 1846 R. Burckhardt

Samuel
Nat. 1824
ux. 1850
Burckhardt
Bandfabrikant
55.1

Wilhelm
Nat. 1827 + 1865
ux. 1858
Linder
Handelsherr
55.2

Bertha N. 1824
ux. 1845 J. Müller-Bourry

Maria Charlotte
ux. 1850 Max Preiswerk

Theodora Mathilde
ux. 1853 C. D. Vischer-Sarasin

Lydia N. 1838
ux. 1860 Rud. Max Burckhardt

Anna N. 1843 + 1893
ux. 1865 Rud. Merian-Burckhardt

Christoph
Nat. 1835
ux. 1862
Bertha Reber
52.2

Aug. Hermann
N. 1832 + 1834

Maria N. 1830
ux. 1854 Gust. Hecker, Pfr.

Wilhelmine
ux. 1857 [illegible]

Hanna Thusnelda

Theodor N. [illegible]
unverheiratet

Franc. Philipp
Nat. 1807 + 1875
ux.
Jul. Eug. Roland + 1859
Kaufmann
74.1

Ant. Léon
Nat. 1803 +
ux. 1830
Marie Cécile Brisset
Kaufmann in Belfort
79.2

Marie Josèphe
Nat. 1833

Hieronymus
Nat. 1815
ux. 1852
Anna Magd. Koch
Kaufmann
53.2

Balthasar
Nat. 1827
ux. 1862
Louise Preiswerk
53.1

Amalie N. 1830
ux. Vischer

Dr. Jur. Louis
Carl Sarasin

Mathilde N. [illegible]
ux. [illegible]

Carl Eduard
Rene
Nat. 1830

Emil [illegible]
Adolf
Nat. 1837
ux. [illegible]
Kaufma

Balthasar
Nat. 1758 + 1823
ux. 1785 Hel. Ew. Bonhorst
ux. 1794 Wilh. Bergoultli
Kaufmann
53.1

Elisabeth
Nat. 1793

Dorothea
Nat. 1800 + 1863
ux. 1820
Benedikt La Roche

Carl
Nat. 1815 + 1845
ux. 1839
Amalie Billig
Kaufmann
in Bischwyler
52.1

Eduard
Nat. 1819
ux. 1835
El. Zeller.
Kaufmann
in Bischwyler
60.2

Adolf.
Nat. 1825

Elisabeth
N. 1826
ux. Carl Bischoff
ux. Michel Perrin

Dorothea N. 1759
ux. Daniel Perrin
ux. 2. J. J. Preiswerk

Nikolaus N. 1759
ux. Daniel Perrin
ux. 2. J. J. Preiswerk

Salome N. 1762
ux. 1783 J. R. Sarasin
Elisabeth N. 1764
ux. 1784 J. J. Merian

Philipp Heinrich
Nat. 1738 + 1783
ux. 1766 Adèle Pétitpierre
Nat. 1775 + 1836 (ux. 2.)
Kaufmann.

Anna Elisabeth
Nat. 1746 + 1755
ux. 1770
J. Merian

Balthasar
Nat.
1763 + 1790

Hieronymus
Nat. 1771 + 1857.
ux. 1795 Christ. Bernoulli
+ 1820
ux. 1823 Dorothea Schlumberger
+ 1870
Kaufmann.
52.2

Christoph
Nat. 1778 + 1850
ux. 1797
Salome Reber
+ 1856
51.1

Gertrud N. 1797 + 1844
ux. 1. J. Balthasar + 1825
ux. 2. Peter Merian

Valeria N. 1798 + 1872

Salome N. 1800 + 1860

Hieronymus N. 1801 + 1834

Hans Heinrich
Nat.
1769 + 1773

Hieronymus
Nat.
1772 +

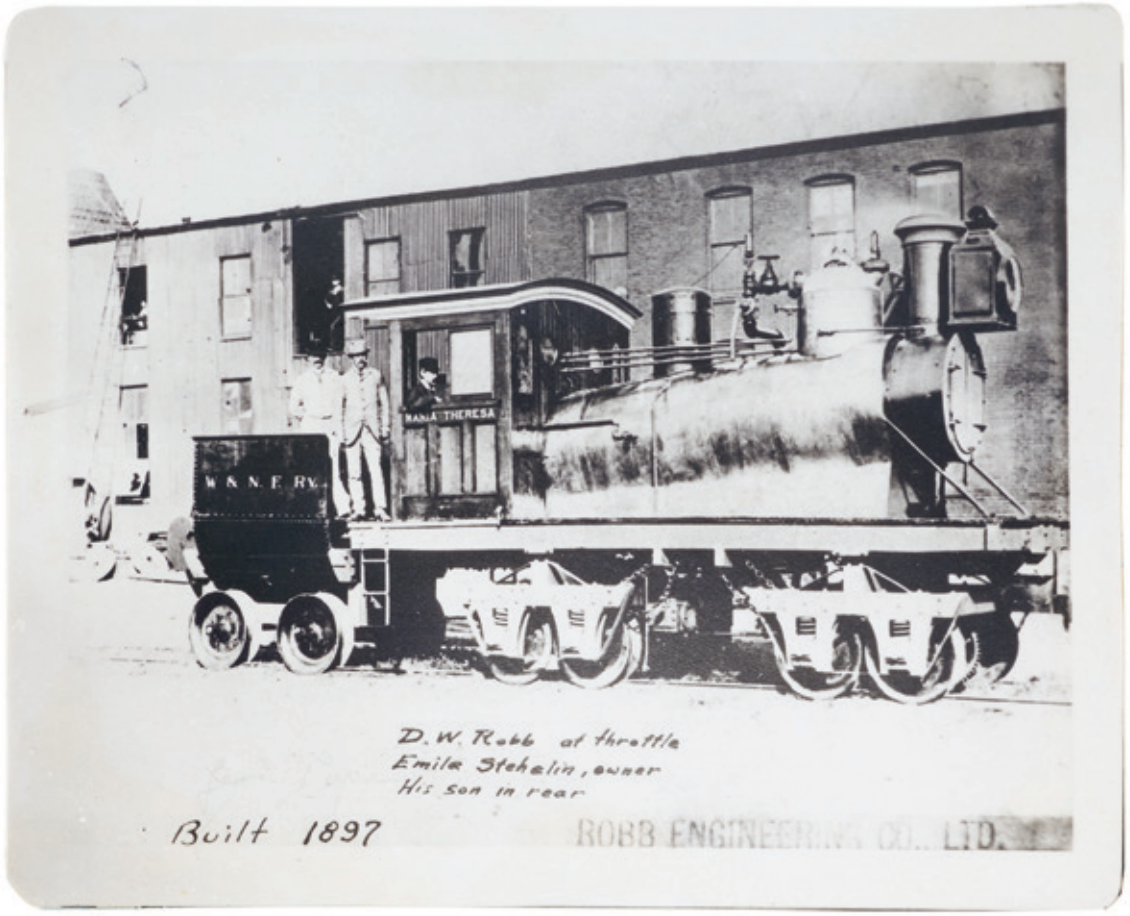
Balthasar
Nat. 1739 + 1797
ux. 1762 Dorothea Gernuseus
des Raths.
35.1

Hieronymus
Nat. 1761 + 1803
ux. 1786 Salom. Respinger
+ 1843
War Eisenhändler
und Gutsbesitzer.

Joh. Burca
N. 1764 +
ux. 1784
Ursula Iselin

MONSENHOR STÄHELIN

Protestantism has long shaped the Basel branch of the family. Elsewhere, Stähelins have practiced other faiths, particularly in Northern France and Brazil, where Catholicism has been popular. A well-known practitioner of Roman Catholicism was Agostinho Stähelin (1924–2018), who served as priest in the Archdiocese of Florianopolis for over sixty years, and was also known in Brazil for his televised masses.[236]

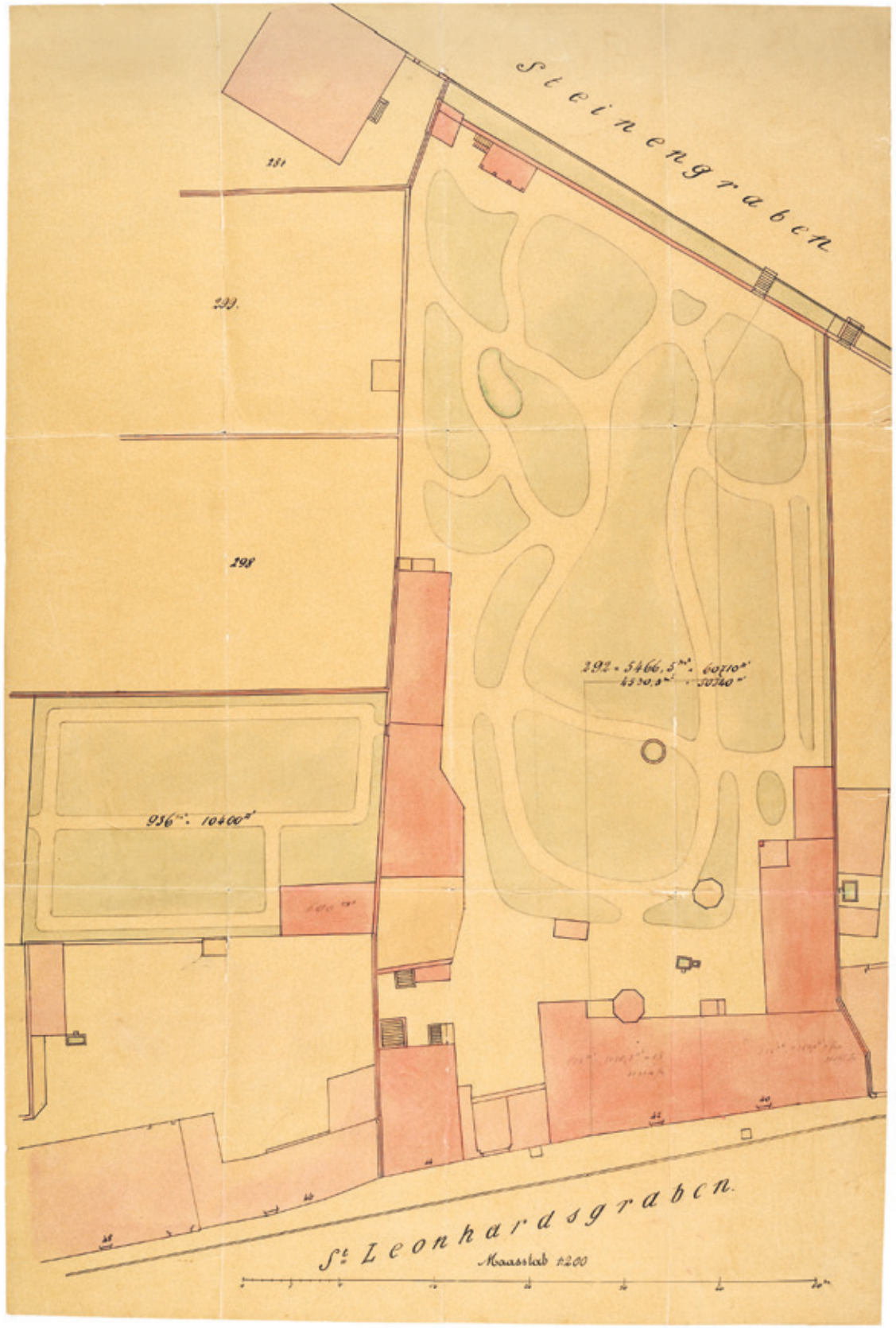


OWNER OF A LOCOMOTIVE

In 1838, the Bitschwiller-based firm of Stehelin et Huber built the first locomotive in the Alsace. Emile Stehelin (1837–1918), son of the French railway pioneer, emigrated to Canada. There he invested in railway lines in order to connect his forestry company to a port. In 1897, the proud owner posed with the "Maria Therese"; the locomotive bore the name of his wife.[237]

A PROPER WEDDING

Two coats of arms, two pillars, one new family — so announces the invitation to the wedding of Benedict Stähelin (1860–1930) and Elisabeth Burckhardt (1861–1948). The celebration took place at the Stadt-Casino, and numerous families from the Basel upper class were invited.[238] The menu for the March 30, 1886 occasion: *"Potage à la tortue — Saumon piqué aux truffes sauce veuilienne — Pommes de terre à la Hollandaise — Filet de boeuf à la Gothard — Riz de veau à la Joinville — Salmi de Perdreaux à la Périgueux — Petits pois à la Française — Dinde truffée rôtie — Salade de Laitue — Selle de Chevreuil à la Polonaise — Salade russe — Aspic de Langouste — Savarin aux fruits — Sujets de Glace panachée — Dessert assorti — Pièces montées."* The final item on the menu: *B'haltis,* a small wedding favor.[239]



THE FAMILY HOME IN THE OLD CITY

In the nineteenth century, the family owned the houses at 40–44 on the Leonhardsgraben. Behind residences, factory space, storage rooms and offices lay a garden that reached over 100 meters. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, the private city park had a haunted feeling to it, remembers a former resident: "Here and there age-worn, obviously neglected since the days of Gosspapa who so loved to hunt …and those of the wealthy and respected ribbon manufacturer Benedict Stehelin-Bischoff, with his many gardeners and servants." The family sold the property and buildings on Leonhardsgraben at the end of the 1920s.[240]

IN THE ARISTOCRATIC STYLE

The family had these portraits of selected ancestors collected into a brochure.[241] They include paintings, drawings and a plaster medallion — fifteen men, nine women and one couple. Most of these portraits appeared in the eighteenth century and depict councilors, professors or merchants and their wives. The French Revolution marks a clear break in style: Before 1789 the Stähelins pose like aristocrats, with finely powdered wigs and in exquisite fabrics, particularly the elegant Ursula (1697–1742) with her draped curls and cleavage. Urusla was the daughter of a professor and married Leonhard Respinger in 1714. Her portrait was painted by Johann Rudolf Huber (1668–1748).[242] After the Revolution, everything went *bieder:* Jackets, foulards and hoods covered the subjects' whole bodies' apart from their faces.

A CLERGYMAN'S FAMILY

Lydia Stähelin (1839–1899) sits between her parents Judith and Peter. Her father was a pastor, as was her mother's father. In 1866, Lydia married Hieronymous Buser, who also served as a pastor in the Protestant church.[243]

REMEMBERING THE DEAD

The Family Archive reveals dozens of published eulogies, or Leichenreden. The oldest dates to 1667 and was published on the occasion of the funeral of Emmanuel Stehelin. He was born in 1628 and was survived by his wife, a son and a daughter. As a young man he learned the cloth trade in Frankfurt, and in Basel he became a pastor.[244]

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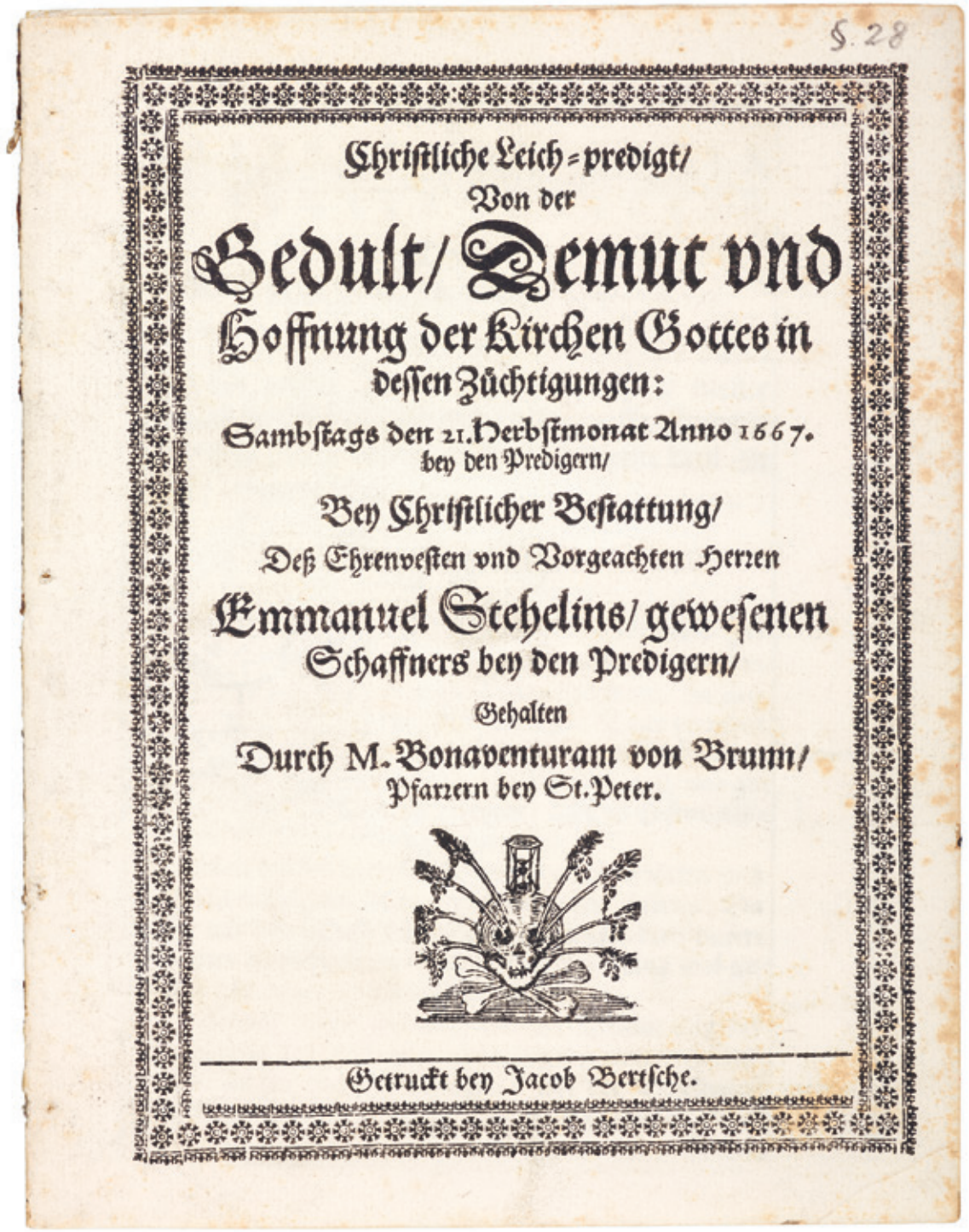
PIOUS VERSE

In 1874, Julie Benigna Staehelin (1829–1899), born Linder, published the booklet *Maiglöcklein aus Basels Stillleben (Lily of the Valley from Basel's Still Life),* "for the Best of the Mission." It was a product of Pietism, which gained a stronger foothold in Basel than in almost any other Swiss city. The separatist "awakening movement" sought to restore Protestantism to its earliest Christian spirit.[245]



Ich will deinen Namen erhöhen, weil er tröstlich ist.

Hab Dank! hab Dank, wie gut erquickt
Ist, wer sein Herze zu Dir schickt.
Hab Dank — vergäß ich's nimmer nicht,
Wenn mich der Unruh Pein ansicht.

O Herr, mein Gott, wer ist wie Du?
Du bist die Quelle aller Ruh.
Wer ruhet ganz in Seinem Gott,
Kann stille sein — trotz aller Noth.

So will ich denn den Namen dein
Erhöhen, preisen, Du bist mein!
Gottlob, Du hilfst, ich fühl die Kraft,
Die aus der Ohnmacht etwas schafft. —

Herr, ich warte auf dein Heil.

Ich wart, ich harre auf Dein Heil,
Gewiß, es wird auch mir zu Theil!
Ich wart, ich harre, könnt' ich doch
Ganz stille halten Deinem Joch.

Ach, gieb mir Frieden, gieb mir Ruh,
Mir Schwachen schenke Kraft dazu.
Dann will ich loben meinen Gott,
Und will Dich preisen bis in Tod.

FROM THE STREITGASSE TO THE BAROQUE ROOM

This picture hangs in the “Baroque Room” of Basel’s Museum der Kulturen. It depicts a landscape in the bucolic style and originates from the Balchen, a large house on the Streitgasse that Balthasar Stähelin (1739–1797) purchased in 1764. The family lived there and ran a flourishing trading house; in 1879 the property was sold, and in 1934 the Balchen was razed. Today it is the location of Café Huguenin. The family took the wall decorations with them in the nineteenth century when they moved to Bernoullistrasse 26. Finally, the picture from the former Balchen landed in the museum.[246]

THE EMILE C. STEHELIN SCHOOL IN CANADA

Around 1900, the Stehelin family migrated across the Atlantic from France. On the East Coast of Canada, they built a lumber business. The schoolhouse pictured here in Barrhead, Alberta, does not carry the name of a lumber manufacturer, but rather of Emile Charles Stehelin, nicknamed Mitt (1905–1952), one of the original emigrant's grandchildren. Mitt Stehelin was headmaster of a school near Edmonton, and in 1947 he became superintendent of the new Barrhead school district.[247]

FOUR GENERATIONS OF STEHELINS FROM THE ALSACE

This 1903 photo depicts the primogenitor of a family. Pictured are the firstborn male descendants of 93-year-old Édouard; they passed the Stehelin name down. The elderly patriarch was born in Basel and ran numerous family businesses in Bitschwiller (Alsace), where his family settled. Son, grandson and great-grandson all worked in the textile industry, including in Cernay and Mulhouse.[248]

THE LOST NAMES OF THE MOTHERS

On a summer day in 1937, little Annemarie Feer lies in the arms of her great-great grandmother Marie Staehelin-Vischer (1848–1942). Next to Annemarie are her great-grandmother, mother and grandmother. Thus, this photograph from the Stähelin family archives shows five generations of a family. But which family? Only the two oldest women pictured are included in the Stähelin family tree: the great-great-grandmother married a Staehelin in 1866, and the great-grandmother was a born Staehelin, who became a Koechlin after marriage. As such, the matrilineal line lost its place in the Family Book: the grandmother was Koechlin, the mother Von der Mühll, and Annemarie was Feer, like her father.[249]

"PROGENITOR" OF A BRAZILIAN FAMILY

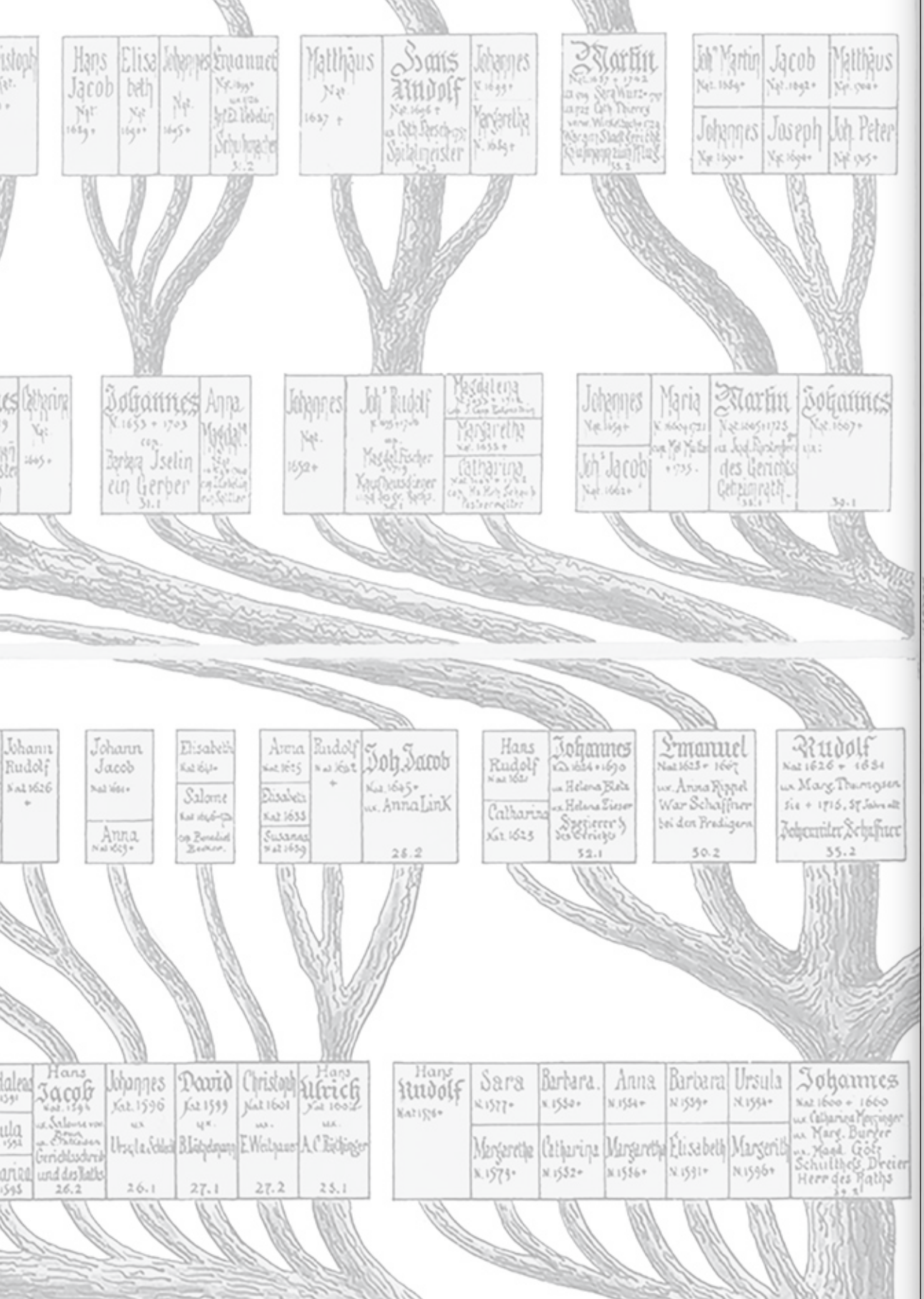
South American Stähelins describe him as their progenitor: Arnold Alfred Stähelin, born in Basel in 1822, father of twelve children, died in 1892 in São Pedro de Alecãntara, Brazil. Besides this portrait of the emigrant, the family also commissioned a family tree that lists Arnold's relatives in Europe.[250]

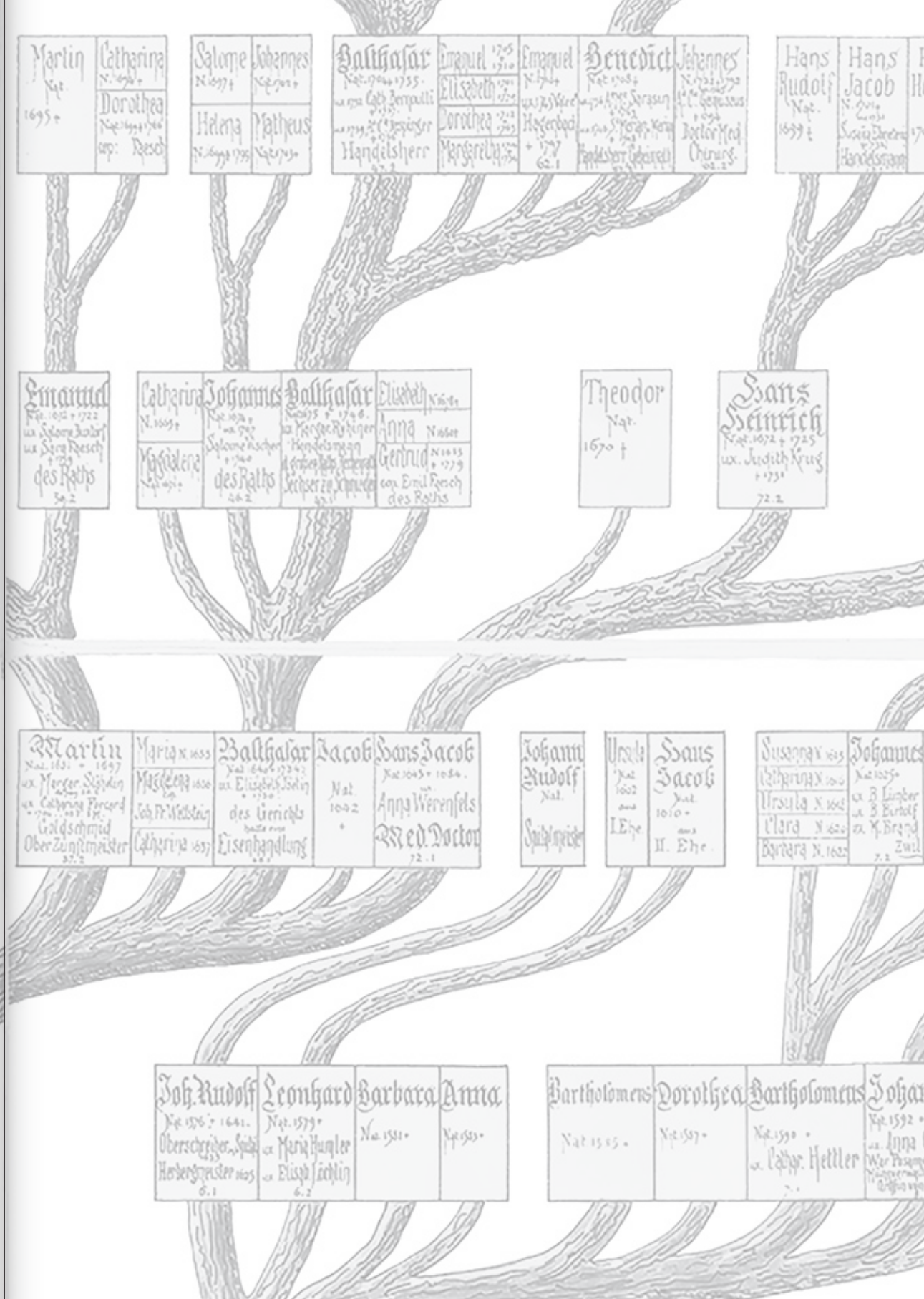
KNITTING GRANDMOTHERS

Photography became more common in the nineteenth century. Photographs such as this one depicted the scenes of bourgeois life of that time. Female Stähelins presented themselves in long, dark, high-buttoned dresses, and often held their knitting. Lydia Stähelin (1839–1899), wife of the Rev. Hieronymus Buser,[251] also used balls of wool and knitting needles as signifiers of domesticity. In others' remembrances, grandmothers such as Lydia were strict house mistresses who demanded heavily regulated daily routines. "For us children," remembers one Stähelin, Grandmother was "terribly serious."[252] Another speculates that "knitting was her 'greatest pleasure'."[253] In this photograph, Lydia sits in the parlor next to her daughter of the same name. On the wall of the living room hang portraits of men.

DAUGHTER-IN LAW AND MOTHER OF THE MAYOR

The marriage of Magdalena Stähelin (1636–1667) testifies to the family's social ascent.[254] She married Johann Friedrich Wettstein (1632–1691), son of Johann Rudolf Wettstein, the most significant Basel mayor of the *Ancien Régime*.[255] Magdalena's husband Johann Friedrich was also a politician, as evident in his epitaph: "Thirteener, Landvogt of Riehen, wise, renowned, married twice, first with Magdalene Stähelin, then Anna Katharina Burckhardt …"[256] The coat of arms of the Wettstein family, as well as the families of both of his wives, adorn his gravestone. It is located in St.Theodor's Church and belongs to the collection of the Basel Historical Museum.[257] In 1970, it was depicted in the brochure *Epitaphs of the Stehelin and Stähelin Family*. Magdalena's oldest son had the same name as her father-in-law: Johann Rudolf Wettstein (1658–1734), who also became mayor.[258]


Hans Jacob
Elisabeth
Johannes
Emanuel
Matthäus
Hans Rudolf
Johannes
Martin
Joh. Martin
Jacob
Matthäus
Johannes
Joseph
Joh. Peter
Johannes
Anna
Johannes
Joh. Rudolf
Johannes
Maria
Martin
Johannes
Johann Rudolf
Johann Jacob
Elisabeth
Anna
Rudolf
Joh. Jacob
Hans Rudolf
Johannes
Emanuel
Rudolf
Johann Rudolf
Hans Jacob
Johannes
David
Christoph
Hans Ulrich
Hans Rudolf
Sara
Barbara
Anna
Barbara
Ursula
Johannes


Martin
Catharina
Dorothea
Salome
Johannes
Helena
Matheus
Balthasar
Emanuel
Elisabeth
Dorothea
Margaretha
Emanuel
Benedict
Johannes
Hans Rudolf
Hans Jacob
Emanuel
Catharina
Johannes
Balthasar
Elisabeth
Anna
Gertrud
Magdalena
Theodor
Hans Heinrich
Martin
Maria
Balthasar
Jacob
Hans Jacob
Johann Rudolf
Ursula
Hans Jacob
Susanna
Catharina
Ursula
Clara
Barbara
Johannes
Joh. Rudolf
Leonhard
Barbara
Anna
Bartholomeus
Dorothea
Bartholomeus
Johannes

GOWNS AND GOLD CHAINS FOR THE PROFESSORS

The ‘Scholar’s Lineage’ *(Gelehrtengeschlecht)* reached a high point in June of 1939 with the inauguration party for the Kollegienhaus, the University of Basel’s new main building. The festivities lasted for three days. Professors Rudolf (medicine) and John Staehelin (psychiatry) also took part in the citywide celebration. They wore new gowns and octagonal mortarboards. The chief representative of the university at the time was Rector Ernst Staehelin, and at the party he welcomed federal councilors, spoke in the Basel Cathedral and finally received the key to the building from architect Roland Rohn. The theologian wore a golden Rector’s chain, and he said was “not the rector in and of himself, but the venerable body.” A little shine also fell on the family.[259]

THE STÄHELINE, FROM THE DAISY FAMILY

"The flower of this genus, named after a great Swiss scholar named Stähelin, belongs to the same family as the daisy…"[260] — so describes Carl von Linné's system of plants about the "Stähe-line," as the Swedish scientist christened it. It can be divided into several types, as one can see in this picture: *Staehelina dubia.* With it, Linné honoured the professors Johann Heinrich Stähelin (1668–1721) and his son Benedict (1695–1750), who both taught at the University of Basel. With Benedict, the line of the family's renowned botanists was, as the genealogists say, extinguished.[261] Meanwhile the "Stäheline" continues to bloom, especially on the islands of the Mediterranean.[262]

STÉHÉLIN DE BORDEAUX: WINE AND CHÂTEAU

Many members of the family settled in France: in Alsace in particular, but also in other regions. They mostly spelled their name Stehelin, but in Bordeaux: Stéhélin. There, the family from Basel rose to the upper class at the end of the 18th century; a Rue Stéhélin still leads through the port city on the Garonne today. One branch lived on the nearby Château La Haye; this picture shows workers at this winery. According to legend, the castle was once the love nest of King Henri II and his mistress. The estate is located in the district of Saint-Estèphe, the northernmost of the four appelations of the Médoc. It has not been owned by the family since the first half of the 20th century.[263]

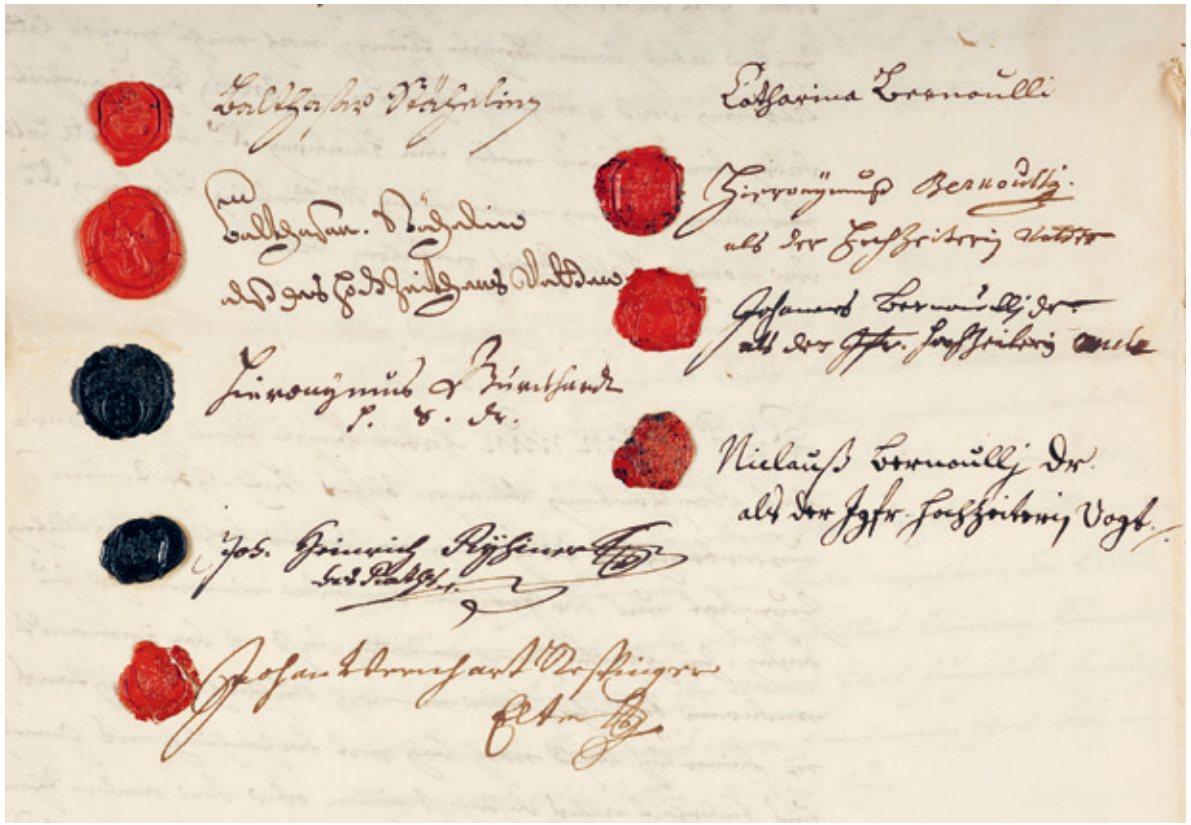
LES VENDANGES
AU CHATEAU LA HAYE (MÉDOC)
Propriété de la Famille Stéhélin

A FAMILY RESEARCHER AND HISTORY PROFESSOR

Felix Stähelin (1873–1952) had just turned thirty when he published the *Geschichte der Basler Familie Stehelin und Stähelin,* a wide-ranging genealogy that reached back to the sixteenth century.[264] Beginning in 1907, Felix was a private docent at the University of Basel, and from 1917 on a Professor of Ancient History. This portrait, painted by Ernst Wolf in 1944 in the style of the *Basler Graumaler* (Basel gray painters),[265] is in the possession of the university's art collection.[266] Stähelin collaborated on the book's first edition with Jacob Burckhardt, to whom he was related on his mother's side.[267]

MISSIONARY FESTIVAL AND Z/VIERI IN KLEINBASEL

"Festival Guests in the Stähelin Garden (1942)" is the title of this photo from the archive of the Basel Mission.[268] A grandchild of pastor Ernst Stähelin (1861–1949), who hosted the closing ceremony of the "Mission Week" several times, remembered the occasion: "One regularly encountered colored mission employees in their native clothes and costumes." The family met at Rheinfelderstrasse 33 at Christmas, and he and the other grandchildren came to the *z'Vieri* each Wednesday. Then they would have played in the garden quite a while (likely croquet or soccer), "which was really something unique for Kleinbasel and for an otherwise densely contructed area." As such, one not only spent a happy afternoon, one also had close contact with cousins and realized "that you were a member of a 'large family'." The property had been owned by the family since 1823. After the death of Stähelin's wife Sibylle, née Merian (1861–1953), it went to the Christoph Merian Foundation.[269]



PRENUPTIAL AGREEMENT, WITH SEALS

In early Modernity, Stähelins pressed their family crest ring into soft wax, signed their names underneath and in so doing notarized the contents of the "sealed" text. Numberous relatives notarized this prenuptial agreement from 1732, as well as the bride and groom, Balthasar Stähelin and Catharina Bernoulli. The bride does not own her own sealing ring, however; she has only signed the document.[270]

STÄHELINS MARRYING STÄHELINS

The family book documents five marriages between Stähelins. One of these was between Margaretha, daughter of a ribbon manufacturer, and Johann Rudolf, son of a colonial goods dealer. The seating chart bears witness to the wedding. At the reception gathered numerous guests with names that are still associated with the Basel upper class, the so-called Daig, including Sulger or, as the occasion makes clear, Stähelin.[271]

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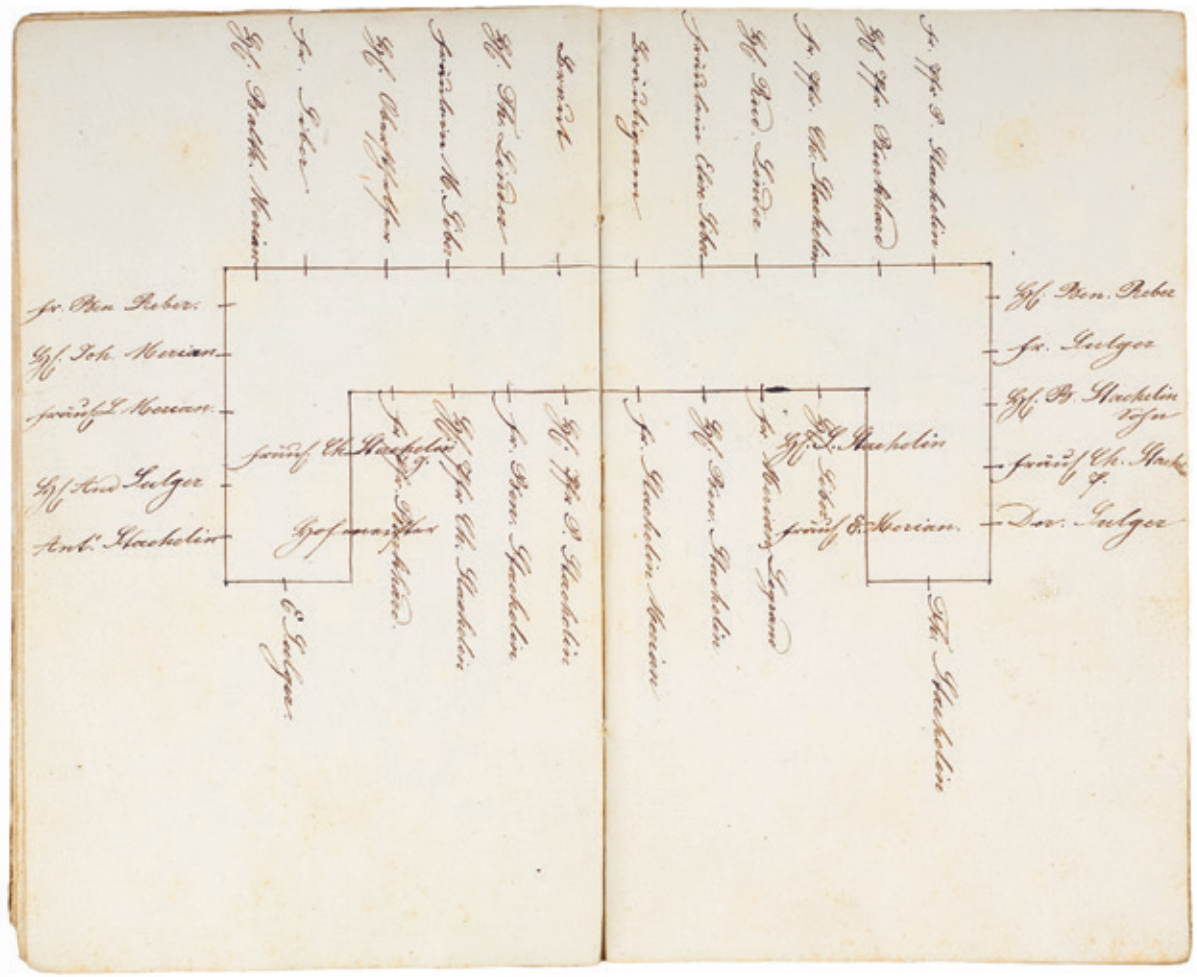
AN OUTCAST'S BESTSELLER

Marie Louise Staehelin (1902–1997), alias Diane d'Henri, published her salacious memoir *The Wife of My Mother's Lover* in 1988. The book revealed "bad times in 'better society'," according to the *SonntagsBlick;* after her late-in-life debut, the television moderator Kurt Aeschenbacher described the 86-year-old author as *persona non grata* in Basel. At the time, the *Weltwoche* also sent out a small survey to the Basel upper class about the "scandal book." "I really don't know it and I don't plan to buy it," said Thomas Staehelin, at which point the jurist and politician ended the conversation. Only two women surveyed praised the work; the rest panned it.[272] The tell-all about the *Daig* might not have been popular with its subject group, but it certainly found readers: *The Wife of My Mother's Lover* spent 38 weeks at the top of the Swiss bestseller list, has sold over 120,000 copies at present, and was published as an audiobook in 2007.[273]



«Die Frau des Geliebten der Mutter» ist ein Sex-&-Crime-Buch par excellence: Da geht es um Skandale, Intrigen, Inzest, Bestechungen . . . Nur ist das alles nicht erfunden. Es ist eine wahre Geschichte aus den sogenannt besten Basler Familien! Im Buch treten diese Kreise zwar unter Pseudonymen auf, doch SonntagsBlick-Redaktor Heinz Moll hat die Autorin besucht und kann die echten Namen nennen.

SCHLECHTE ZEITEN IN «BESSEREN KREISEN»

Skandal! Skandal! In den Basler Salons ist man ausser sich. Nun hat «die» es doch gewagt!

Mit «die» ist Marie-Louise Staehelin gemeint. Die inzwischen 86 Jahre alte «Tochter aus bestem Hause» hat – unter dem Pseudonym Diane d'Henri – im kleinen Berner Zytglogge-Verlag ihre Memoiren herausgebracht. Schon der Titel riecht nach schierer Provokation: «Die Frau des Geliebten der Mutter».

Marie-Louise Staehelin lebt als von ihrer Familie Enterbte und Verfemte seit Jahrzehnten in Zürich im Exil. Ihr Buch basiert auf Tagebuchaufzeichnungen. Es ist die Geschichte eines Martyriums: eine ergreifende Enthüllungsstory über spezifisch gutbaslerischen Familiensinn, über Habgier, Machtsucht, sexuelle Verwirrungen, geschäftliche und menschliche Korruption. Kurz: eine Denver-Story à la bâloise, die sich gewaschen hat.

Das Buch schlug in Basel wie eine Bombe ein. Innert nur fünf Tagen war die erste Auflage von 3000 Exemplaren ausverkauft! Der Ansturm auf die zweite Auflage hält unvermindert an, nun auch ausserhalb Basels.

Marie-Louise Staehelin war als junge Frau von ihrer herrschsüchtigen Mutter, einer geborenen Von der Mühll, zur Heirat mit ihrem Cousin Nicolas Schlumberger gezwungen worden. Der Kavallerie-Offizier war als Teilhaber-Sohn der renommierten Basler Privatbank Ehinger & Co. die «bessere Partie» als ihr vom Herzen Auserwählter.

Dass Schlumberger in Wirklichkeit der Geliebte ihrer eigenen Mutter war, diese schmerzliche Erkenntnis stellte sich erst nach und nach ein. Inzwischen gebar die unglückliche Marie-Louise drei Töchter. Nach jahrelangem innerem Kampf entschloss sie sich schliesslich, auf Scheidung zu klagen.

Die 18jährige Marie-Louise Staehelin. Gegen ihren Willen musste sie einen Mann heiraten, der sich später als Liebhaber ihrer Mutter herausstellte.

Damit aber war Feuer im Dach! Die Familie unternahm buchstäblich alles, um den drohenden Skandal abzuwenden. Kein Mittel war ihr zu fies, um die um ihr Recht kämpfende Marie-Louise zur Familien-Raison zu zwingen. Sie wurde seelisch und körperlich unter Druck gesetzt, monatelang auf dem ländlichen Familiensitz in Therwil (BL) eingesperrt, mit Drogen betäubt und gar von der Polizei – aufgrund falscher Angaben des Ehemannes! – auf offener Strasse verhaftet.

Als alles nichts mehr half, die Affäre war bereits zum Stadtgespräch geworden –, sollte die Widerspenstige für verrückt erklärt und in der Basler Irrenanstalt «Friedmatt» interniert werden. Eine sehr zwielichtige Rolle bei diesem Komplott spielte ihr Grossvetter Professor John Staehelin, damals Direktor der «Friedmatt».

Nur dank einer von ihrer treuen Freundin Franziska Lichtenhahn ausgeheckten List konnte Marie-Louise Staehelin dem Intrigennetz schliesslich entrinnen und die Scheidung durchsetzen. Die Mutter rächte sich mit der Enterbung. Marie-Louise Staehelin, von klein auf an grossen Wohlstand gewöhnt, musste sich viele Jahre lang in der Schweiz und in Deutschland als Putzfrau, Näherin und Fabrikarbeiterin durchs Leben schlagen. Während sechs Jahren führte sie in München den Haushalt des Naziführers Hermann Göring. Nach der Heirat mit einem jüdischen Geschäftsmann musste sie Deutschland verlassen.

Nicolas Schlumberger verheiratete sich bald wieder und setzte seine Karriere im Militär bis zum Generalstabsobersten fort. Aus der Bank Ehinger (sie gehört seit 1974 dem Bankverein) schied er nach einer dunklen Affäre in Mussolini-Italien aus und wechselte in die Verwaltungsräte mehrerer Industriefirmen. Schlumberger verstarb 1975 im Alter von 81 Jahren.

Der Staehelin-Clan versuchte lange, die abtrünnige Marie-Louise mundtot zu machen, um den Skandal zu verhindern.

ZITAT

«Der Basler ‹Teig›, wie die untereinander stark versippten Familien genannt werden, ist gekennzeichnet durch ein hohes kulturelles Niveau und durch einen hohen Grad an Überfeinerung.»

(Carl M. Holliger: «Die Reichen und die Superreichen in der Schweiz», 1974)

Marie-Louise Staehelin (86, o.) verunsichert die Basler Aristokratie: Ihr autobiographisches Buch (r.) «Die Frau des Geliebten der Mutter» (Zytglogge, Bern, 227 Seiten, Fr. 27.–) – erschienen unter dem Pseudonym Diane d'Henri – ist die unglaubliche Saga einer reichen Basler Familie, die von Skandalen, Intrigen, Inzest und Bestechungen geschüttelt wurde. Die Erstauflage ist bereits weg.

Dass die explosive Familiensaga nun als Buch erscheint, ist dem puren Zufall zu verdanken. Marie-Louise Staehelin: «Ich las vor drei Jahren den im Zytglogge-Verlag erschienenen erschütternden Lebensbericht der Putzfrau Rosalia G. Hierauf nahm ich allen Mut zusammen und schrieb dem Verlag. Ich habe mir das Buch richtiggehend von der Seele geschrieben. Obwohl ich noch immer Angst habe vor meiner einflussreichen Familie, empfinde ich jetzt, wo das Buch gedruckt vorliegt, eine grosse Genugtuung. Y bi halt doch e Staehelin!»

SOMMERLICHE KINO-TIPS

Psychos und Yuppies, Dörfler und Städter

Für die einen ist die Sommerzeit Sonnenzeit. Andere flüchten sich gerne aus dem gleissenden Licht und der lähmenden Hitze in angenehm abgedunkelte und kühl klimatisierte Kinos. Für die zweite Gruppe hier ein kleiner Überblick über sehenswerte neue Filme.

«Le cri du hibou» von Claude Chabrol mit Christophe Malavoy und Jungstar Mathilda May ist ein atmosphärisch dichter Psychothriller, der wirklich «thrill» hat. Er kribbelt ganz schön. Chabrol hat die hintergründig-spannende US-Kleinstadtgeschichte «The Cry of The Owl» von Patricia Highsmith (deutsch: «Der Schrei der Eule», Diogenes Verlag) in die französische Provinz verlegt. Da passt dieser auf leisen Sohlen daherkommende Horror auch ganz gut hin.

Chabrols «Le cri du hibou»: dramatisches Finale.

«Bright Lights, Big City» ist James Bridges' Kinoversion von Jay McInerneys gleichnamigem New Yorker Yuppie-Roman (deutsch: «Ein starker Abgang», Rowohlt Verlag). Der schöne Sarkasmus des Romans fehlt zwar im Film weitgehend, doch die Stimmungen des Buches werden meist ganz gut getroffen. Das grosse Problem ist der Hauptdarsteller: Teenie-Star Michael J. Fox ist und bleibt ein Bubi – den verzweifelten Jung-Dichter nimmt man ihm nie und nimmer ab.

«5 Corners» von Tony Bill mit Jodie Foster erzählt stimmungsvoll von jungen Leuten in der New Yorker Bronx der frühen 60er Jahre. Leiser Humor und plötzliches Grauen, fröhliches Rumhängen und Rassendiskriminierung liegen in diesem gescheiten Zeitbild nahe beieinander.

«The Milagro Beanfield▶

BON VIVANT, NE'ER-DO-WELL

"I shouldn't like to leave Bordeaux without reporting to you my impression of our relatives there," wrote Wilhelm Richard Staehelin to Basel in 1921. As primary culprit for the family's societal decline he identified Jean Emile Stéhélin, a wine merchant who married a South American woman to whom he had been unfaithful. As for "the rest of the assets," the family researcher reported, Jean Emile had made short work of them. Despite this withering judgment, the visitor commissioned a portrait of the French *bon vivant* for the family archive.[274]

A CENTURY OF FAMILY DAYS

The family celebrated the 400th anniversary of the granting of citizenship to Hans Stähelin's in 1920 with a "Family Day of the Stehelin and Stähelin Family." Family members performed a play that Maggy Staehelin had written: *A Look at Master Hans Stähelin's Ropemaking Workshop.* Other Family Days followed in 1930 and 1942, and the event has been held every five years since 1950.[275]

30. Auguſt
1520

15. September
1920

Familientag

der

Stehelin und Stähelin

zur Feier des vierhundertſten Jahrestages
der Aufnahme ihres Stammvaters
in das Bürgerrecht der Stadt Baſel

Alle Angehörigen der Familien Stehelin und Stähelin mit Einſchluß der verheirateten Töchter und ihrer Männer ſind eingeladen, ſich am 15. September 1920 nachmittags im Schützenhaus zu Baſel zu verſammeln

Einzelheiten werden ſpäter bekannt gegeben. Auskunft erteilt Herr Fritz Stähelin-Bernoulli, Wartenbergſtr. 20, Baſel.

THE COAT OF ARMS IN A CHANGING TIME

The oldest depiction of the family coat of arms can be found on a seal from 1560. Genealogists attributed it to Bartholomäus, the oldest son of the *Stammvater,* or progenitor. At the time, the coat of arms depicted an unprotected arm with a *Morgenstern,* i.e. a simple soldier at battle. In the subsequent generation, a Stähelin replaced the Morgenstern with a mace, and in later seals the descendants introduced a knight with an armored arm.[276] Family historian, history professor and state archivist Andreas Staehelin justified this refinement with an explanation of the increased prestige of the nobility to the bourgeoisie of the seventeenth century: "Hence, the desire for a noble transformation of the coat of arms."[277] Pictured here is the family crest of the recent past: the logo of the family website: www.ststst.ch.

5.
EARNING, LOSING, INHERITING:

THE ECONOMY OF A FAMILY

The wealth of the Basel upper class is as legendary. So too is the reserve and modesty of the Baslers. In the "city on the Rhine," it is considered gauche to flaunt one's wealth. As a result, what which Basler owns and how much he or she has, was, and is, a continual subject of rumor, conjecture and gossip. One such tale concerns the widow Fäsch, born Gertrud Stähelin (1683–1779), the daughter of an iron dynasty who resided both on the Augustinergasse and at a country estate in Schoren. The legendarily wealthy woman was said to have kept "the bulk of her wealth, likely 100,000 Pfund," in her bed with her.[278]

One Stähelin calculated that, adjusted for inflation, Gertrud's concealed capital would have given her the purchasing power of roughly seven million Swiss francs in 1962.[279] Comparisons of wealth over time are of course tricky, but his purpose was to make a different point, and judging by the raptness of his audience, he succeeded: Who among us isn't interested in the details of the wealth of our forebears?

Gertrud's oldest brother Balthasar Stähelin (1675–1746) chose to put his money to other uses. "The Lord God" had commanded him to think of the poor, Balthasar noted on February 17, 1739. He wanted to obey, especially since he himself was "more than worthy of the kind hand of God with temporal Goodness," which was his way of admitting that he was very well off. "With this, my Last Will and Testament," he set aside a thousand Pfund for the good of poor "descendants" of "Stähelin line" who might "fall into poverty."[280] He bequeathed the remainder of his large estate to his children, with instructions that they look after the Stähelins' *Armenfond,* or Fund for the Poor, in a manner that preserved the capital.

How had Balthasar amassed his fortune? He ran the iron business from the "Zum Neuenburg" building that had been built by his father (also named Balthasar) and above all by his mother Elisabeth (1644–1730).[281] Elisabeth, née Iselin, was one of many Stähelin widows who ran a family business at the dawn of the eighteenth century.[282] She had inherited the iron business from her husband after he died from bilious fever in 1686. At the time, the oldest son Balthasar the younger was only ten; his sister Gertrud (the future eccentric widow Fäsch), three. Elisabeth found a good governess for her daughter, and she sent Balthasar to Neuchâtel and Paris in order to prepare him for his foreordained role as the head of the family business. Elisabeth's Francophile leanings had their origins Basel's economic orientation at the time. The city was not a part of the Swiss confederation at that time and its commercial links were stronger with the Upper Rhine region than with the cantons that then constituted Switzerland. The iron sold by the "Balthasar Stähelin" company was one of numerous goods produced in Alsace and sold in Switzerland.

After his education, Balthasar took over the family business and embarked upon a political career. In 1700 he married Margaretha (née Ryhiner), nine years his junior and granddaughter of Emanuel Socin, Mayor of Basel. In honor of this prominent forebear, Balthasar and Margaretha gave three of their sons his name (Emanuel). The first died shortly after birth, the second as a toddler, but the third managed to outlive his great-grandfather.[283] Balthasar thus had powerful family ties, important political offices and ample funds.

This iron merchant did not keep his money under the bed as his younger sister is said to have done but invested it instead. His last will shows that he relied on interest-bearing bonds and had given some money in "solid pledges" to those who were good for their debts. For only the *Züns,* or interest, as Balthasar explained to his descendants, could be "given out to the *truly poor* throughout the year." The principal of one thousand pounds was not to be touched under any circumstances. Balthasar clearly understood the importance of husbanding capital and the magic of compound interest. The managers of the Stähelin Fund for the Poor invested the principal in private investments, stocks, bonds and foreign currencies. They observed the stipulation in Balthasar's will that the donations were never to originate from the principal, but only from the interest it earned.[284]

By the mid-1990s, the value of the Fund for the Poor, which was now registered as a Stähelin family trust and benefited from further bequests, had exceeded one million Swiss francs. Further, by this time, the Stähelin Family Foundation, founded in 1894 by Adolf Stehelin, a great grandson of Balthasar's from the Alsace, had twice as much in assets. This provided Balthasar's "descendants" with a good three million Swiss francs, which on the cusp of the twenty-first century the Board of Trustees permitted to be used only for charitable purposes, but also for the promotion of a "sense of family." This revision of the statues came into force in 1996.[285]

TO BE POOR IN A RICH FAMILY

Balthasar left a bequest that remains at the disposal of the family today. Balthasar's forebear and the progenitor of the family, Hans Stehelin, did not or could not do so. He had been a ropemaker in the building "Zum Laufenberg" on the Rindermarkt two centuries before Balthasar's birth. The Laufenberg house, which was acquired in 1535 and was located at Gerbergasse 18, serves as the family *Stammhaus,* or ancestral home.[286] The family's economic rise did not occur here; indeed, quite the contrary. The "ancestral home" is a reminder that some branches of the family did not do as well as others. The cramped Rindermarkt house was abandoned by the Stähelins who ascended to the city's upper class, including councilors such as Balthasar,

wealthy widows like his sister Gertrud, or the numerous merchants among their relatives and descendants.

The heirs of the Laufenberg house remained craftsmen. The Stammhaus was both their workshop and home. And Hans the ropemaker was himself only able to afford it thanks to an inheritance from his mother-in-law Margaretha Mieg.[287] He invested strategically in real estate, one of the most common investment opportunities in early modernity. But the problem with real estate was that it was hard to divide up among heirs — whoever inherited a house had to either buy out the other heirs or live with them.[288] This meant that for Hans and his descendants it was crucial to generate enough income from their shop, or else they would have to sell the building to be able to divide the proceeds among the claimants. This is exactly what Hans Heinrich Stähelin (born in 1584, year of death unknown) did in 1635. The buyer of the Stammhaus was a ropemaker named Lindenmeyer.[289]

Most of Hans Heinrich's descendants remained simple craftsmen: saddlers, tailors, coopers, cobblers or fishermen. One of them, Christoph Stähelin (1707–1743), is described in Council minutes as a hosiery weaver who was said to have lived in "very poor circumstances." In genealogical jargon, this branch of the family "died out" in the nineteenth century. What this really means is that the descendants of the man who sold the Stammhaus were married to women with common names like Oshgy, Kittweiler or Fischer — not upper-class families such as Vischer, Merian or Iselin.[290]

These Stähelins were humble, but far from the bottom end of the social hierarchy. They were citizens of Basel. They were not beggars, servants or day laborers such as Johannes Kunz, who spent some months working for Hieronymous Staehelin in Rosshof. Kunz stole a number of items from Hieronymous, primarily garments, including a gilet — a piece of clothing that had replaced the camisole among the upper classes during the eighteenth century. Stealing was a common way for the lower classes to obtain clothing, given that it could be easily sold or bartered.[291]

In addition to rising or stagnating, there was a third option: falling from grace. The Basel Stähelins were no strangers to it. One such spectacular case involved Emanuel Stähelin (1672–1722), a son of Martin Stähelin, who had been Chief Guild

Master Martin, and a cousin of the wealthy Balthasar Stähelin who had established the trust for the benefit of poor members of the family. Emanuel dealt in hats and owned the building "Zur Glocken" on the Fischmarkt; he was also a Councilor to the Safran guild. In 1713 he was exposed as a fraud and declared bankrupt and outlawed. He lost his political office on the spot and fled across the Jura to Biel with enormous debts. He broke his ankle jumping over the Basel city wall. According to witnesses at the time, the cause of his bankruptcy had nothing to do with poor business acumen but was rather the result of a dissolute life of drinking and womanizing.[292]

After his fall and flight, Emanuel and his children could not expect to benefit from the largesse of his rich cousin Balthasar. Only his direct descendants were beneficiaries of the trust he established.[293] The names of those who received assistance from the Stähelin Fund for the Poor, as well as the amount they received, have been a matter of record since 1787. Women were, and still are, particularly vulnerable economically. The oldest extant entry in the record is for "a poor widow Stähelin in the small City," i.e. in Kleinbasel, who received a grant in 1794. Women — in particular widows or single "virgins," received the most support by far well into the twentieth century.[294]

The monies paid out were not loans, but rather grants. Despite this, they sometimes seem to have been seen by the beneficiaries as debts, and perhaps also as a matter of shame. For example, the minutes for a meeting of the Board of Trustees from 1967 notes that a Mrs. Stehelin from Canada had "voluntarily refunded" the previous grant after she has sufficient liquidity again.[295] At this time, most of applications for aid came from abroad. For a Basel-based family member to apply for money from the Fund for the Poor was simply impossible, as one contemporary witness put it. Even if they were poor, their pride would not have allowed it.[296]

A widow who lived on St. Crischona saw things differently. She longed to be given assistance and wrote to the administration of the family fund in 1948: "Given that my cash reserves are so low, I had just comforted myself every day on the way to Basel: 'The dear God knows it!'"[297] She received about 1200 francs a year, corresponding to about two months' wages of a worker at

the time.[298] In addition to her, about half-dozen family members received support shortly after the Second World War. A relative wrote from Brooklyn to the administrator that her father had once told his children of a *Fonds Stehelin de Bâle.* Another explained that she had lost everything in the War and had nothing left: *ni ménage, ni meubles, ni argent* (no household, no furniture, no money).[299] She too received money from the trust.

Even though the Board of Trustees did not often turn down applications for support, they tended to view requests for support from male family members with more skepticism. For example, a request for support from Geneva was rejected following an investigation by an acquaintance. The applicant was judged to be a "sad personality." The application was denied forthwith, and it was agreed that he should be institutionalized. Beyond that, the petitioner could not provide a genealogy showing that he was a member of the family. The number of applications for support fell after the hardships of the postwar years passed and has not been in double digits in any year since then. But there have been, and still are, cases that show that Stähelins are not immune from economic privation.

KAFFISTÄÄCHELI AND COLONIAL WARES

Balthasar the iron merchant was not only the original benefactor of the Fund for the Poor. To genealogists, he is also the most important fork in the family tree. From him, both the "Streitgass Line" and the "Graben Line" emerged, two branches that sprouted in the eighteenth century and began with Balthasar's eldest sons. The lines are named after two Basel buildings that were once owned by members of the Stähelin family; one on the Streitgasse and the other on the Leonhardsgraben.[300]

The reason that genealogists speak of a Streitgasse and Graben line has to do with companies established by family members that operated there. One was the "Gebrüder Stähelin" trading house on Streitgasse. The other was the "Balthasar de Benedict Staehelin" ribbon factory on Leonhardsgraben. Their history provides insight into regional industrialization in an age of expanding capitalism and into the close-knit structure of Basel as a trading city, which brought wealth to a few bourgeois families.

Gebrüder Stähelin was located on the Streitgasse off Barfüsserplatz, where members of the family first bought a residence in 1764. Later, the house "Zum Balchen" was extended to cover the plots now numbered Streitgasse 11 and 13. Gold-framed paintings adorned the living rooms, among them a miniature portrait of the family patriarch and company patron, Peter Stähelin (1763–1820). This portrait depicts a businessman with a winning smile, well-fed and meticulously groomed, with a large nose and fine clothing. Peter, who was nicknamed Kaffistäächeli or Kaffee-Peter ("Coffee Peter"), laid the foundation for the business conducted by Gebrüder Stähelin.[301]

As his nickname implies, one of the Gebrüder Stähelin's specialties was trading in coffee. The drinking of coffee had spread to Europe in the seventeenth century but was regularly consumed only in wealthier cities. Coffee was only one of numerous goods in which "Kaffistäächeli" dealt.[302] Peter's father, like other members of Basel's upper class at the end of the eighteenth century, had speculated successfully wide and far. He was involved in a variety of businesses, lent money and collected commissions. First and foremost, his companies imported and sold *Specerey und Farbwaaren* (roughly, "specialty spices and color wares"). During the course of the nineteenth century, the term *Kolonialwaren,* or "colonial goods," was applied to a range of goods produced in the colonies of the major powers around the world: tea, sugar, cotton and spices, colorful natural fibers, cacao — and, of course, coffee, the brown beans that gave the company's patron his epithet.

Most of the merchandise consisted of raw materials and consumer goods that moved across the oceans and along the waterways, including the Rhine. In Basel it was well known that enslaved persons from Africa were an important part the transatlantic triangular trade linking Europe, Africa and the Americas. There are no extant records suggesting that the Gebrüder Stähelin concern was directly involved in the slave trade, as other Basel merchant houses were.[303] However, members of the family clearly understood the nature of trading in colonial goods. The first Stähelin from Basel who dealt in *Specery* did so as early as 1700.[304] Coffee Peter became one of Basel's leading purveyors of colonial wares a century later.

Peter Stähelin began working in his father's businesses in 1786. At the age of 24, he took charge of the office at Streitgasse when his father moved to the Kettenhof, where another branch of the company, Stähelin & Merian, was located.[305] Just how dangerously and deftly the Stähelin and Merian families speculated is indicated by an episode from the mid-1790s. Officially specializing in cotton, Stähelin & Merian ordered what was at the time a massive amount of flour from abroad. It was seized by customs officials in Gottlieben on Lake Constance. Shortly thereafter the mayor of Basel lodged a complaint with the customs authorities, a testament to the influence these families had.

The flour, the government insisted, was certified as "transit goods," and "not intended for resale, but for the personal consumption of our relatives." Of course, this could not have been true given the enormous amount that was being shipped. The flour was hardly intended solely to be used to feed the family, but for the open market. At the time, grain was scarce and expensive, owing to poor harvests in preceding years, and the suspicious shipment from the East was quite likely a commercial response.[306] It didn't matter if it was grain or coffee: The family company traded in all manner of goods, locally and globally, trading with everything that promised a profit.

On January 1, 1798, Peter Stähelin announced to his business contacts that he was now in sole control of his late father's trading house. Together with his younger brother Christoph, he founded Gebrüder Stähelin. Peter was the boss. He kept a secret ledger in perfect handwriting and, together with his family and household staff, lived on the Streitgasse next to the safe, warehouse, bookkeeper and accountant. Only fragments of the records of the company's operations from this time have been preserved.[307] However, the daily affairs at Gebrüder Stähelin must have been similar to those of the other Basel trading houses.[308] And like those houses, the company Peter and Christoph ran would soon be caught up in the maelstrom of European politics.

In autumn of 1806, Napoleon imposed economic sanctions on Great Britain and blockaded trade with it and its colonies. This was meant to free the Continent (which was largely under French influence) from British colonial goods and industrial products, thus bringing France's archenemy to its knees. This

proved to be an opportunity for Basel's nimble trading houses that managed to circumvent the obstacle to colonial trade to thereby to make huge profits. Among them, Frères Merian (Merian Brothers), the leading Swiss trading house, boasted such solid contacts abroad that it attracted Napoleon's wrath.

Gebrüder Stähelin must also have mastered this risky and lucrative business. The size of their bursting coffers was revealed in 1810 after the Edict of Trianon. Under pressure from France, which now imposed a tariff of up to fifty percent on all colonial goods from outside French territories, the Basel government reported the value of the goods stored at local trading houses. Unsurprisingly, Frères Merian revealed the most valuable cache, but the Gebrüder Stähelin's stash was only marginally smaller. Peter and Christoph Stähelin had taxable goods that were almost three times as valuable as those of the houses Ludwig Respinger or J.R. Geigy, which were in third and fourth place.[309]

Napoleon's threats and decrees subsequently became more effective. As early as 1811, seventeen Basel trading houses went bankrupt. Only the largest of them had enough capital to survive until the end of the continental blockade in 1813 — including Gebrüder Stähelin. In 1816, Peter Stähelin handed over management to his eldest son, who had married a Merian.[310] At that time, the Frères Merian concern was already concentrating on banking and investment. in contrast to Gebrüder Stähelin. These former competitors, who nonetheless were linked by marriage, had renounced the arduous trade in colonial goods. Their lending yielded high returns. The Company patron, Christoph Merian, was reputed to be the richest man in Switzerland, and his son of the same name later donated the fortune of this branch of the Merian family to the city of Basel.[311]

Christoph Merian senior was known as "the Rich Merian." His erstwhile competitor's more casual nickname, "Kaffistäächeli," belied its bearer's huge wealth. The joint will he created with his wife Sara stipulated that their heirs would stand to inherit almost 600,000 old Swiss francs in 1843. But what was this inheritance really worth? It was distributed at the time of the *Münzwirrwarrs,* or "coin confusion." There was no national currency, and each canton set the value of the old franc for itself. Moreover, numerous foreign currencies were widely used.

Real estate is one measure on money's worth. A year after the inheritance was divided up, the "Spiesshof" in Basel was sold for 90,000 old francs. This sumptuous Renaissance building had been owned by a notorious (and rich) heretic, David Joris, who lived under an assumed name in Basel; his true identity was discovered only after his death and his body was exhumed and he was beheaded. With their share of the inheritance, each of Kaffistäächeli's five children could in principle have afforded this majestic building on the Heuberg. Each received some 105,000 francs, some of which took the form of loans that bore interest at between three to five percent.[312] Such assets could be passed on to the next generation much more easily than real estate.

Peter and Sara Stähelin were richer than Gertrud Stähelin, who in the eighteenth century, as the widow Fäsch, was said to have stashed away seven million Swiss francs in her bed. The approximately 600,000 old Swiss francs that the couple left to their heirs in 1843 would have been worth many times Gertrud's 100,000 Pfund. With this capital, they could theoretically purchase numerous properties the size of the Spiesshof. That building, by the way, was purchased by a merchant in 1844. The seller? None other than the other great Basel family business: Balthasar de Benedict Staehelin.[313]

PROTESTANT RIBBON BARONS

The name Balthasar de Benedict Staehelin was biblical in inspiration: Balthasar, son of Benedict Staehelin. In later generations, the company name was shortened to B. de B. Staehelin.[314] Its foundation at the end of the eighteenth century served to diversify the family's business undertakings into one of the most lucrative fields in Basel: the trade and manufacture of textiles. This had made families such as the Bachofens, De Barys and Vischers very wealthy. The so-called Blue and White houses on the Rheinsprung that belonged to the Sarasins bear witness to just how prosperous owners of companies in Basel's leading industry were.[315]

With the purchase of the Spiesshof in 1804, B. de B. Staehelin acquired a site of considerable historical significance. The building is now considered to be a preeminent example of Renaissance architecture on the Upper Rhine.[316] Before the purchase of the Spiesshof, the business was located in the Zum Neu-

enberg building on today's Marktplatz. This was the site of the iron business that Balthasar, the original patron of the Fund for the Poor, had once run. In 1828 B. de B. Staehelin abandoned the trading in iron that members of the family had successfully practiced for two centuries. From then on, B. de B. Staehelin concentrated on fine fabrics and ribbons.[317] The expansion into this new line of business was eventually successful, but it took time.

B. de B. Staehelin initially traded in mousseline, a finely threaded cotton fabric with a light fall. The capital for the diversification of the business came in part from the Reber family, which had moved to Basel from the Alsace. The founder of B. de B. Stähelin ended up marrying three members of that family in succession.[318] The company's safe was located on the fourth floor of the Spiesshof. Valuables were said to be kept in a massive oak cabinet that was so large it could not be brought back through the doors. Another legend of the Spiesshof claimed that it was haunted by the ghost of a former owner, the heretic David Joris.[319]

In the 1830s and 1840s, B. de B. Staehelin purchased more property. The company raised money so that it would be able to produce textiles in addition to trading them. It was common knowledge in Basel that substantial financing was needed to survive in a capital-intensive industry.[320] B. de B. Staehelin gradually abandoned sheet metal manufacture, iron forging and wire drawing, which was undertaken in St. Jakob near Basel.

From 1844 on, the headquarters of B. de B. Staehelin were situated on the Leonardsgraben, where the property abutted the city wall at Steinengraben and extended along the street to what today are house numbers 40 to 44.[321] The company offices and dispatch rooms were located on the ground floor of house number 44; the factory was housed on the second and third floors. The family, with their servants, lived next door in the middle of a secluded, park-like garden.[322]

The ledgers testify to just how well business was going. When the unified franc was introduced across Switzerland in 1848, the company's turnover amounted to more than one million Swiss francs in the new currency. The profits that remained after deducting operating costs went directly into the family account, which the company owner recorded every year as "Profit through God's undeserved blessing."[323]

The head of B. de B. Staehelin stood in a long line of Protestant businessmen who shaped Basel's economy in the nineteenth century.[324] B. de B. Staehelin was run by devout *Bändelherren,* or "Ribbon Barons." One of their descendants remembers the "many missionaries who, devout and hospitable, came and went from the Herrnhuter-oriented Staehelin houses."[325] The ribbon company on Leonardsgraben raises the question of the relationship between Protestant faith and economic success. What sort of pious capitalists were these, who so seamlessly blended God and money?

Their wives lived private lives. Although more women had become active in family businesses from 1700 on, they played no role in the day-to-day business of B. de B. Stähelin. In correspondence that describes life at the Leonhardsgraben residence around 1900, they appear pious and strict. In the evening the eldest matron gathered her staff and the children at the bedside to read Bible verses. They recorded expenditures on milk, meat and the like down to the exact centime.[326] They forbade such "worldly sins" as dance and theatre. They guarded the home, the faith and the family.

Their husbands stood apart. They largely stayed away from their children, controlled the workers in the factory, kept the books and represented the business to the outside world. With their brothers and cousins, they played billiards on the first floor of the Leonhardsgraben residence, and they entertained business associates in the stately salon.

Weapons, ethnographic objects from all over the world, and a Staehelin family tree adorned the walls of the rooms reserved for the men. The business world valued drive and rational management, and this included thrift bordering on miserliness: the company used old copy books as toilet paper.[327]

B. de B. Staehelin manufactured ribbon from cotton and foil silk that was also referred to as *Schappe,* which was composed of the inferior fibers that came from the outer layer of the silkworms' cocoon. This business flourished in the mid-nineteenth century, when a good 220 workstations at once manufactured ribbons. B. de B. Staehelin displayed their products at the 1855 Paris World's Fair in the *catégorie rubans façonnés divers.*[328] In the 1870s they sold a factory in Liestal but opened a new

production facility in St. Jakob. Across the Atlantic, the company also maintained warehouses in Boston and New York.[329] The fashion capital of Paris and emerging metropolises such as New York shaped the professional lives of ribbon barons such as Benedict Staehelin (1825–1891). Benedict had drove the expansion of B. de B. Staehelin until his death in a rail accident in Münchenstein. It was unthinkable that his widow would have taken over the businesses at the end of the nineteenth century.[330]

By 1900, B. de B. Staehelin had already passed its zenith. In addition to other factors, the Basel textile industry, which was still by far the most important in the region, fell victim to the whims of fashion. While the hips, waist and bosom of the bourgeois lady of the nineteenth century was accentuated with the aid of ribbons and laces, the fashionable flapper dresses of the 1920s fell loosely over the boyish silhouettes of the *femme garçonne.* The hats of the early twentieth century also featured fewer decorative ribbon garnishes. The ribbon barons could not fathom how to react to changing fashions in womenswear.[331]

The owners of B. de B. Staehelin addressed these urgent and increasingly existential questions over coffee, which they drank together every day at 4:00 p.m. sharp.[332] At last they went the route of many of the ribbon barons and decided to liquidate their business.[333] They sold the factory to the Schappe-Cordonnetspinnerei, and after over a hundred years of family ownership, the Leonardsgraben property went to the canton of Basel-Stadt. In 1927 the company B. de B. Stähelin went out of business after five generations in the same family. "With this," bemoaned a former resident of the Leonhardsgraben property, "a piece of old Basel has disappeared, and a family history has come to an end."[334]

BASEL CHEMISTRY

At the end of the nineteenth century, the partners of Balthasar de Benedict Staehelin were not among the richest of all Baslers, nor were those of the Gemuseus & Stähelin colonial goods store, the successor to Gebrüder Stähelin. However, the heads of both of these companies nevertheless numbered among the 500 individuals who paid the most taxes in the canton of Basel-Stadt. In 1895 they were among the two percent of Baslers

who paid taxes on a private income of over 20,000 francs.[335] To put this into perspective, a working-class female at the time earned barely 600 francs per annum and a commercial employee around 2200.[336]

Basel was a distinct class society at the end of the nineteenth century. The extent of socio-economic inequality at the time can be seen in in images of the many beggars and the hazardous sanitation conditions in the city center. The significance of family origin in this city is noted in the historical analyses of Philipp Sarasin, who argues that the old upper class was not merely socially and culturally detached, but also economically insular. Half of the five hundred richest households in Basel consisted of married couples where both the man and the wife came from old-money families.

Even within this upper class there were relatively large wealth and income differences. In 1895, no Stähelin belonged to the 60 or so Basler taxpayers who would now be called superrich — those whose taxable income was over 131,000 francs (or about sixty times as average annual earnings of a commercial clerk). Some of the households had taxable income in excess of a quarter million francs. None of these individuals were named Stähelin, nor did any woman by the name of Stähelin marry into one of these superrich families.[337] Nevertheless, many members of the family were quite well off.

There were eleven Stähelins altogether who numbered among the highest-earning taxpayers in Basel in 1895. None of them earned a "salary" in the literal sense. Four owned businesses which provided them with income in the form of the distributed profits or realized capital gains. The remaining seven received their income primarily in the form of earnings on investment. Two were members of the clergy; the other five did not work. One of the these was a Stähelin who had retired, another the daughter of the deceased head of the Sarasin & Heusler cotton mill (later Sarasin, Stähelin); the other three were widows named Stähelin.[338] Like numerous individuals among Basel's richest, they had inherited a large sum and they lived according to the principle upon which the Stähelin Fund for the Poor was founded: One should live on capital income and not eat into the principal.

Inheritance plays a key role in maintaining the financial integrity of a family over the generations. Female and male heirs were treated equally before the law, and the order of beneficiaries in Basel was and continues to be: children, parents, siblings, siblings' children, grandparents, grandparents' siblings, cousins.[339] "It is unfortunate," wrote one Stähelin around 1900, "that every inheritance seems to generate unpleasantness and strife among the next of kin."[340] Despite legal provisions and personal wills, estates are not easily divided, especially when it comes to sentimental heirlooms: jewelry, paintings, furniture, books, a wine cellar, the family home. In addition to various wills, the numerous marriage agreements in the Stähelin family archives testify to the extent to which economic considerations played a part in the founding of a family, no matter the century.[341]

A hackneyed characterization of the bourgeois marriage is that the man has economic motives and the woman social motives.[342] In this view a bride contributed to the couple's economic security, for example through her dowry, the prospect of a substantial inheritance or her position in her father's business. Conversely, a male *Bildungsbürger* (i.e. a cultured gentleman) was a particularly attractive catch for women from wealthy families as the prospective bridegroom would be at least as useful to the family's reputation as money. But in order to belong to Basel's upper class, both economic and cultural capital were needed. A closer examination of the richest five hundred households in Basel reveals a disproportionally large number of pastors and professors. This was no different with the Stähelins. Marriages took place in both directions: the pastor Ernst Stähelin married into the rich Merian family; a wealthy female Stähelin married into the Preiswerk parish dynasty.

In the case of the Preiswerk-Stähelin marriage, the motives could not have been less romantic. In his memoirs, the groom, Samuel Preiswerk, wrote "that it is also quite fitting if a bride does not come to a rather penniless country pastor with completely empty hands." He knew his chosen betrothed only "from fleeting glances," and before proposing he knew only that Charlotte Stähelin "was not as beautiful as the beloved of the poems, but a kind-hearted, pious, educated daughter of a good family." The transaction took place. Their marriage was happy, reported Preiswerk, and

the children followed in their parents' footsteps: All four sons became pastors and married women from rich families.[343]

The family also had its share of ambitious members. For example, Max Staehelin (1880–1968), son of a pastor and a theologian, was a successful businessman and a survivor of the sinking of the *Titanic.* He took a doctoral degree in law and at the age of 17 was made a director of the Swiss Trust Company. In 1928 he was appointed the president of *Bankverein* or Swiss Bank Corporation, which was later merged into UBS. In the same year he was made a member of the Board of Directors of Ciba, a chemical company that was eventually merged into today's Novartis, one of the two leading Swiss pharmaceuticals, both located in Basel. He subsequently served as the president of Ciba from 1944–1956. His only son, also named Max Staehelin, pursued a similar career in both of the same large firms — he was, among other things, on the Board of Directors at the Bankverein and Ciba, and was a docent at the University of Basel where he lectured in commercial law.

In newspaper articles featuring Max Sr. and Max Jr., the two are described in a similar vein: "With his family's typical preference of substance before style," Max the elder waved off each imminent celebration of his birthday, wrote the local papers in unison. In the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung,* Max the younger was said to have lived according to the "leitmotif of moderation."[344]

On the other hand, the Schnitzelbank (a satirical verse) that a relative presented Max the elder and younger at a family party in 1955 was less hagiographic. Some present were adept at "making powder," the speaker said, alluding to the flourishing chemical-pharmaceutical industry in Basel, teasing: *«So Max dem Vater, Max dem Sohn / und auch Carl Staehelin-Simon. / An Wässerlein und Pulvern nie / fehlt es bekanntlich der Chemie / viel Wundermittel bringt die Geigy / erst von der Ciba ganz geschweigy,* or, roughly: *So Max the father / Max the son / and also Carl Staehelin-Simon / Water and powders in supply / what's missing is the chemist-ry / Lotsa miracle cures from Geigy / but from Ciba, not so wise-y.*[345]

The punchline was at the expense of Max senior and Max junior, who were influential at Ciba, as well as the "Geigy" director Carl Staehelin:[346] *Und wer viel Pülverlein verkauft, / der wird*

am End steinreich getauft,[347] or, *And whoever to the market the most powder sends / will be the richest in the end.* The allusion to the fortunes of the family members working in the *Basler Chemie,* or Basel chemical-pharmaceutical industry, was direct. It was aimed at very rich men, who lived quite modestly in public but who could be the butt of satire behind closed doors in a family setting. The speaker may even have earned some laughs. In any case the verse gained attention, because the fortunes of Stähelins past and present remains a point of interest.

6.
THE SCHOLAR'S REPUBLIC:

ANATOMISTS, THEOLOGIANS, HISTORIANS

In 1960, to mark the 500th anniversary of the founding of the University of Basel, a book was published with the quintessentially dry title of *Professoren der Universität Basel aus fünf Jahrhunderten,* or *Professors of the University of Basel over Five Centuries.*[348] The tome provided vignettes of the lives of 200 professors who had held chairs the university. It was edited by Andreas Staehelin, who was a historian and later state archivist for the canton of Basel-Stadt, as well as a private docent in Swiss history at the university.[349] The preface was written by Ernst Staehelin, a church historian and the rector of the university as well as the author of the volume's first entry, which was devoted to Johannes Geiler von Kaiserberg, a professor of theology from 1475 to 1476.

Together Andreas and Ernst Staehelin wrote the first five entries. Altogether 26 were written by one of three Stähelins, the third being John, Professor of Psychiatry.[350] In addition, three Stähelins are among the volume's subjects: Rudolf (1841–1900), Professor of Church History; Felix (1873–1952), Professor of Ancient History, and Rudolf (1875–1943), Professor of Medicine.[351]

By 1960, the Stähelins had emerged as one of the leading scholarly families in Basel. There are close links between the university and a number of Stähelins. Some members of the family who are concerned about its traditions see scholarship as a family trait, just as other eminent Basel families, as widely as branched out and diverse in their occupations as they are, are associated with certain industries: silk, banking, chemistry.

As such, these members of the family pay less attention to financial capital that the family has accumulated over time as to what thee sociologist Pierre Bordieu calls "cultural capital," by which he means culture, learning and academic credentials. In this narrative the distinction of the family does not arise from aristocratic titles, wealth or business acumen, but rather from the nobility of the mind. Those of this mindset distance themselves from the world of business and politics. The politician, after all, even when committed to the *res publica,* seeks. The businessman, even if he has a social conscience, wants money. The scholar, on the other hand, even if he is vain and seeks fame, only wants to increase his knowledge and understand the world (or at least some substantive detail of it). He looks at things from all sides, including his own actions. He contemplates and, in his mind, sees himself as morally superior.

THE FIRST PROFESSORS

Just as politics in Basel in the seventeenth and eighteenth century were shaped by certain patrician families, so too was the university. Prior to that, most of the lecturers had come from Southern Germany, Alsace, the rest of Switzerland, France, Italy or the Netherlands; only a quarter came from Basel in the 16th century. However, as Andreas Staehelin wrote in his 1957 two-volume history of the university, in the seventeenth century the institution started to become *verbaselt,* or Basel-ified.

Between 1600 and 1700, nearly 50 of the 80 university professors came from just fifteen elite Basel families. The Stähelins were not among them. In that period family members were active mainly in industry and trade. However, in the eighteenth century, more local families became interested in scholarship: the Bernoullis held five chairs them, the Burckhardts four, and the Stähelins, Ryhiners, Merians and Zwingers each had three. Other eminent families such as the De Barys, Sarasins and Socins, however, had no professors among them.[352]

The first Stähelin to be appointed to a university chair in Basel was Johann Heinrich (1668–1721), medical doctor and a botanist. He trained as a surgeon in Paris in 1692. From 1711 he taught anatomy and botany at the university and had a medical practice in the city. He is said to have been the first Basel professor to offer surgical colloquia.[353] In 1797, two years before his death, he was elected Rector. He is one of the family's great botanists. The Swedish naturalist Carl von Linné, who is the father of the system of binomial botanical nomenclature now in use, named a plant Stahelina after him in recognition of his work.[354] Johann Heinrich was an acquaintance of the Zurich scholar Johann Jakob Scheuchzer, who was at the time one of the most prominent naturalists in Europe. Scheuchzer tried to prove the Biblical flood theory scientifically by collecting fossils in the mountains.[355] Scheuchzer and Stähelin exchanged plants and botanical findings, and Johann Heinrich also led expeditions into the mountains.

Johann Heinrich's son Benedict (1695–1750) followed in his father's footsteps. He studied anatomy and botany in Basel and Paris, in 1727 was named Professor of Physics and became Rector in 1736. He had previously been a corresponding member of the Royal Academy of Sciences in Paris. As a young man, he began work on a history of plants that he never fully finished. His great passion lay in the study of fungi and he also enjoyed great success in the discipline of physiology. In addition, he wrote poetry (including some in English), and discovered the mineral spring in Neubad.[356]

At the request of the City Council, Benedict expanded the university's physics labs and education in experimentation. A physics hall was erected at the Spalentor, and he purchased new

equipment from the famous English instrument maker Hawksbee through the mediation of a Geneva mathematician. An air pump that could create a vacuum and several optical instruments were among the instruments he ordered.[357] Benedict was also friends with the Bern scholar Albrecht von Haller, who has been called the "last universal scholar" and taught at the newly established University of Göttingen. Benedict had kindled his interest in botany, Haller wrote, praising the botanical specimens he had prepared and dedicating several of his poems to him. In one, he rhymed:

Woher, o Stähelin, kömmt doch die Zuversicht, / womit der schwächste Geist von hohen Dingen spricht? / Du weisst's — Betrug und Tand umringt die reine Wahrheit, verfälscht ihr ewig Licht und dämpfet ihre Klarheit, or, roughly: Whence, O Stähelin, cometh the confidence,/with which the weakest spirit speaks of the highest things?/You know full well — fraud and trumpery shroud pure truth, falsify its eternal light and dim its clarity. [358]

Benedict, like Haller, may also have dissected cadavers and performed experiments on live animals. In the eighteenth century, anatomy and physiology were important parts of the study of medicine, and the scientists opened bodies to examine organs, poured hot oil on muscles, tendons and nerves and cut out embryos in the name of science.[359] At the end of his life, Benedict suffered a mental breakdown. When Haller visited him at this point in his life, he is said to have been barely able to speak and was given to playing with children's toys. Haller broke down in tears, at which point Benedict said: *Yes, it's very sad to become a child again.*[360]

Johann Rudolf (1724–1800) also undertook studies in anatomy and botany. He became a professor in 1753 and was Rector four times. He also had a medical practice. In order to be able to perform his duties competently, he noted in retrospect, he had visited Strasbourg, Heidelberg, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Berlin, Göttingen, Leyden and Paris to see "the operating theaters and botanical gardens, and be acquainted with the most famous men in these sciences, and see through many cabinets with natural and anatomical artifacts. After my return I did not miss the opportunity to hold anatomical lectures in Latin and provide instruction in surgery in in German. In the spring and summer, I always made excursions to the mountains and fields with the

students, to look for the herbs that grow there and become acquainted with them."[361] His work, however, often suffered due to a shortage of cadavers.[362]

Yet more natural scientists of note belonged to the family, including the physician Johann Jakob (1643–1683) and the physicist Christoph (1804–1870). The former was a pioneer in the field of chemistry. He had a well-equipped chemistry lab and one of the first courses in chemical preparations took place in his house in 1767.[363] The latter first worked as a factory owner and then had to resign from his professorship after only one year due to an eye condition.[364]

RISE AND CRISIS

The Stähelin family archive contains a number of doctoral diplomas from around 1900. Unrolled, the bulky documents are poster-size. They are fashioned in an antique style, entirely in Latin with capital letters in the manner of old Roman inscriptions, and they are decorated with seals.[365] They provide some idea of the care with which tradition was maintained as well as the exclusivity connected to the degree. Felix Staehelin's diploma begins with a standard line from Cicero: *Quod bonum felix faustum forturantum sit* ("May it be good, propitious, blissful and blessed …"). He received this degree for a thesis devoted to the history of the Galatians of Asia Minor. The diploma was granted under the auspices of the *Senatus populusque Basiliensis,* that is, the senate and people of Basel. The phrase alludes to the Roman Republic's *Senatus Populusque Romanus.* Max Staehelin, who is referred to as "Maximilianus Stehelinus" on the diploma, received his doctorate for work in accountancy, and Johann received his for a thesis on civil law in the Helvetic Republic.[366]

The University of Basel is a venerable institution whose history is closely interwoven with that of the city. It was founded in 1460 by Pope Pius II, who had spent many years in Basel as Enea Silvio Piccolomini. Piccolomini participated in the Council of Basel that took place between 1431 and 1448 and displayed considerable diplomatic skill before he was ordained. He composed a romantic novella during his time in Basel.

The University of Basel was established more than forty years before Basel joined the Swiss Confederation and is the oldest institution of higher learning in Switzerland. The university stood for — and stands for — the principle of self-government and a particular kind of democracy. In a *universitas magistrorum et scolarium,* it was the quality of the argument that should be counted, not the status of the person making it. Or, to put it more idealistically: In no other place in the city were people encouraged to question authority or to challenge received opinion. The first universities were founded in the eleventh and twelfth centuries in cities such as Bologna, Paris, Oxford and Salamanca. No other European institution in history has achieved as much global significance through its structures and scientific achievements as the university.[367] The city's university has been the focus of the lives of many members of the Stähelin family since the eighteenth century.

At its beginnings, the University of Basel established itself as an international center of Renaissance Humanism. This school of thought respected and traditionalized the recently rediscovered traditional education of Greece and Rome and placed the dignity of the individual in the foreground, much unlike the official teachings of the Church. However, Renaissance Humanism also displayed a great interest in magic and hermeticism. In Basel, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Bonifacius Amerbach and Paracelsus all taught at the university in this period.

In the sixteenth century, the university benefited from an influx of religious refugees, including Italians, Savoys and Huguenots. However, enrollment figures were still low; only about 55 students studied there altogether. However, as a place of tolerance it was highly regarded among scholars; here, for example an edition of the Qur'an was edited and published there, though not without complications. The Reformation led to a halt in teaching for a short time; in its wake, the university broke away from Reform Protestantism's radical faith and returned to its basic humanist approach.[368] Now, of course, it functioned as a censor for church and state alike.

For a long period, the university functioned like a state within a state, with its own laws and its own administration. Around 1700 it was said that the faculties were comparable to the city's guilds, that the Consistorium was their court and the Regency Council, in which the professors sat (and still sit) akin

to their parliament.[369] At the time the university was divided into four faculties: theology, jurisprudence, medicine and philosophy. The study of philosophy was required for all students, and in early modernity this faculty stood at the bottom of the hierarchy under the other three.

The humanistic tradition remained alive even after the university lost its standing in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and became more provincial. By then it was thought of as more of a regional and even local institution, dominated by local bourgeois families, so much so that in 1740 the City Council felt the need to urge professors do to do a better job. Nepotism had become so rife that as early as 1688 the Council had instituted a form of sortition to appoint professors similar to the one used to select city officials. Appointments were thus made by drawing lots. Such a procedure did not foster "academic excellence." Lectures by mathematicians as eminent as Daniel and Johann I Bernoulli were poorly attended; the eminent mathematicians even had trouble filling chairs in their lectures, though in this case the council intervened. Furthermore, instead of appointing, Leonard Euler, the most brilliant mathematician of the era, a student of Bernoulli and also a Basler, the university appointed Benedict Stähelin, a physician and a devotee of mushrooms to a chair in 1727. Euler left Basel in that year and went on to an illustrious career, heading at one time Frederick the Great's newly founded Academy in Berlin and, subsequently Catherine the Great's Academy in St. Petersburg.[370]

The Helvetic Revolution of 1798 brought a serious crisis for the university, whereby the institution was essentially paralyzed. In 1795 barely thirty students had matriculated; in 1796 only 15; in 1797 just 16; in 1798 only four, and in 1799 six. As Andreas Staehelin writes in his history of the university, these numbers did not merely reflect the adverse political circumstances, so much as the university's existential crisis.[371] In fact, the Helvetic officials wanted to close the institution altogether, which in their eyes had become hopelessly ossified and run down. In its place, Education Minister Phillip Albert Stapfer envisioned no less than the creation of a federal national university. To this end he established a new chair on his own initiative, bypassing the university's autonomy in an unprecedented display of power.

The reaction was swift. In 1801, four men published anonymously a grandiloquent paper in defense of the university, "Remarks on the University of Basel." One of the authors, as Edgar Bonjour writes in his history of the university, was said to have been Johann Rudolf Stähelin (1750–1832). In principle, the merchant and judge supported the policies of the Helvetic Republic. In 1798 he started his political career by serving as a *Volksräpresentant,* or people's representative. By 1811 he headed the University Commission.[372]

The paper co-authored by Johann Rudolf testifies to the academics' high self-esteem and proclivity to gloss over the past. The university, the paper argued, was an equal partner to the state: "No person in the world, no Regent, no authority" would be entitled "to make the slightest change to the Freedoms and Rights etc. of the University of the City of Basel without its Explicit Consent." Any form of coercion towards the institution would be "an Injury not only to Civil Rights, but to Rights of Nature, the People, the State, and even God."[373] The authors then mock Stapfer's plan for a national university: "Does the Helvetic government want to have a new University — National, Central, Eccentric, whatever you want to call it — and would they truly like to see how their Helvetic Doctors, Licentiates Masters, etc. will be viewed in Germany and elsewhere!" The university would be much better off even today, the authors argued, if it had not always been disturbed in the exercise of its rights.[374] The truth, of course, was never that simple. One hundred years later, Switzerland created a national university specialized in technology that now ranks among the ten best in the world and attracts scholars from across the globe.

The University of Basel saved itself in the nineteenth century. In 1818 and 1835, in the wake of the liberal movements of that period, it was reformed by the state. In 1833 it lost two-thirds of its endowment as a result of the split of the canton of Basel into two half-cantons. It was separated from the Church and placed completely under control of the State; the members of the university had to surrender their special privileges and henceforth enjoyed only the normal civil rights of citizens of the Canton of Basel-Stadt. The Regents remained the highest officials in the university, but their powers were curtailed: They

lost the right to select professors at the university and teachers at the *Gymnasium* (or preparatory secondary school) teachers, as well as the power to determine the *Gymnasium's* curriculum. Pedantic Latin titles were also replaced with more modest German ones.[375] These reforms, however, did not prevent the radicals from keeping up pressure to reduce the emphasis given to theology in the curriculum, even calling for its elimination as they saw it as a *Schmarotzerpflanze,* or parasitic plant.[376]

The radicals of this period were not disturbed by the fact that the university remained a male preserve. When a member of the Stähelin family searches through the genealogical records and finds a litany of professors, he or she will not find single female among them. Women were not admitted to any institution of higher learning in Basel until 1890. In that year the government made the university co-educational after a Basel citizen insisted on enrolling his daughter despite the opposition of many of the professors who did not deem women capable of academic work and yet, somewhat paradoxically, feared competition from them as well as what they expected would be degradation of morals.[377] At its top, the University of Basel remains a male preserve even today; some eighty percent of the professors are men. Alas, the cheeky cry of student protesters in 1968 — *Unter den Talaren, der Muff von tausend Jahren!* Or "Under the gowns, the must of a thousand years!" — does not seem to have changed much in the interim.

When the university's professors gathered on the Münsterplatz on June 10, 1939 to participate in a solemn procession to inaugurate the university's new main building on Petersplatz, three Stähelins numbered among them, but not a single woman. The men had received new gowns (presumably not musty) for the celebration. While the professors banqueted in the music hall, their wives had teas with guests in the new auditorium, and "admired the new tapestry embroidered by the lecturers' wives for the Regents' room," as reported by Edgar Bonjour, a professor of history at the time.[378]

The opening celebration took place on the same day in the Münster, which could not hold the multitude of those present: the faculty, representatives of the authorities, politicians, the military and administration as well as numerous other guests. The

Rector, Ernst Staehelin, a theologian, explained to the assembled crowd the meaning and mission of the centuries-old institution: the idea of humanity bound to God. In this way, he was able to unite his faith with the university's traditional humanism. The night before, he had presented the new university flag to the student body, comparing service to science to military service as the Second World War loomed.[379] The celebration, which was attended supported by large swathes of the population, demonstrated the strong attachment of the Basel bourgeoisie to the university.

EUGENICS AND HEREDITARY BIOLOGY

One year earlier, in 1938, the canton of Basel-Stadt had revised its civil rights law. The revised law stipulated that an individual would be ineligible for Basel citizenship if he or she "suffered from or is likely to suffer from either a physical or mental handicap that makes them or their offspring a danger to themselves or their surroundings."[380] This paragraph had been drafted by a professor of psychiatry by the name of John Eugen Staehelin.[381] What exactly were he and other Baslers afraid of? How could a disabled or mentally ill person or, in particular, their offspring, endanger themselves or their surroundings? Was disability or mental illness contagious?

Numerous presumptions that today are considered scientifically untenable and morally problematic lay behind this statutory provision. First there was the presumption that both diseases and character traits are inherited. Furthermore, certain illnesses were associated with moral and cognitive decrepitude. Deaf-mutes and epileptics were said to be prone to intellectual disability. Finally, John Eugen and others of this time believed there was a difference between a "worthy" and a "worthless" life. The statutory provision was targeted at those who were medically or psychiatrically diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia, epilepsy, madness or "drunkenness," or those who displayed criminal tendencies and lived a "dissolute" life.[382] These "degenerates" from precarious circumstances or the lower orders should be prevented from procreating, the argument went. This was eugenics.

John E. Staehelin (1891–1969), the author of this paragraph, had studied medicine in Basel and began his career as a

psychiatrist in 1919 at the renowned Burghölzli clinic in Zurich. Eminent psychologists such as Eugen Bleuler, C.G. Jung, Karl Abraham and Ludwig Binswanger had worked there — as well as Robert Ritter, the National Socialists' race theorist. John's father, Benedict Emanuel, owned a silk spinning mill; his mother was a Burckhardt; her mother had been a Thurneysen. In 1929 John was appointed Professor of Psychology and Director of the Friedmatt University Clinic, as well as of the psychiatric polyclinic. In 1948, he was made Rector of the University of Basel. He also served as the president of the Swiss Society for Psychiatry and of the Federal Commission for the Prevention of Alcoholism. One of his areas of specialization was child psychiatry.[383]

John offered statistical evidence to the canton of Basel-Stadt to show that many sick or "inferior" people had already been granted citizenship, chastising authorities for paying too little attention to the "many immigrants and women who have become Swiss through marriage [who] bring poor hereditary material with them, which will harm the incumbent population."

For Basel, this was quite noteworthy. John even demanded that the city attempt to achieve "voluntary sterilization" for eugenic reasons by demanding "psychopaths" who suffered from "inborn moral feeblemindedness" to choose between sterilization or permanent institutionalization. (Sterilization must only be carried out, argued John, if the personality of the patient and his family had been thoroughly examined.)

Fundamentally, however, John was skeptical of sterilization: It was a sign that people no longer wanted to start families, that they were too complacent and narcissistic.[384] On the one hand, he feared that "the feeble and dimwitted" had too many offspring. On the other hand, he feared that healthy people would shirk their duty to breed because they were afraid it would be too much work. This fear also affected women.

There is no doubt that John thought in the categories of heredity, eugenics and racial hygiene current at the time. He and his guild were concerned with the "body behind" the sick individual, or in the words of Michel Foucault: with the "body of the parents, ancestors, the family body, the body of inheritance."[385] These categories were widespread in the culture of National Socialism and fascism: Biological features made some

individuals worth more than others, and these others should have their reproduction curtailed in the interest of the economy of the *Volk* and the *Volkskörper,* or "body of the people." The National Socialists famously carried out this program on Jews, Roma, homosexuals and the disabled.

However, eugenics was not limited to fascism or fascist states. The United States was a pioneer in this area at the beginning of the twentieth century and the Supreme Court legalized forced sterilization in 1927. In psychiatry, the study eugenics was as widespread as it was socially acceptable, especially in Switzerland. It was propagated by Auguste Forel, the famous psychiatrist, pacifist and socialist from Vaud. And in Munich in 1933, Ernst Rüdin, the St. Gallen-born professor at the University of Basel and head of the Friedmatt psychiatric clinic (he was John's predecessor) described the National Socialist "Law for the Prevention of Hereditarily Diseased Offspring" as the "most humane act of mankind."[386]

The eugenicist paragraph in the Basel citizenship law, which was in force until the 1960s, was unique; no other canton in Switzerland had a similar provision. John's prominent role in the legislative process contrasts with his family's desire to highlight their ancestor's acquisition of Basel citizenship in 1520.

THE HUMANITIES

In 1946, an academic celebration again took place in Basel. This time it was not at the Münsterplatz or on Petersplatz, but rather on Heuberg. This is where the Frey-Grynaeische Institute is located. The celebration was to mark the bicentennial of the Institute, which is devoted to scholarship in theology and philology. It is now part of the university. When it was founded the focus was on Eastern philology. The Stähelins have been involved with the Institute throughout its history, and two were involved at its bicentenary. Ernst, the theologian, was the Institute's director and John. the psychiatrist was a member of its supervisory Board.

Both men signed the invitation to festivities at Heuberg 33 on March 1. It requested the invitees (including "Frau Professor Staehelin-Kutter," Ernst's wife, who worked there for over forty years) to arrive at "3 pm sharp." The event was enlivened by the performance of a "historical vignette, written by Fräulein

Margrit Staehelin, nicknamed Maggy."[387] She was the daughter of the theologian Rudolf Staehelin, who worked at the Heuberg for at least twenty years (1880–1900).[388] Just has she had decades earlier in her play depicting the "foundation" of the family by Hans the ropemaker, her script would probably had re-enacted the establishment of the Institute. In 1746, the two theologians Frey and Grynaeus bequeathed their libraries (6000 volumes) and part of their estates to the university.[389]

In the eighteenth century the Stähelins had been actively engaged in the fields of natural science and medicine. In the second half of the nineteenth and into the twentieth, the focus shifted to the humanities, and in particular to theology, history and law. What the members of the family with an academic bent had in common was their attachment to Basel; none of the humanists embarked upon an international career.

To some extent, the Stähelin humanists' precursor was the Old Testament scholar Johann Jakob Staehelin (1797–1875). He became a professor at the University of Basel in 1835, its Rector in 1846 and served as Director of the Frey-Grynaeische Institute from 1861 until his death.[390] He held lectures on Hebrew and Arabic grammar, exegeses of both the Old and New Testament, dogma and Hebrew archaeology. For the most part, no more than five to ten students enrolled in his classes, and they are said not to have liked the whimsical professor. His father had been a successful iron merchant, which meant that he was independently wealthy. Accordingly, he did not draw a salary at any time during his 50 years of service to the university.[391] When the famous French historian Jules Michelet visited to Basel in 1843, he mocked the capitalism there, joking that even the theologian Staehelin engaged in lending.[392]

Among Johann Jakob's exponents was the theologian Wilhelm Martin Leberecht De Wette, a five-time rector of the university. He is reported to have said that Staehelin provided "the young theologians, in particular the freshmen, essential education, given that Herr Prof. Linder, despite his scholarly abilities, undertakes his Hebrew teachings in a thoroughly outdated and pathetic manner." Even fewer students attended Prof. Linder's lectures than those of Prof. Staehelin. Furthermore, argued De Wette, Johann Jakob possessed "really a very remarkable

knowledge of Hebrew and even Arabic and displayed laudable zeal for academic teaching." He had shed his "earlier hypernaïveté" almost entirely, which in itself had not been all that "unusual, since many famous scholars at large German universities have such curious peculiarities." Moreover, he was "flexible and grateful for advice."[393]

The fact that the work of the family's humanities scholars resonated so well in Basel was not due solely to the quality of their academic work. It was also due the extent and nature of their work beyond the university in Basel and generally high interest among the citizens of Basel in theological and historical questions. Theology in its various forms occupied the minds of Baslers in a way that is scarcely imaginable today.

For example, while he was serving as the Director of the Frey-Grynaesch Institute, the church historian Rudolf Stähelin (1841–1900) was played a significant role what was then a sensational conflict about the replacement of a vacant theological chair around 1890.[394] The university curators, today the university council, had recommended Adolf Bolliger, who was a member of the clergy and held doctorates in both theology and philosophy. His book *Anti-Kant* had earned him some recognition. However, the proposal to appoint a free thinker rankled the orthodox and Pietistic members on the faculty. They delivered a petition to the Educational Council with twenty-six signatures, claiming that Bolliger had not demonstrated sufficient competence in Christian dogma, New Testament exegesis and practical theology.[395]

The students had views of their own. One group delivered another petition, proposing a counter-candidate. A second group submitted still another name to the government council. Then, the faculty took a stand in a letter signed by Rudolf Staehelin. He strongly opposed the appointment of Bolliger. He did not see any academic merit in Bolliger's theological publications, which he considered to be biased. In the end, the Basel Government appointed Bolliger to the chair. He immediately and blithely went on to produce a litany of publications, including *Die Willensfreiheit (Free Will)* and *Gott, Freiheit, Unsterblichkeit (God, Freedom, Immortality),* which surely did not find favor among his adversaries. He did not remain in Basel for long. After five years in Basel, he left to become a pastor in Zurich.[396]

Felix Stähelin (1873–1952) may also have witnessed this affair. As the great-nephew of the historian Jacob Burckhardt, he had benefited from his tutelage. He became a professor in 1931.[397] He specialized in the history of the Orient, Greece and Rome. His publications were devoted to ancient history. His life's work culminated in *Die Schweiz in römischer Zeit (Switzerland in Roman Times),* which provided the Basel bourgeoisie with an account of the findings from the archeological excavations in the Roman settlement of August Raurica about 10 miles east of Basel.[398] He also performed an invaluable service to the family by creating and constantly updating the Family Book, the foundational document for the genealogy of the Basel Stähelins. This project provides evidence of a professional at work. It is filled with source documents, including those that do not cast a flattering light on members of the family.

Andreas Staehelin (1926–2002) took up where Felix left off. Andreas was the son of John, the psychiatrist with eugenicist leanings. He served as Basel's State Archivist. Beyond that, he was a member of a guild, Governor of the Charitable Academic Society of the City of Basel and President of the *Allgemeine Geschichtforschungsgesellschaft der Schweiz* (now the Swiss Society for History).[399] Andreas had written a dissertation on the Basel maverick Peter Ochs, an advocate of Enlightenment thinking and a prominent exponent of the Helvetic Republic. This was followed by a series of biographies of professors of the University of Basel (his most successful work) and, finally, two volumes on the history of the university.

Andreas was heavily involved in editing Thomas Platter the Elder's travel memoirs, which had included the description of Hans the "Redheaded Ropemaker." His historical work is characterized by precision, meticulousness and rigor, and is intended for all those who are interested in history. Flights of theoretical fancy were as foreign to Andreas as methodological innovation. His greatest commitment was, however, not to writing, but to the State Archives.[400]

Andreas presented a series of lectures entitled "Basic Features of Genealogy and Family History" at the university on three separate occasions — in 1970, 1975 and 1984.[401] As he noted in his introduction, this topic had dropped been from the curriculum around 1951. The Nazis' racism had discredited genealogy as a whole. Looking at the "bloodline" of one's ancestors was now heavily frowned upon. Andreas resisted this Zeitgeist: Students of history should not "completely ignore genealogical connections." All history, he argued, "was the history of family, origin, *Volk,* and historiography cannot be deprived of the concept of the generation."

This was a plea for a historically informed genealogy, as practiced by the Stähelin family — with perhaps just a distant echo of his father John's interest in heredity. As the third family archivist, Andreas administered the family book that Felix had begun. In his series of lectures, he explained to students the differences between a pedigree, a table of descendants, a family tree and a family history.

For the time being at least, the Stähelins are not notably active in the disciplines of theology and history. This is not the case for other subjects, however. In fact, the academic line extends to the present day. Adrian (1931–2016) wrote several standard legal works and taught law; his son Daniel, also a lawyer, teaches at the university.[402] In addition, many Stähelins, both male and female, were active in the sciences outside the academy, for example in the research departments of the Basel pharmaceutical industry (Ciba-Geigy, Roche, Sandoz), in the National Institute of Health (USA), at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and in the European Organisation for Nuclear Research (CERN) in Geneva.[403]

In addition, Balthasar (1923–2005), one of the sons of Ernst the theologian, worked in Zurich as a psychiatrist and developed what he called *Basistherapie,* which is used to treat psychosomatic disorders by building up trust in God.[404] He converted to Catholicism and became known for his book *Haben und Sein (To Have and To Be,* 1969). Erich Fromm, of the Neo-Marxist Frankfurt School, aped the title for his own bestseller: *Haben oder Sein (To Have or To Be).*[405]

7.
FROM THE ARISTOCRACY TO THE BOURGEOISIE:

STÄHELINS IN THE MODERN WORLD

Cousins marrying cousins; three brothers from one family marrying three sisters from another; a widower marrying his sister-in-law — such unions are as old as the institution of marriage itself. In Europe, however, the practices of endogamy (marrying only within one's "clan") or homogamy (inbreeding) became more common around 1800.[406] This period is often considered the dawn of the modern age. As such, marrying relatives is not only a practice of the past but also a "modern" one. After all, marrying within the family helps to keep money and property together and fosters common beliefs and ideals — in the case of the Stähelins, affinity, feeling and family.

The Stähelin family tree shows particularly close ties on the threshold of the nineteenth century. Longstanding alliances with other families had already been established in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries: Stehelin-Merian, Socin-Stähelin, and even Stähelin-Stähelin. However, around 1800 the "family ties" became considerably tighter, the tree's branches becoming a veritable tangle.[407]

For example: In 1787, 1792, 1796 and 1803, four siblings from the Reber-Passavant family married Stähelins. Three of these four Stähelins were siblings, and the fourth was their cousin.408 Another example: Christoph Stähelin and Maria Bischoff, who were first cousins, married in the summer of 1831. Before them, two of Maria's sisters had already married Stähelins, and one was Christoph's brother Peter. Thus, both brothers married their cousins, the daughters of their uncle Niklaus Bischoff.[409]

The multiple ties between the Stähelins and Bischoffs made things simpler, argued Christoph (1804–1875) in a letter. At their formal engagement, the guests were struck by the extensive use of the informal *du* pronoun in a situation that would otherwise have required the formal *Sie.* All were, of course, already related to each other, and "nobody was a total stranger." "The two of us sat together on the sofa," he continued, "and the rest sat close to us around a table. The coffee was brought in and the little children came to congratulate us." However, the adults were not particularly talkative; they were later received by his father-in-law "with few or no words" in the family home of the bride, Maria Bischoff (1808–1872).

The silence and stiffness stand in stark contrast to the open-hearted tone that permeates the family's correspondence. Emotions are often the subject of the letters and diaries. Subjects that decorum did not permit to be discussed face to face were expressed all the more passionately in letters and diaries by those schooled in the traditions of Romanticism. Love was one such subject. Christoph and Maria believed in love even though the two cousins had known each other only fleetingly before their engagement. They spent the togetherness granted them during their engagement on the sofa in silence.[410]

Twenty visits were scheduled the next day to announce the engagement. A larger circle of the family could now "behold the

loveliest bride in all the land," as Christoph wrote. Maria wore a purple dress and a white scarf adorned with a small flower. "The series of events, which we had dreaded beforehand, was actually quite a bit more relaxed and informal than we expected," claimed the groom in retrospect.[411] However, the whole procedure was anything but "relaxed" and "informal." From the engagement to the wedding and the housing arrangements for the young couple, everything was determined, planned and orchestrated by the parents.

The presentation of wedding gifts had long been a ritual among Basel's upper class.[412] "Should I describe the fun a little," one of Christoph's brothers asked his sister (who lived in Saxony) sarcastically. "So, imagine a spacious, elongated room," which was filled to the hilt with gifts in no time. Two siblings were given the task of recording exactly who had given what: a service from girlfriends; silver spoons from Aunt Merian; cups from the maids, etc.[413] This sort of meticulous accounting is documented for other weddings in the private archives of the Stähelin family.[414] One descendant described what was done with this information: The families of the newlyweds calculated what every gift was worth, and the amount of money spent served as a benchmark for the relationship between gifter and giftee. Some might be quickly relegated to the position of tightwad, while others whose expensive gifts overstepped their social standing might thereafter be seen as intrusive acquaintances.[415]

Christoph and Maria's wedding demonstrated the organizational skills of Cristoph's mother, Sara Stähelin-Bischoff (1768–1843).[416] The widow of a rich colonial goods trader, Sara was not wasteful. A family letter reports for example that, "The maids had prepared an excellent dinner from the leftovers of wedding meal" for the day after the event. The lady of the house had, furthermore, "new wallpaper installed in the ballroom on the Streitgasse so that one did not need to feel ashamed." Maria would learn shortly after marriage what one needed to be ashamed of in better society. Her mother-in-law (also her aunt) took her under her wing, and at the start of their marriage the newlyweds lived in Sara's house. Maria could now "go hand in hand with my good Mama," wrote Christoph in a letter.[417]

Maria Stähelin-Bishoff led a life typical of a bourgeois woman of this period.[418] She was a wife and a homemaker, and a

mother of six children (three of whom died young).[419] Her oldest son, Christoph, was named after his father. He in turn married and sired eleven children who all survived into old age as infant and child mortality declined markedly after about 1870. Maria became a grandmother many times over and turned into the center of gravity for the family. "For us grandchildren, Grandfather stood behind Grandmother in the family hierarchy," a Staehelin later recalled. "though outside the family, Grandfather was naturally the dominant figure."[420]

In old photographs, the female Stähelins often have serious expressions. They sit in their parlors, often holding knitting, their skirts long, their blouses buttoned to the chin. In the early modern era, women of the Stähelin family stood for order and discipline in the private sphere, as their husbands sought to prove themselves in the outside world. Like three of his brothers, Christoph Stähelin-Bischoff was a clergyman; the colonial goods business was in the hands of another brother. Both "cultural" and "economic" capital joined together in this branch of the family .

In the nineteenth century, a clergyman was held in very high regard by members of the Pietistically-influenced Basel upper class. In politics there was a creeping erosion of influence and interest. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, numerous men of the Stähelin family had been members of both the Grand and Small Council, but only a few held political office after 1800. Political life was no longer as prestigious or lucrative as it had been. The old structures were faltering in Basel and elsewhere.

HUMILIATION OF THE ARISTOCRACY

"Outrageous insolence! Liberty trees everywhere. Anarchy rules!" Peter Stähelin-Bischoff (1798–1863), Christoph's brother, was livid. Someone had hung a "paper skull," he wrote to his family in a circular, on his door. In his church in Frenkendorf, revolutionaries had pinned a cockade to the floor with the inscription "Freedom or Death." "All aristocrats have been threatened with fire and murder," he explained.

Like other members of the clergy who were serving in the Basel area during what was referred to as the *Dreissigerwirren,* or "the chaotic thirties,"[421] Peter felt a strong attachment to an aristocratic order or "rule by the best." To the stalwart pastor,

the demand in Bubendorf for equal rights for urban and rural populations seemed downright absurd. In the countryside, he wrote, he found "a blinded, bewildered, misguided mob who were outraged with the wildest passion against the authorities because they cannot accede to their unreasonable demands."[422]

Equality had been a long-standing issue in the canton. After the French Revolution of 1789, serfdom was abolished in the comparatively mild "Basel Revolution" of 1798, and the rural population was placed briefly on equal political footing with the residents of the city. However, the political winds then had changed: After the collapse of the Helvetic Republic in 1803, the bourgeoisie regained control of the government, the Small Council. Although the bulk of the population lived in the countryside, the revised cantonal constitution enabled the bourgeoisie to secure a majority in the Grand Council in 1814.

Peter Stähelin had, after all, grown up in a society that was not democratic. He found this just and was confident that the rabble would soon abandon their "unreasonable demands". He reported to his newlywed brother Christoph late in the year 1831 that he had "smoked a little pipe with some aristocrats," in a village pacified by federal troops. *"À la guerre comme à la guerre!"* ("in war as in war"), he said; it really could have been worse.

Shortly thereafter, it became worse — far worse. In the spring of 1832, rebels rallied the in the countryside. The following winter, the parish clergy of Basel were ousted, and on August 3, 1833, the final bloody battle took place. A Stähelin listed the names of a brother, cousins and uncles who had allied forth from the city early that morning. Hours later, "wagons and chaises full of wounded" had returned home, followed by wagons with "even the dead." Luckily no close relative was among the fallen; a lonely hero had swum across the Rhine and "returned naked." But almost sixty Basel residents had been "slain, hanged, hacked, stripped and dismembered by the enemy." According to Stähelin, they suffered "death by the peasant hand."[423]

By recognizing the division of the canton into "Basel-Landschaft" and "Basel-Stadttheil," a new federal statute sealed the aristocrats' ignominy. The proud city, for which the Councilor Johann Rudolf Stähelin (1750–1832) had once tried to secure the Frick Valley,[424] was not only defeated, but also diminished

is size and, above all, humiliated. Paradoxically, however, the division of the canton into Basel-Stadt and Basel-Landschaft actually strengthened the old order. Without opposition of the rural population, the so-called Councilors' Regime, which operated under conditions similar to those in the *Ancien Régime,* could remain.

The political order was reactionary in this period. Members of the Grand Council were either chosen by the guilds or elected in district assemblies. The right to vote was limited a small circle of wealthy Basel citizens, and the poor, residents of other cantons, foreigners and women were disenfranchised. The Small Council, which consisted of thirteen Councilors and two mayors, constituted the executive branch. The unbroken domination of the long-established upper class met with criticism in the liberal cantons, but Basel's Council Regime even survived the founding of the Swiss federal state in 1848.

URBANIZATION AND DEMOCRACY

The highest political office ever held by a representative of the Stähelin family in Swiss politics was that of a member of the *Ständerat* (Council of States), the second chamber of parliament created by the Swiss constitution of 1848. The second Basler to achieve this feat, August Stähelin (1812–1886) was elected to the Federal Parliament in 1855.[425] Once described by a cousin as *sehr reizbar,*[426] or "very irritable," his primary focus was on economic matters. He was a great supporter of the railways. At the time, Basel was served by three railway stations, only one of which connected the city with other Swiss cantons. The oldest station connected Basel with the Alsace and other parts of France. This region was economic interest to the Baslers and a number — not just for the Stähelins — had close kinship links. The same was true of Baden, where the third station led. At this time, trains had to pass through a gate that remained closed at night, and it was not until 1859 that a decision was made to dismantle the medieval walls that circle the city.[427] The mayor Johann Jacob Stehlin (no relation) had encountered resistance, primarily from the old upper class to the proposal to demolish the city wall.

Ständerat Stähelin, by contrast, welcomed the opening of the city. As a member of both the Grand and Small Council, he

positioned himself between the liberal and conservative factions. In 1874 he had a decisive role in the revision of the cantonal constitution, which spelled the end of the Councilors' Regime and ushered in direct democracy in 1875[428]. Members of the Grand Council were now elected by a larger number of voters, and a *Regierungsrat,* or government council, replaced the Small Council, and assumed the executive functions of government. Those who served on the government council were for the first time paid a salary, which mean that those who were not independently wealth could afford to put their names forward. Suddenly, non-citizens of Basel (including immigrants) were eligible to run for office. It was a time of change unlike anything the city had seen before or has seen since.

At the same time, Basel, like Zurich and Geneva, was expanding rapidly. Between 1850 and 1900, the population grew from fewer than 28,000 people to more 109,000. Many of these individuals lived in cramped quarters and poor sanitary conditions. The Birsig river, which cuts straight through the city and was not covered until the 1880s, was an open sewer and bred cholera and other maladies.

The family archive contains a list of where the Stähelins lived at this time.[429] The households were headed by 27 men, who mostly spelled the name "Staehelin", though some used the "Stehelin" spelling. The address list includes "all adults of Staehelin's descendants who reside in Basel." Many lived in the stately suburb of St. Alban or in the Gellert, where villas had been built beyond the old city walls. In the old city, Stähelins owned houses on Steinenberg, Heuberg and Spalenberg. The largest group of "descendants" lived on the Leonhardsgraben, in the house numbers 40–44. This was also the location of the Balthasar de Benedict Staehlin ribbon factory, the largest family business at the time.

The "descendants" living in Basel clearly belonged to the same social class. In many cases they also belonged to the same associations, guilds or fraternities. Many of them were also still closely related. A close examination of the statistical sample of family alliances of the sixteen Stähelin men who were married at this time reveals a tendency in Basel similar to one observed in the bourgeois families in Bern: In the second half of the nineteenth century, almost three-quarters of all marriages took place within the old city bourgeoisie.[430] Eleven of the sixteen Stähelins married a woman from a "lineage" whose members had held Basel citizenship for a century or more: Burckhardt, Frey, Heusler, Linder, Lotz, Preiswerk, Vischer — and, yes, sometimes Staehelin.

TRADITION BUILDING

The *fin de siècle* led to an identity crisis in the Basel's old upper class, as the historian Sara Janner describes it.[431] The numerous transformations in the city may have been seen by members of the Stähelin family as clear threats to the social order. For the first time, those who had been pre-eminent in the city found the standing they had taken for granted was a thing of the past. It was now the task of the historians, church historians and conservationists (of which the Stähelins boasted more than a few) to write (or re-write) the history of Basel. In the local historiography the city has long been in the hands of the bourgeoisie. Genealogy had been popular, in that it showed who was related to whom, and who was a member of a "long-established" family.

Family trees had also come into vogue as early as the 1870s, which had been a turbulent decade. Bordering both France and Germany, Basel could not escape the effects of the Franco-Prussian War (1870–71). It was then that the Stähelin family commissioned a family album and elaborate family tree.[432] The Schweizerische Volksfreund succored local identity politics by publishing some of these genealogical studies in 1879. The first in the series of *Basel Family Portraits* was devoted to the Merians and the second to the Stähelins.[433] In this way, the Stähelins were identified as a part of "old Basel" and placed squarely within its aristocratic tradition.

A "modern founding date" in the family is March 21, 1888. On this day, the Fund for the Poor, established in 1739, was converted into a foundation under Swiss law.[434]

The Family Foundation continues to preserve the genealogical material the family. At the time of its creation, the adult male descendants who resided in Basel held a founding meeting. Later this circle was expanded, soon beyond the city limits, and later (much later) also beyond the male line.[435]

The foundation is headed by an administrator and has a secretary who oversees address lists, protocols and correspondence, and one or two board members are responsible for the accounting of the assets donated by Balthasar Stähelin-Ryhiner (1675–1746) and the funds subsequently donated by numerous other descendants.

The family was not alone in establishing a body with a legal identity with the objective of maintain the family's heritage: Other Basel families such as the Burckhardts, Preiswerks or Vischers also did so.[436] The practice was also widespread in Germany.[437]

The foundation has held a so-called Descendants Assembly every three years since 1888 to inform members of the family members about the activities of the foundation. There has rarely been a great deal to discuss. The number of applications for financial assistance, upon which the Board of Trustees decides, has been manageable. Beginning 1891 the formalities required by the statute governing Swiss foundations were followed by what became the high point of the event, a joint dinner used "to promote mutual acquaintance among family members," as the Board explained in the original invitation.

At the Descendants Assembly, family trees were hung, heraldic letters exchanged, and reports on research into archives and church records presented. A discourse about a particular ancestor crowned the event.[438] The creation of a shared narrative was at least as important as the joint management of the foundation's assets.

A much larger event took place on September 15, 1920. "To celebrate the 400th anniversary of the admission of their progenitor to citizenship in the city of Basel," all members of the Stähelin family — "including the married daughters and their husbands" — were invited to a party the Schützenhaus restaurant.[439] It was the first such event to nurture a sense of family by commemorating Hans's naturalization and identifying 1520 as the founding date for the family.[440] The historical character of the event was underscored by a brochure featuring a selection of old portraits.[441] Soon, other old Basel families adopted this method of providing a historical-genealogical chronicle.[442]

Between 1870 and 1920, the Stähelins set about creating a family narrative, which they knew how to substantiate with all

manner of documents and objects. This was done over a span of fifty years full of upheaval and uncertainty. Wars with both local and global repercussions broke out. Communism seemed to many to be a viable alternative to the existing social and political order. New technologies accelerated the speed of change in many areas of life. All of this touched the city of Basel.

The family history offered an opportunity for contemplation and provided many Stähelins pleasure during uncertain times. Celebrations and gatherings, conversations about ancestors, and reading the 1903 family book created a kind of shared family consciousness. One example of this can be found in the memoirs of August Stähelin (1871–1959), a Doctor of Medicine and a grandson of the politician of the same name. "The Staehelins were not a warlike family," he writes in the chapter entitled "Militaria" and concludes from the dearth of officers or knights in his family: "I too had inherited little military blood." (A primitive form of genetics was, of course, in vogue at the time.)

What filled August with pride (and made him slightly haughty) was often what sprang from "the Vischer side" of the family, i.e. from his mother's pedigree. In addition to a talent for music, August took pleasure in the aristocratic lifestyle of his maternal grandparents, with whom he spent his summer holidays at their Wildenstein Castle. He devoted almost forty pages of this memoir to describing this former bailiff's residence in upper Bubendorf. August's affinity to the recently unseated aristocracy contrasts markedly with the understatement in the title of his memoir: *Memories of an Average Man.*[443] This "average man" had been born with a silver spoon in his mouth, and the spoon bore the coat of arms of what he considered to be illustrious ancestors.[444]

August married into old Basel families. His first wife was a Burckhardt; in his second marriage, his spouse was Paravicini. A predilection for marrying into the aristocracy was in evidence in other family members. From the 1870s on, several Stähelins married members of the old European lower nobility: The Baroness von Honzing-Berstett von und zu Bollschweil and the Baroness von Enzberg came from Germany, a von Simon from Austria-Hungary. Stähelins found women with names from the lower nobility: von Fellenberg, von Mandach, von Salis.

The Stähelins who spouses had noble names were mainly men. However, the family book also mentions a female Stähelin who married a count who had grown up in Langenstein Castle near Singen on Lake Constance. (Today that location houses a golf course, playground for a different sort of modern "nobility."[445])

In the absence of a nobility in Switzerland, the bourgeoisie stood at the top of the social hierarchy. Socially and culturally, they were a fairly homogenous group, as Albert Tanner writes in a study: "The bourgeoisie defined themselves though a common lifestyle and shared mentalities and values that distinguished them from the other social classes; they accomplished this through education, possessions or relationships". This social hierarchy was particularly pronounced before the First World War, as Sarasin demonstrated in *Stadt der Bürger* (City of the Bourgeoisie).[446]

CAREER WOMEN

Bourgeois society was very family-oriented and marriage lay at its foundation. Although gender equality was introduced into federal law in 1881, women were still subordinate to men for all intents and purposes. The wife was under her husband's custody; her domain was the home. At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, signs of emancipation began to emerge, instilling confidence in a new generation. As one female Stähelin put it: "The solid structure of old traditions and all too narrow views" had finally relaxed.[447] The lives of Charlotte Louise Staehelin (née Burckhardt, 1877–1918) and Helene Stähelin (1891–1970) exemplify both the what was possible for women at the time and the enduring power of the patriarchal gender structure.

Charlotte was the first wife of August, the aforementioned "average man." He writes that he had seen his future bride at "balls and societies," but had never been able to speak to her alone. "The girls back then were very well-protected," he recalled in 1947. "They couldn't just go out to a tea house or the cinema like the girls of today."[448] Meanwhile, in Charlotte's own diaries (she was called "Lolly"), the marriage market was the dominant topic. A ribbon manufacturer Bally from Säckingen had once invited her and her girlfriends over so that his son could see "the Basel girls," she reported; she also wrote of dances, dinners and scavenger hunts, all organized for the purpose of pairing the young people up.[449]

Charlotte was a good catch: well-bred and beautiful, she spent winters in the family home on the Münsterhügel and summers at the majestic Wenkenhof in Riehen. The Burckhardts were among the richest families in the city.[450] The marriage to August was blessed by both father and father-in-law; Charlotte became a part of the Staehelin family. Theirs was a branch that happened to experience a crisis between 1914 and 1918 — a crisis that had nothing to do with the concurrently raging First World War.

"During this time, there is more than the usual amount of chatter about the unhappy marriage of our sister-in-law Staehelin-Vonder Mühll," wrote Charlotte in her diary.[451] This woman's husband was gay, and she had had an affair with Fritz Hoffmann-La Roche, the founder of the eponymous pharmaceutical company, whom she later married.[452] The couple's separation and her husband's homosexuality led to a rift with Charlotte's new family. "There are no more family reunions," she wrote. The situation had made her mother-in-law "half-sick." "None understood the other, in short, the best was for everyone to remain home for himself."[453] Charlotte died of Spanish flu before the tension could tail off. Her diaries were published posthumously, with a quote from them as the title: *Under the Seal of Confidentiality.* Her writings leave the great political and social questions of her time largely untouched. The same is not true for Helene Stähelin, who was strongly influenced by the bourgeois women's movement.

Helene Stähelin was one of twelve children of Luise and Gustav Stähelin-Lieb. Her father was a pastor in Allschwil, and from 1896 to 1934 the administrator of the Family Foundation.[454] Helene studied mathematics in Basel and Göttingen. She earned a doctorate and taught at the Töchterinstitut in Ftan, and worked as a secondary school teacher in Zug. Her work with the International Women's League for Peace and Freedom, the oldest and most active women's pacifist association in the world, is particularly noteworthy.[455]

Stähelin was "an intellectual with an impractical nature," a Zug police officer wrote to the Federal Prosecutor's Office. His report contained a litany of female stereotypes: Stähelin, on whom he was spying, had "no ability to lead," was "a daydreamer,

strange, and complicated." But politically, of course, she was harmless, the 1955 report concluded, especially since she loathed nothing more than the Communists. "Even if this party were to bring something, and if this were women's suffrage, then she would immediately slow down, because she would not accept anything from that side" — not even her "pet idea," the right of women to have a political say.[456]

Helene was no communist, and this placated the police. But she was a staunch and committed activist. Before the Second World War broke out, Stähelin gave lectures warning about the use of poison gas, and during the war she called on the Federal Council to restore the right to freedom of expression.[457] She was also the president of the Swiss chapter of the Women's League from 1948–1967. In this capacity, she campaigned for membership in the UN. She was also active in the Swiss Mathematical Society and in the campaign for women's suffrage. This "pet idea" only became a reality at the national level in 1971, a year after Helene's death. She had remained a second-class political citizen all her life.

ANTIAUTHORITARIANISM

The most auspicious road to the "cultural revolution" of the 1960s led through the family and household, writes the historian Eric Hobsbawm.[458] In the U.S., Belgium, Switzerland and numerous other countries, the divorce rate increased exponentially. The adoption of oral contraception separated sex from procreation; the ideal of the bourgeois nuclear family began to falter. This was also the case in the Stähelin family, which saw a massive increase in divorce, as the family genealogical database shows: only 1.8 percent of married family members born between 1850 and 1900 were ever divorced; for those born in the following 50 years, that rate shot up to 25 percent.

The Staehelin Familientag, or Family Day festivities, which has taken place every five years since 1950, had long been a bastion of the old conservative-bourgeois concept of family. The invitees were all bearers of the last name "with their wives and confirmed children," as well as Stähelin-born women with their husbands.[459] It was a formal and formalized affair, with assigned seating and long speeches; guests from abroad were greeted in

French and later English; the event often took place in the Basel Zoological Garden. Some 125 people often took part, and most of the German-speakers among them greeted each other with the formal *Sie* address, meaning they did not know each other well.[460]

Family trees were on display, sometimes letters as well, such as one from Sœur Marie Jacqueline de Jésus Stehelin (1899–1891), who was serving as a missionary in Algeria and Japan and could not take part in person.[461] Not to be missed were the lists, with the names of the dead, the newlyweds and the recent graduates, as well as any Stähelin who had reached the age of majority since the last Family Day. "We are happy and proud of the magnificent offspring and would be delighted if they honor the family name," they were welcomed in 1965. For the *Stammhalter* (or heads of the different lines) there were more words of encouragement: "that the offspring never fail to appear."[462]

Young men and women everywhere were starting to chafe at such paternalistic tones, and this was also the case in Basel. The cultural revolution (epitomized in the Europe-wide student protests of 1968) was directed against bourgeois traditions, against the "establishment," against the stale reek of the bourgeoisie. The young Stähelins were not merely passive observers of the protests and sit-ins of the time. Many were students, and quite concerned about topics such as emancipation, anti-militarism and environmentalism. For the older Stähelins, the antiauthoritarian stirrings caused nothing short of panic. "The events of early summer 1968, apparently triggered by the students of various European cities, paint a depressing picture of youthful activity," harrumphed a Stähelin in a letter to the editor. "It's hard for any respectable citizen *[Bürger]* to accept."[463]

The family was deeply anchored in bourgeois tradition, and in midcentury Basel the Stähelins enjoyed a reputation as a family of scholars. In addition to numerous professors, the family included many lawyers, some of whom served as judges in Basel. The medical profession was also well represented, as was journalism and architecture. However, in contrast with previous centuries, there were almost no politicians. Heinrich Staehelin (1903–1976), who was a member of the Swiss National Council

was as an exception: He represented the canton of Aargau rather than Basel-Stadt, and he was not a member of the Liberals like many other Basel Stähelins, but rather of the Alliance of Independents.[464] However, unlike the Thurgau Stähelins[465], political offices played a meager role in the life of the family.

However, in the chemical-pharmaceutical industry, the famed *Basler Chemie* that had become the source of local prosperity, many prominent positions were held by Stähelins. For example, the pharmacologist Hartmann Stähelin (1925–2011) was involved in the development of new medications. The fact that he did not receive the Nobel Prize for his achievements was explained in *The Sandimmun File: A Pharmaceutical Scandal,* a book that he had ghostwritten but was published under pseudonym. According to Hartmann, his employer Sandoz (now Novartis) attributed a blockbuster discovery used in transplants to another researcher who dazzled everyone as a "busy PR man" and "gifted salesman." Such a scramble for recognition, according to the ghostwriter's own diagnosis, would have been contrary to the nature of the true inventor. For Stähelin was instead an "old-school academic," calm and polite, averse to "noise and spectacle."[466]

From 1975 to 1996, Hartmann was administrator of the Family Trust, as well as a member of the Christoph Merian Foundation Commission, President of the Natural Science Researchers' Society of Basel and representative of the Liberal-Democratic party in the Citizens' Council. In addition to research at Sandoz, he cultivated the city's old bourgeois institutions and the traditions of his family. "I still suspect that Irene married me because she didn't want to learn a new name," he joked once in a birthday speech, "because she is also a born Staehelin, albeit from a noble branch of the family which spells the name with the 'ae' and comes from Grossbasel, not with the "ä" like the more modest Kleinbasler branch."[467]

When he married Irene (born in 1935) in 1955, Hartmann completed the last Stähelin-Staehelin marriage. (The two were not closely related as their paternal branches had split in the eighteenth century.) The characteristic alliances through marriage within the narrow circle of families constituting the old bourgeoisie in Basel had become much rare in their children's generation.[468]

REVELATIONS FROM THE DAIG

The Basel upper class has long had the reputation of a secret society, which is often represented in Swiss German popular culture as the "nasty villain" trope. In Switzerland, this layer of society is often called the *Daig,* a Swiss German term that may stem from an old Middle High German word for *fortress,* harkening back to the fact that Basel, like most cities of the time, were walled city in the Middle Ages. In its 1984 special issue on the Daig, the magazine *Bilanz* contended that the city was still shaped by its long-established and close-knit old families, including the Stähelins. The series of articles portrayed the Daig as a self-contained community. *I bitt Sie, so haisst me doch z'Basel nit* (dialect for "I beg you, that's not a name used in Basel") was reportedly the death sentence for social climbers in Basel. The Baslers' wit and waggishness were as legendary as their discretion, which can be interpreted as humility, or at least modesty. *Dr Daig, isch das e Thema?* ("the Daig, is that the topic?"). The journalists often received this as an answer to their inquiries and found that as far as the Daig's more reticent members were concerned, the Daig didn't exist.[469] Members of the Stähelin family were not fond of the expression Daig; they didn't want to be perceived as *begüterte Zopfbürger,* as one of them wrote, which literally means "wealthy braid-heads."[470]

The great revelation about the Basel Daig appeared in 1988 in the form of a *roman à clef,* bearing the spicy title *The Wife of my Mother's Lover.* The author's *nomme de plume* was Diane d'Henri. A few weeks after publication, the author's identity was revealed by the press: Marie-Louise Staehelin (1902–1997; Schlumberger by her first marriage; Jarosy by her second).[471] The characters in her book were easy to identify; all the "Stackenhorsts" were really Stähelins, related to the author on her father's side. One of these is the "Queen," her beloved Grandmama Stahelin; others, however, are portrayed as hideous characters.[472]

The book was a sensation. *The Wife of My Mother's Lover* was at the top of the Swiss bestseller list for almost forty weeks. At present time, it has been released in thirteen editions, most recently as an audiobook.[473] This success could not be understood without the authenticity promised to the reader by the name Stähelin, which had been revealed in the press and on television.

In interviews, Marie-Louise freely recounted how things had been in the Daig of the 1920s: of the double wedding between herself and her sister to two of their cousins, and of her own mother's affair with her (Marie-Louise's) husband and their subsequent divorce, which cost Marie-Louise her place in high society. She lived penniless, and following her subsequent marriage to a Hungarian, she temporarily lost her citizenship and moved away from Basel, never settling in any one city for long.[474]

The thinly veiled account of the Basel Daig in the middle of the twentieth century sold over 120,000 copies, evidence of just how interesting the topic was to both the national and local readership. Many Swiss women had encountered societal constraints and hypocrisy, no matter what their own social origins. In fact, the legislation providing for full equality between spouses only came into force in 1988, the year of the publication of the book. Marie-Louise explained to the press and television reporters that she wanted to use the book to show that young men "marry whomever they want."[475] One (female) reviewer described her as a "homegrown heroine."[476] Staehelin enjoyed the late-in-life commotion around her to the fullest. *Wisse Sie,* she explained proudly, *I bin e Schtar, I bin e Kinschlere* ("Don't you know, I'm a star, I'm an *artiste")*.[477] A star and an artiste — quite the opposite of the "average man" or the "old-school academic," or a life "under the seal of confidentiality." She had had quite enough of Basel's fabled modesty and discretion.

The muckraking in the book was quite the theme at Basel's Fasnacht carnival celebrations, with satirical poems in dialect poking fun at both "D'Frau Staehelin" and "ihre Maa," or her husband, as well as a recent money-laundering scandal having to do with the first female member of the Federal Council, Elisabeth Kopp. (The final lines were: *und frog emool die Plauderdäsche / Ka Ihre Maa au Biecher wäsche*? *— and the chattering loudmouths asked her / Can your man wash books too?)*.[478] For Baslers, the "Daig book" was thus painted with the same brush as the Kopp affair. The salacious revelations and the author's shrill media appearances were highly embarrassing for the Daig. Marie-Louise's publisher later wrote that Basel attorneys had threatened them with numerous lawsuits to stop the book's publication.[479] Meanwhile, the satirical magazine *Nebelspalter* conjectured that the maligned families had attempted to buy out the entire first edition of *The Wife of My Mother's Lover* so that nobody else could read it.[480] Did the Stähelins inadvertently help it become a bestseller?

At the 1990 Family Day festivities, Bernhard Stehelin (1923–2010) broke months-long silence and turned the scandal into a humorous rhyming verse: *"In aller Wält, vo Singapur bis Georgia / hämmer e Ruef wie z'Rom d'Familie Borgia,"* or, roughly: "In all the world, from Singapore to Georgia/emerges a scandal like the Roman family Borgia," and then further: *"Das Renommé verdanke mr ere Daame / wo Diane d'Henri haisst in dr Reklaame / fir dr Beschtseller Nummere Ains: Die Frau / des Geliebten der Mutter — gänds zue, Iir händ en au."* ("I owe my reputation to you, dear madam/who goes by the nomme de plume Diane d'Henri /for you, Bestseller number one: The Wife/ of the Mother's Lover/I admit it, I'm all for it.")

The verse was long, and it continued: "Im Innere vo däm Johrhundertwärk / haisst d'Diane d'Henri drno Schtackelbärg / und hit duet si sich aller Wält erwyyse / als e Frau Schtäächeli, Marie Louise." (Within this masterpiece/d'Diane d'Henri is Stackelberg/and now the whole world has realized/she's Frau Schtäächeli, Marie Louise.")

Bernhard, a law professor, gleefully adopted the choppy and sensationalist writing style of the absent author. And yet, what is remarkable here is not the humor or mockery, but the tacit legitimacy accorded to the bestseller's author. The story's "perverse sex" and other revelations were, according to Bernhard, highly exaggerated and placed the whole relationship in a false light. Still, as the verse concludes, one had no choice but to make peace with the work and with the past.[481]

CONNECTING THE FAMILY

On January 11, 1991, the "descendants" decided to allow the female relatives of the family into their circle.[482] They had discussed such a move 25 years earlier but did not follow through. For over a century, the Assembly had been a male preserve. The first woman to serve on the Foundation Commission was Simone Forcart (born Staehelin), who was elected in 1991. In 1993, "all descendants and their adult daughters" were invited to

the Assembly for the first time. Since 1888 The event had been held triennially since 1888 and the agenda had remained the same: Opening remarks; role call and protocol; then reporting, approval of accounts and election of the board, and finally an evening meal together.[483]

The Family Day by contrast is generally a more festive affair. In 1990, the Brazilian family members took part for the first time, and they were welcomed in Portuguese. They had disappeared from the Basel family's consciousness until one of the Brazilian descendants came to Basel to investigate whether his ancestor Arnold Alfred Stähelin (1822–1892) had originated there. The Family Day celebration takes place every five years. Although a great deal of planning is always involved, there is from time to time some grumbling about "questions of style." Once the music was too loud (as recorded in the minutes); another time the seating assignments were not right, and there has almost never been a suitable mixing of young and old and of familiar and unfamiliar faces. The family is international and has so many branches that most of the participants do not know each other at all.[484]

"In the age of equal rights for women and the new marriage law," wrote Andreas Staehelin (history professor, state archivist, family historian) in the introduction to the third edition of the family book in 1995, the 1903 family book itself should be rethought. The children of single women or of married couples where the woman was Stähelin-born were henceforth to be included. "In these cases, the family will proceed matrilineally," explained Andreas, who had spent an enormous amount of his free time in research into the genealogy of his family.[485]

With the new millennium a new means for keeping track of the family became available: a website (first www.stehelin-staehlin.ch; later www.ststst.ch). Once a person has a password, he or she can surf the family tree and explore which Stehelin, Stähelin or Staehelin he or she is related to and just how close or distant the relationship is.

The family members in the digital record may live in Switzerland, Australia, California or Provence, Florianópolis or Basel. They work as managers, psychotherapists, organic gardeners; cellists, train engineers, surgeons, etc. In one branch there is a

brother who works as a diplomat with the UN, and a sister who founded the Bürgerpartei of Basel. There are marriages, divorces, adoptions, publications and accounts of careers. Some Stähelins requested that they be allowed to spell their names Staehelin; others had their name changed from Stehelin to Stähelin.[486] And yet, if they click all the way through their online pedigree, they always end up at the beginning with Hans, the ropemaker.

CONCLUSION:

SELF-PORTRAITS, OUTSIDE IMPRESSIONS

A baby girl born with the name Stähelin in 2020 would belong to the seventeenth generation of the family. If some years from now she became curious about her ancestors, she could open this book and learn something about her rich and fascinating family history; how an immigrant to Basel in the sixteenth century made rope from hemp; how in later generations men served in guilds and on councils; how they sold iron and colonial goods; how they preached in churches and served as missionaries. The little girl would read about how often women died in childbirth; how they ran both businesses and households and engaged in correspondence all over the world. Whether in Basel or Alsace, Canada or Southern Brazil, this Basel family's history is global.

One day the young woman, who might acquire a male, female or nonbinary partner and establish a family of her own, could explore the "Stähelins" herself, as a historian, sociologist or genealogist. As a historian, she would come to different conclusions from those of the authors of this book, as our description of the past is of course colored by the values and memes of the present. It is, according to the historian Paul Veyne, a "true novel": the historian provides a narrative based on sources that she selects and interprets in a manner that is shaped by her background and culture. As a sociologist, the woman might wonder how people who feel (or don't feel) a link with their ancestors make use of the "symbolic capital" of their name.

If the woman turned to genealogy, a vast new vista would open to her. She could do a DNA test, link digital pedigrees and discover countless relatives. Seventeen generations ago there was not merely the so-called *Stammpaar,* Hans and Magdalena, but more than a hundred thousand couples with whom the young lady would have the same degree of relationship, and millions more with whom she would be more closely related in genetic terms. Almost all of her female relatives are missing from the family database, and most of the men, too, for that matter. The name "Stähelin" is not the determinant of a genetic family.

Whatever the double helix may say, the woman might well be inclined to remain in contact with the Stähelins by virtue of a shared memory. In doing so, she would know that she is taking part in a centuries-old tradition. This, in turn, would make her different from most of her contemporaries, as most families do not have a "family book" that goes back seventeen generations.

Today, the Stähelin Family Foundation manages some 300 addresses of individuals it deems to be as a part of the family. These family members receive invitations to family events and are asked to report births, marriages and deaths; ideally also educational or professional milestones so that the genealogical database remains up to date. We, the authors of this book, conducted interviews with eight of them.[487] Among this group are older women and younger men; French and Swiss; those who identify strongly with the family and those who intentionally

distance themselves from the larger family celebrations out of principle. Around 40 family members answered our online survey, and we also asked them what family meant to them.

What is a "Stähelin"? The family branch in Brazil, whose families trace their origins in that country to the arrival of an emigrant from Basel in the nineteenth century, is now larger than the branch in Switzerland, at least according to the number of entries in the database. These Brazilians are citizens of the largest country in Latin America. Citizenship in the city of Basel to which their local cousins refer is both foreign and meaningful to them. During correspondence with family members in Brazil and North America, the authors often encountered words such as *origem* (origin) or *roots* — and associated it with "an immense sense of pride." It seems that the year 1520 and the Basel of the middle ages have a special appeal to the Stähelins on the other side of the Atlantic. The further the origin is geographically and the further back in time that it can be dated, the deeper the roots and the greater the pride.

In neighboring France, the tenor is sometimes quite different. One Stehelin writes that her father was a hobby genealogist, "so I knew that a branch had emigrated to Switzerland." A French progenitor, who emigrated *to* Switzerland? Does the family tree not demonstrate that the Basel Stähelins emigrated out of Switzerland *to* France — to Normandy and Provence, to Paris and Bordeaux, but above all to Alsace? And yet, Madame Stehelin sees the origins of the family in France, not Basel. She refers to a different family memory, to other sources, and this is not wrong.

Members of the family are spread across the globe, but for many Stähelins, the geographic point of reference remains Basel. For them, and also for families such as Geigy, Ryhiner or Vonder Mühll, what the *Historical Lexicon of Switzerland* says about the Burckhardts also holds true: The appeal of a *Stammvater;* the consciousness of belonging to the Daig, i.e. to an exclusive set of old, established families in Basel, the celebration of Family Days and the conservation of a Family Foundation, are for many members the glue that holds the family together.[488]

Academia and pietism; global trade and local power — these remain important themes for many families of the

Daig. The "forefathers" of these were immigrants from Southern Germany, Lorraine, the Netherlands and other places who moved to Basel and were naturalized there. Their male descendants advanced socially, largely by marrying women from Basel. From the eighteenth to the twentieth centuries, there was no family the Stähelins married into more often than the Burckhardts, whose family tree is a veritable who's who of leading Basel families.

"From the outside, we belong to the Daig," says a Basel-based Stähelin, evoking an impression of privilege, wealth and power. But it is not that simple. Within the family, one never uses the term *Daig,* and for that matter no member would ever have to ask what it means. In the survey, most respondents said that, while there was once this small stratum of wealthy, closely related bourgeois families, today the Daig no longer exists. And yet the families associated with it (Stähelins included) are etched into the donors' panels at the Basel Zoo or other cultural institutions. Without the Daig, Basel would look markedly different; it's a common term, in Basel and beyond it. Everyone talks about it — but why does nobody want to be a part of it?

In 2012, a 22-year-old Stähelin from Zurich, a journalist by profession, wanted to know his relationship to the Daig, so he went looking for answers from a 50-year-old cousin from Basel.[489] There are people in Basel, the cousin replied, who believe children of certain upper-class families are born with a proverbial silver spoon in their mouths: "They only see where it was easier for them. They never see where it's been harder." The cousin had studied abroad and then moved away from Basel because he felt that he was being treated like a stencil or a stereotype. The younger journalist agreed. His own grandfather had moved to Zurich because he had found life in Basel to be too restrictive. For these individuals, the term 'Daig' evokes a range of reactions: expectations and prejudices as well as admiration and envy.

During another conversation, one Stähelin recalled the shame she felt when "Aunt Stächeli" spoke too loudly on the tram. A single word like *allewyl* (always) was enough for her, the little girl, to be recognized as part of the Daig. Indeed, the

authors have heard the "Diag dialect" in interviews; it sounds pointed and controlled, distinctive and distinguished. One who speaks this way is the kind of person who receives visitors in a home that looks like a museum: portraits of the ancestors on the wall, heraldic symbols on the china in the display case and the family crest etched into the windows. Wherever one looks family is omnipresent — and this is true not only for the Stähelins, but also for the Iselins, Vischers, Burckhardts and other families that make up the Daig.

The Stähelins no longer enjoy political power simply on the basis of their name. Liberal democracy has put an end to the aristocratic republic. The nineteenth-century structures where just a few powerful families dominate is now unthinkable. The power of the church and religion also no longer plays a role in the family, in no small part because society has become more secular. The clergy, missionaries and theologians so numerous in the family tree are now barely present.

Indeed, the family observes numerous different religions. In Northern France or Brazil, most members are Catholic; in Basel, Stähelins have married Jewish women and converted to Judaism. However, the influence of bourgeois Protestantism should not be underestimated. The Basel-based Stähelins say religion plays an important role in their lives. They grew up in houses where the values were puritanical and ethical, and the virtues of diligence and modesty were emphasized.

And what of wealth? Switzerland is a rich country and Basel is a particularly rich city, in which there is a lot of "old money".[490] We did not ask any of the members of the family members about their assets. In contrast to other Basel families such as Hoffmann, Sarasin and Staechelin (spelled with a 'ch') the name Stähelin does not appear on the list of the "300 Richest Swiss," which the magazine *Bilanz* publishes annually, Nonetheless certain members of the family were wealthy, especially in the first half of the nineteenth century, when the Gebrüder Stähelin colonial goods store, the textile company B. de B. Staehelin, or the Stehelin et Huber railway builder flourished. These businesses no longer exist; their capital has been divided up and reinvested; perhaps today some of it is in the shares of highly profitable companies; perhaps paintings from famous artists

hang in a Stähelin's home; perhaps a Stähelin comes from one of the less affluent branches, or has squandered whatever he might have inherited.

Family is pivotal in the transfer of wealth from one generation to the next, but is equally important in instilling behavior and providing the education that is a prerequisite for professional success. The Stähelins are no longer one of the foremost scholarly families in the University of Basel, but the educational level of most family members is high. The genealogical database reveals that many have earned the *Matura* (or passed rigorous Swiss university entrance exams) or otherwise have pursued postsecondary studies. Doctorates are not uncommon. "We received a good education," says one Stähelin professor. "My parents went to university, my grandparents went to university, and I also went to university." The Stähelins belong to a narrow stratum of the educated bourgeoisie in Switzerland, a country where only about 10 percent of the population attend degree granting institutions of higher learning.

The Stähelins whom we surveyed maintain contact with the Family Foundation and are also basically interested in genealogy and socializing with members of the family. At first glance they appear to be fairly diverse, if only on account of their nationalities and native languages. However, upon closer inspection, commonalities emerge. Almost all of them appear to be well-off, well-educated and represent cultured Protestantism or related secularized spirituality. We did not encounter any female farmers, laborers or Muslims, nor anyone who was institutionalized, incarcerated or in custody. The small group that we surveyed, particularly those from Switzerland, constitute a relatively homogenous group,

What will happen next with the family? The family tree now includes female descendants, children by marriage and same-sex partners. Sooner or later, the surname may fade as an identifying feature of the family, and it will no doubt play only a minor role in the genealogical records. The database now includes those who are not called Stähelin. Will the family tree go the way of its more literal counterparts in the age of social climate change? One young interviewee has pleaded for the name to be retained. "What is certain that this family lives on," says

another. Yet another expressed doubt: “Cohesion was greater.” Most, however, believe the family as an institution has a future. But what will it look like? “More entangled than it is today.” “Solid, but less brilliant.” “More multicultural.” The Stähelins we interviewed could imagine many scenarios — except one in which the family has lost all meaning for future generations.

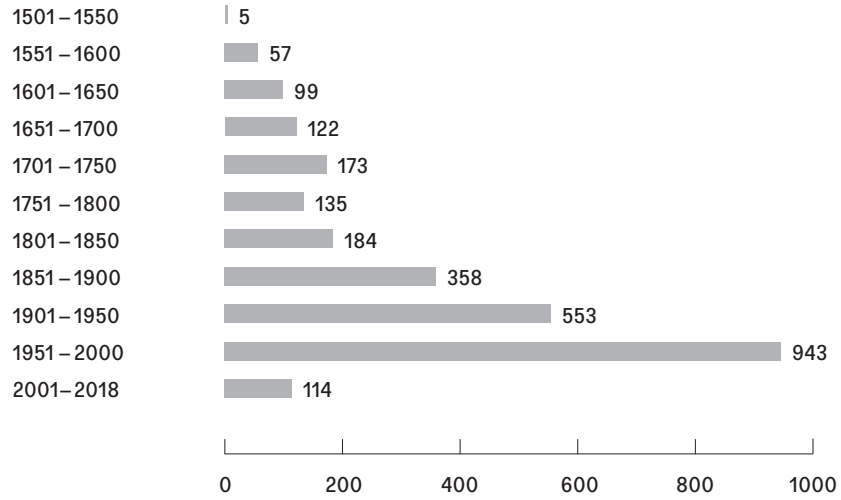
APPENDICES

FAMILY DEMOGRAPHICS

LUCAS RAPPO

The Stähelin Family Book[491] offers a wealth of interesting information about the family demographics: birthplaces and dates, marriages, offspring, divorces, names, reaching from the sixteenth century all the way to the present day. The older dates have been compiled by genealogists through baptismal records, council protocols and handwritten notes. The first edition of the Family Book appeared in 1903. Since then, it has been continually updated by family members. With the third edition of 1995, the data began to be digitalized, and today this information is in compiled in a database that can be uses with statistical analysis programs such as Heredis or Puck.

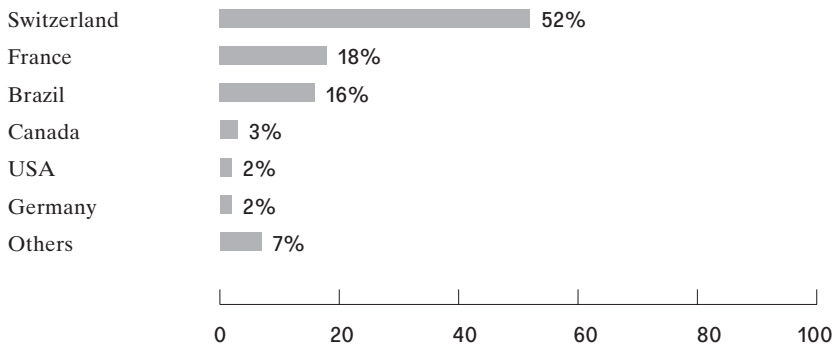
NUMBER OF BIRTHS



Births recorded in family book per 50-year period.

For purposes of analysis, the data was cleaned up and matched, i.e. duplicates were removed. The database thus comprises almost 3000 individuals (as of 2019). The oldest entries concern the progenitory couple, Magdalena Mieg and Hans Stehelin, whose dates of birth are not known. The first five recorded births fall in the time between 1500 and 1550. By far the most people entered into to the database were born in the twentieth century – almost half. This sharp increase is also related to the inclusion of the Brazilian branch of the family, which has many members and, unlike the Family Book, has always followed the lines of female offspring. Since the maternal relatives are largely absent from the Basel family tree, it is not possible to calculate the degrees of kinship at marriage, i.e. how often marriages took place between cousins.

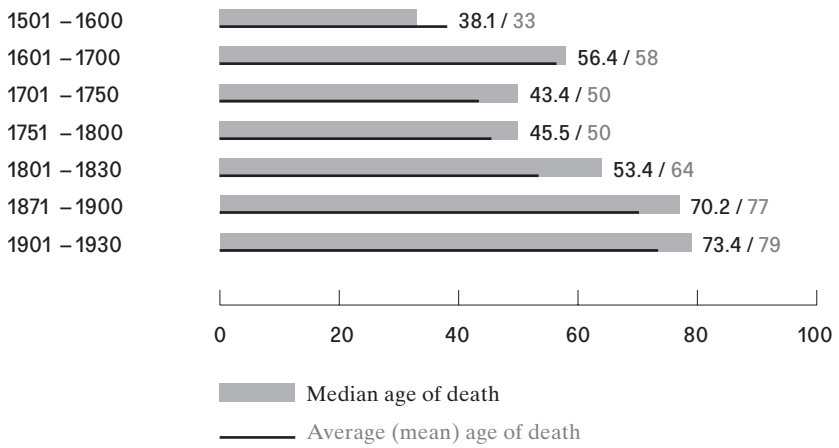
PLACES OF BIRTH



Distribution of family member birthplace by percentage, according to contemporary country borders

The database lists 471 different places of birth. Just over half of the individuals included were born in the area comprising contemporary Switzerland (52 percent), followed by France (18) and Brazil (16). The notable Basel family is, as a result, simultaneously notably international.

LIFE EXPECTANCY



Life expectancy of family members born in different periods

The average age of death of persons recorded in the database continues to rise over the centuries, despite a decline for men in the eighteenth century and for women between 1800 and 1850. The fluctuations are likely due to the more precise recording of the young deceased, i.e. infants and children. The waves of the plague, which hit Basel several times, subsided around 1700, and the acute subsistence crises of the nineteenth century are unlikely to have affected the majority of family members, who were wealthy.[492] The figures for the sixteenth century are based on data for only 27 people. One died at the age of four and three between 15–20. In all likelihood, more children died during this period, but they are not listed in the Family Book. The average age of death of the Stähelins born in the sixteenth century is 38; the median 33. In the median, outliers are not weighted as evenly, so there is less distortion. For the seventeenth century, the statistics rest on 126 individuals. Four children died before the age of five — actually a relatively small number within the data of the time period. The average life expectancy in the family, meanwhile, rose to 56 (median 58), and forty individuals lived past the age of 70.

The infant mortality rate for this period is 4 per thousand, although once again it can be assumed that not all the children in the family who died were recorded, as the number is extraordinarily low. By comparison, for example, in the alpine Urseren valley in the canton of Uri, the rate was 324 per thousand, and in the city of Geneva it was 261.[493]

In the first half of the eighteenth century, the average life expectancy fell to 43 years (median of 50), which is surprising. The reason could simply have to do with more accurate collection of data. In addition, thirty children died between birth and the age of five, i.e. almost a quarter, and three individuals died between the ages of 7–19. Thirty-one persons lived past the age of 70, i.e. 24 percent – in the seventeenth century, more members of the family made it past this age.

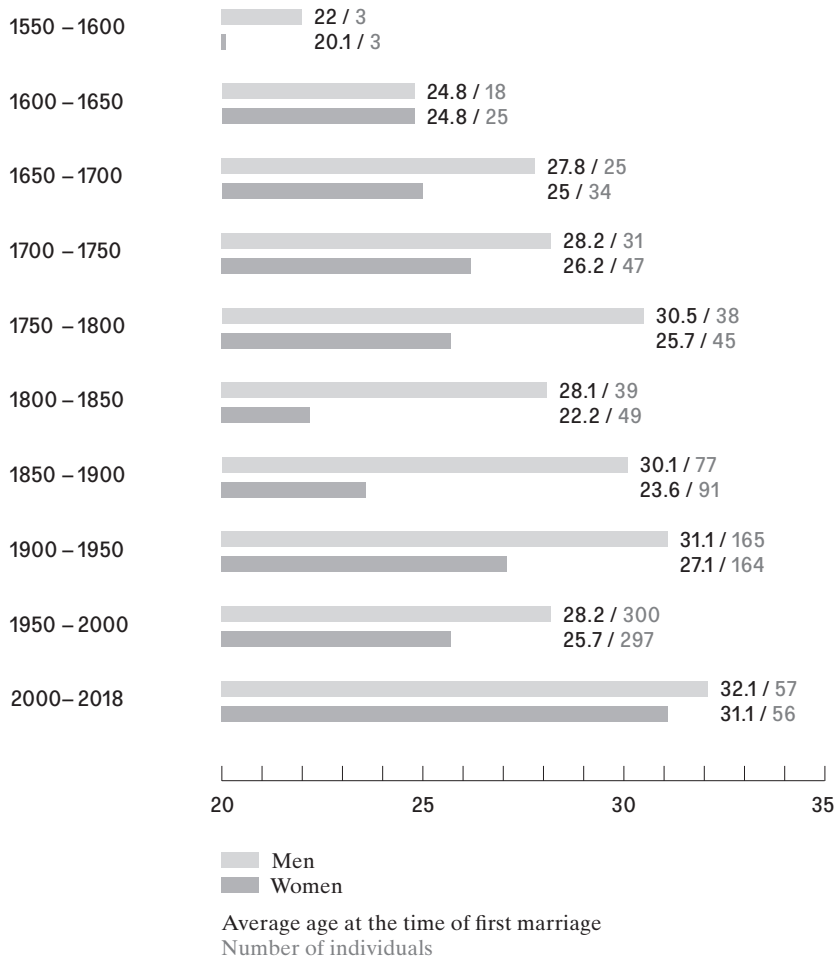
In the second half of the eighteenth century the life expectancy remained more or less the same (average 45, median 50). Twenty-age persons died in old age, i.e. 23 percent, not unlike in the first half of the century. One person lived to be 89. Interestingly, the average life expectancy was the same as in the rural

Törbel area: around 47 years, while in the village of Marschwanden in the canton of Zurich, it was 57.[494]

For the nineteenth century, the statistics rest on the data of 509 persons. Notable for the first quarter of the century: Those who lived past the age of five had a better chance of reaching adulthood easily; only three individuals died before the age of 20. Meanwhile, 37 persons lived past 70. In the last third of the century, the birthrate increased dramatically: 214 new members of the family were welcomed into the world. At the same time, the infant mortality rate decreased dramatically. The average life expectancy was now 70 years (median 77), clearly higher than the Swiss average of around 40.[495] The reason for this disparity may have had to do with the privileged living situation most family members enjoyed.

For the twentieth century, only the first third has been taken into evaluation, given that many Stähelins born in the later part of the century are still alive. Then, the life expectancy rose to 73 years (median 79). Indeed, old age became the norm: 41 individuals lived past 70. Meanwhile, infant mortality remained low, with the cause attributable to advances in medicine.

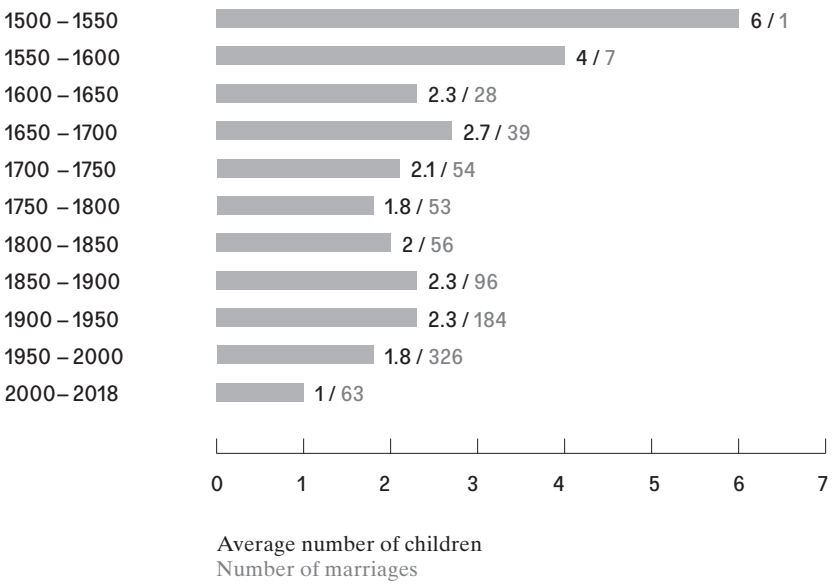
AGE OF MARRIAGE



For the sixteenth century, only six marriages are recorded — too few for an evaluation, but one tendency does emerge: Women married younger than men. At the beginning of the seventeenth century, the marriage age of both sexes was under 25 years. After that it rose on a continual basis, with a slight reversal in the second half of the twentieth century. The age difference between spouses is most pronounced in the second half of the nineteenth century: The men are 30 years old at marriage on average; the women 23.5. Across the entire time period, that

difference is 3.4 years. In the twenty-first century, the average age difference between spouses shrank to one year: he is 31, she 31.

NUMBER OF CHILDREN PER MARRIAGE



A relatively high number of children per marriage (i.e. between four or five on average) is only recorded in the sixteenth century. From 1600, that number decreases gradually and continually until it becomes 1.8 in the second half of the twentieth century, which is itself still above the Swiss average of 1.5.[496] In the second half of the eighteenth century, one can also see a gradual increase to 2,7 children; at the same time, the absolute number of marriages also increases: Following the logic of a family tree, the family becomes larger and larger, beginning with the "proto-marriage" before 1550 between Hans and Magdalena.

In the second half of the sixteenth century, the family recorded four first marriages, two second marriages and one fourth marriage, as women died in childbirth quite often. Almost half of the marriages appear to have been childless. Given the rudimentary birth control methods of the time, this can be attributed to incomplete records. In the first half of the seventeenth century, 29 marriages were recorded, 16 of which were first marriages, five second and three third marriages. During this period, the average number of children also sinks to 2.2, clearly lower than the Swiss average.[497] Again, 13 marriages without children are recorded, but again this is not a realistic number. When the childless couples are excluded, the average number of children increases to 4 (median 3.5).

The first half of the eighteenth century shows 53 marriages, including seven second marriages but no third marriages. With the childless couples included the average number of children is 1.9; without them, 4.1 (median 4). In the second half of the century (53 marriages) the average is 1.8 children counting the childless couples and 4.3 excluding them (median 4). In the nineteenth century, the number of marriages increases markedly; in the first half 61 and the second 92, while the number of second marriages decreases. The average number of children now lies at 2.3, and 4.6 (median 4) with the childless couples excluded.

In the twentieth century the number of marriages increases again: 190 in the first half, and 327 in the second. The database now takes into account non-patrilinear connections. In addition, a new form of civil union practiced in Brazil appears in the Family Book: the Pacs (Pacte civil de solidarité), a kind of registered domestic partnership. Rosemarie Mafra, whose mother is Terezinha Imelda Stähelin, enters into one such union with Sergio Schmitz in 1992. In addition, the Brazilian branch of the family appears extremely fertile: for example, in the first half of the twentieth century, eight couples had twelve or more children. Celso Stähelin (1915–1976) and his father Joao (1887–1960) each had sixteen or more children. Neither is recorded in the Family Book, but they are both in the digital database.

DIVORCES

The family database records 150 individuals who are divorced, mostly in the twentieth century. The first divorce is recorded as having happened in 1771, when Martin Stähelin and Ursula Bischoff separated after marrying in 1766. The second

couple separated in 1841: Elisabeth Stähelin and Karl Bischoff, who had married in 1831. Between 1850–1900 the divorce rate remained at 1.8 percent, but between 1900 and 1950 it rose massively to 25 percent. There the family lies clearly above the Swiss average, which was 13 percent around 1950.[498] This may be explained by the family's urban and Protestant context.

NAMES

The way in which family members spell their last name divides as follows: Stähelin (40 percent of all respondents), Stehelin (12%) and Staehelin (2%). Just about half of the surveyed persons were born with a different name, i.e. spouses and partners of Stähelins. Which families did they marry into most often?

In the sixteenth century two Mentzingers are recorded and other names only appear once, including Mieg, the name of the *Stammvater*'s wife, who was born sometime after 1500.

The names of the individual spouses born in the seventeenth century bear witness to the rapid rise into a powerful family; Iselin (3), Faesch (2) and Wettstein (1). This was the beginning of the family's peak time of marriage alliances. The name Stähelin began to be associated with the Basel upper class no later than 1700.

The well-known bourgeois families in these alliances were recorded without exception in the eighteenth century. Spouses born between 1701 and 1750 named Gemeseus (2), Passavant (2), Sarasin (2) and Vischer (2) appear multiple times. By far the most common marriages occurred between the Stähelins and the Merians (6) and the Rebers (8), who had prospered in Alsace.

The kinships became even more established in the nineteenth century, with Stähelins marrying four Burckhardts, four Bischoffs and three Preiswerks, all of whom were born between 1801–1850. Between 1851–1900, Stähelins married 4 Burckhardts and 6 Vischers. At this point, the time of remarkably close bonds between the bourgeois families of Basel comes to an end.

In the twentieth century, Brazilian names and names of German migrants who married Stähelins in Brazil are notably present. The family first appeared in Brazil in 1866, shortly after

the emigration of a male member of the Basel family. Brazilian genealogist traced not only the Stähelin namebearers but also the children from the matrilineal progression. As such, the following accumulations can be explained: Between 1901–1950, 11 Schmidts were born; between 1951 and 200 numerous da Silvas (17), Pereira (11) and Cunha (7). For the first time, names such as Forcart, Bernoulli or Burckhardt appear similarly often to Müller, Gwiazdowski or Xie.

SURVEY

What does family mean to you? What is typical for the Stähelins? Do they feel connected to Hans, the family progenitor? The authors asked these and other questions in Spring 2019 to a good forty members of the Stähelin family. The survey was circulated using the SurveyMonkey online portal, and participants had the choice of answering in German, French or English.

All participants are recorded in the Stähelin family database. Contact with them was facilitated by the Family Foundation, which managers 363 mailing addresses of family members, and which sent an invitation to the authors' survey to 253 family members via email. Forty-one (i.e. one sixth) of these members answered. After their registration for the survey, the participants were given a link to the online portal. In the survey, participants gave their names.

As such, this survey is obviously not "representative" of the "Stähelin family," as only a relatively small section of the family took part. Further, most of the survey participants are not closely related to each other; most are at least three degrees removed from each other. They make up a heterogeneous group; their primary commonality is that they belong to the Stähelin family.

Of the 41 individuals who participated in the survey, 18 are women and 23 men. The oldest participant was 91 and the youngest 16, with the average age of participants being 55. Some 60 percent are married, 17 percent single and 12 percent divorced. Some individuals did not specify civil status, are widowed or live in a registered domestic partnership.

Two-thirds of the group live in Switzerland, a fifth in France, a tenth in the US. One participant lives in Germany. Among the locations where participants live are Avignon and Schiltigheim, Boston and New York, Geneva and Urnäsch. Among the most frequently appearing cities are: Riehen (2), Zurich (3), Binningen (4) and Basel, where eleven participants live. Ten have French citizenship, one American, 3 are dual citizens (French-American, Swiss-American, Swiss-German); the remaining 27 are Swiss.

The authors also asked participants about their jobs. Two participants are still in high school; three are retired. The professionals all have a relatively high level of education; most have at least bachelor's degrees. Some work as pastors, speech therapists and chemists; several work as architects (3), teachers (3), bankers (4) and lawyers (4).

Seven participants work in the private sector, most in an executive or managerial capacity. The health industry is strongly represented; among the seven health professionals are one doctor, one surgeon, one nursing professional, one psychotherapist, one medical student and two medical professors. In addition to the two medical professionals, two diplomats occupy leading positions in their professional fields; one was the chief officer at the Directorate for Development and Cooperation (Deza).

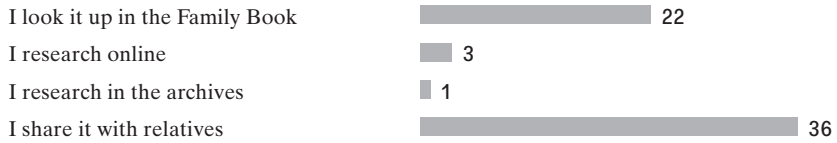
Among other questions, the authors asked the following:

DO YOU FEEL PERSONALLY CONNECTED TO THE 'PROGENITOR,' HANS THE ROPEMAKER, WHO IMMIGRATED TO BASEL BEFORE 1520?

Number of replies 41

Almost 60 percent of participants answered in the affirmative. This identification is strong not in, but rather outside of Switzerland: 48 percent of participants with Swiss citizenship answered with either "no" or "don't know," while 71 percent of participants with other nationalities clicked "yes." It is likely that for them, Hans embodies the distant and yet well-known roots of their ancestry.

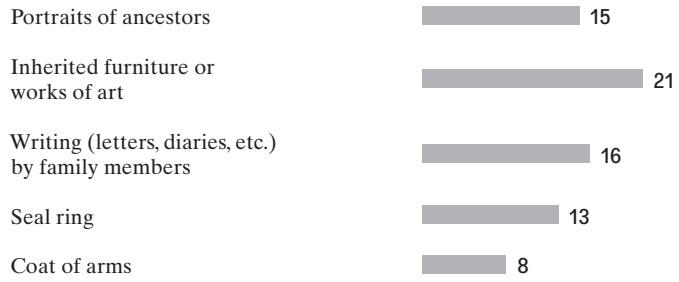
HOW DO YOU OBTAIN INFORMATION ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE STEHELIN-STÄHELIN-STAEHELIN FAMILY?



Number of replies 41, Participants were able to choose more than one response.

Whether in the US, France or Switzerland, the exchange of information with relatives is the most important source of information about family history (88 percent). None of the respondents answered that they were not interested in the family history. Few respondents conducted their own research in the family archives or online. One reason for this may be the Family Book: two-thirds of respondents look information up in the predominantly German genealogy, whereas the French or English-speaking participants own the Family Book only sporadically.

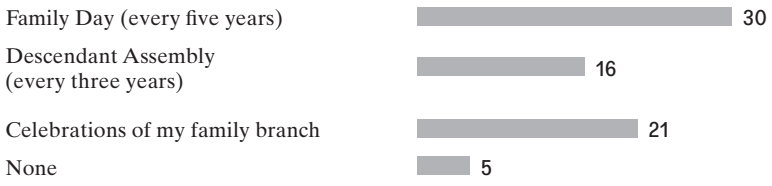
WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING ITEMS RELATED TO THE STEHELIN-STÄHELIN-STAEHELIN FAMILY DO YOU OWN?



Number of replies 41, Participants were able to choose more than one response.

Family-related items are primarily available in Switzerland. Of the 15 owners of ancestral portraits, twelve are Swiss citizens (80%), and that number is even higher when it comes to inherited objects (85%) or writings (94%). The Stähelin coat of arms seems to be scarcely recognized outside of Switzerland. Eleven of thirteen owners of a seal ring live in Switzerland; one painted coat of arms is recorded in the US and seven in Switzerland.

IN WHICH STEHELIN-STÄHELIN-STAEHELIN FAMILY FUNCTIONS DO YOU PARTICIPATE?



Number of replies 38, Participants were able to choose more than one response.

The first Family Day took place in 1920, and since 1950 Family Days have taken place every five years, the most recent being in 2015. For the Swiss respondents, the Basel celebration seems to be a must: 25 out of 26 say they participate in Family Day. The Descendant Assembly has taken place every three years since 1888 and serves as the electoral body of the Family Foundation. In the survey, sixteen participants say they take part in the event; fifteen of these live in Switzerland, one in Paris. Fifty-five percent of respondents say they meet with their closer Stähelin relatives for family celebrations. The five participants who do not participate in any Stähelin family celebrations live in France.

LIKE MANY FAMILY TREES, THE STEHELIN-STÄHELIN-STAEHELIN FAMILY TREE HAS LONG FOLLOWED THE PATRILINEAL PRINCIPLE. I.E. FOLLOWS THE LINES OF ONLY MALE FAMILY MEMBERS. DOES THIS BOTHER YOU?

Number of replies 41

The dominance of men in the family tree is particularly strong among the French Stähelins; ten out of eleven participants who answered the survey in French are disturbed by the patrilineal principle. Among the German and English answers, 41 percent of respondents say they are not bothered. Since 1995, the family tree has also been tracking female family members who keep their names.

HOW STRONG IS YOUR FEELING OF BELONGING TO THE STEHELIN-STÄHELIN-STAEHELIN FAMILY?

Number of replies 41

Eighty percent of family members surveyed feel as if they belong.

FOREWORD TO THE ENGLISH EDITION: BASEL IN THE AGE OF THE STÄHELINS

1 A richer account of life in Basel, particularly in the nineteenth century, will be found in Lionel Gossman's "Basel in the Age of Burckhardt: A Study in Unseasonable Ideas", University of Chicago (2000).

INTRODUCTION: WHAT IS A FAMILY?

2 See bibliography
3 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 6.

1. FROM THE CRAFTSMEN TO THE PATRICIANS: THE STÄHELINS IN THE ANCIEN RÉGIME

4 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 24.
5 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 15.
6 StABS, PA 182.
7 Schweizerischer Volksfreund, 21./22.11.1879.
8 StABS, Genealogy Room, Stähelin family trees.
9 StABS, Genealogy Room, Stähelin family trees.
10 StABS, PA 182, 1-2, Genealogy Room, Stähelin family trees.
11 StABS, Genealogy Room, Stähelin family trees.
12 Aicher (Ende), p. 54.
13 StABS, PA 182, A 2a.
14 HLS, Stähelin.
15 StABS, PA 182c, B 2-1 (1), additions to archive.
16 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 24.
17 Platter (Lebensbeschreibung), p. 81 f.
18 StABS, PA 182, A 1.
19 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 25.
20 von Greyerz (Reformation), p. 83.
21 Meyer (Ende), p. 42.
22 HLS, Zünfte.
23 Geering (Handel), p. 63 – 83.
24 Burnett (Reformation), p. 171.
25 Wackernagel (Basel), Bd. III, p. 293.
26 Füglister (Handwerksregiment), p. 2 f.
27 Von Greyerz (Reformation), p. 80 ff.
28 Burnett (Reformation), p. 190.
29 Burnett (Reformation), p. 192.
30 Roth (Aktensammlung), p. 548 f.
31 Stroux (online).
32 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 25.
33 Stroux (online).
34 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 25.
35 Platter (Tagebuch), p. 71.
36 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 27.
37 Stroux (online).
38 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 40.
39 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 170.
40 Stähelin-Schwarz et al. (Geschichte), p. 6.
41 HLS, Illegitimität.
42 HLS, Ganzes Haus.
43 Von Greyerz (Reformation), p. 80.
44 Sarasin (1990), p. 217. HLS, Socin.
45 Braun (Régime), p. 214.
46 Kriemler (Lesegesellschaft), p. 218.
47 Geering (Handel), p. 103.
48 Röthlin (Handelspolitik), S. 89. Von Greyerz (Reformation), pp. 88 – 89.
49 Röthlin (Handelspolitik), p. 92.
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CONCLUSION: SELF-PORTRAITS, OUTSIDE IMPRESSIONS

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The Stähelin family, also spelled Staehelin and Stehelin, is one of Basel's old established families. This book traces its history through a span of five centuries by exploring thematically developments that have shaped the lives of its members over 17 generations.