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# Elites and Politics in Central and Eastern Europe (1848–1918)



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EDITION

## Foreword

The idea of publishing this book grew out of research carried out in the past few years within the project “The Political Elite from Transylvania (1867–1918)”.<sup>1</sup> Starting from the recovery and prosopographic analysis of Members of Parliament in Hungary elected in the Transylvanian constituencies, we felt there was a need for parallels at the Central and Eastern European level. Without such a perspective, our conclusions could not go beyond the stage of regional history research, given also that the comparative perspective is ever more pervasive in European historiography.<sup>2</sup>

The topic of this book has stirred major historiographic interest, due especially to the complex legacy of the Habsburg Empire. This interest underwent a resurgence following the collapse of Communism in 1989, and in the post-Communist countries in Central and Eastern Europe discussions about the difficulties of change also encompassed the formation of civil society, namely the historical roots of the political system and political culture. Studying the historical development of political and social structures was an essential prerequisite for understanding the changes which took place in this area during the first half of the twentieth century. The structure of the parliamentary elite not only mirrors power relations in a certain period, but also reveals aspects of how a country’s entire political system functions, as well as the changes it undergoes during that period.

The study of parliamentarism, of political parties, deputies, etc. goes a long way back and has been a topic for research in several fields, such as social and political history, political science, political sociology or historical social research.

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- 1 This book was carried out by CNCS-UEFISCDI (National Research Council-Executive Agency for Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation Funding), through the funding of research project PN-II-PCE-2011-3-0040. More information on the project, its results and the electoral databases can be accessed at: [http://elite-research.eu/transylvanian\\_political\\_elite.html](http://elite-research.eu/transylvanian_political_elite.html)
  - 2 Closest to our topic is the project carried out by the European Consortium for Political Research (ECPR), which aimed to create a joint European data set from different national files: Heinrich Best, Maurizio Cotta (eds.), *Parliamentary Representatives in Europe 1848–2000* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2000); Eidem (eds.), *Democratic Representation in Europe. Diversity, Change, and Convergence* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2007). A vast politological analysis based on comparison between electoral systems in 29 states throughout the world: Hans-Dieter Klingemann (ed.), *The Comparative Study of Electoral Systems* (Oxford–New York: Oxford University Press, 2009). A new approach, dealing mainly with the issue of political culture: Adela Gjuricova, Andreas Schulz, Luboš Velek, Andreas Wirsching (eds.), *Parlamentarische Kulturen in Europa: Lebenswelten von Abgeordneten* (Berlin: KGParl, 2013—forthcoming).

Perspectives also vary: research on the composition, recruitment and transformation of political elites has tried to clarify the social structures and social mobility, and research on education and training, social origins and position, values, etc. has tried to explain the attitudes and reasoning underlying the actions of political elites. Since the main sources for research into political elites are biographical data, the most frequently used method—in our study as well—is the prosopography. The quantitative history “trend” in the 1970s and 1980s saw the creation of electronic databases that allowed for more detailed and more accurate data analysis. Certainly, there have been and still are several difficulties to overcome,<sup>3</sup> but their creation led to the publication of several useful research titles, such as dictionaries of deputies from various countries.<sup>4</sup> Collective biographies are still a highly useful tool in the study of such groups, allowing the analyses of group profiles and networks they build in a social and political context.

The parliamentarism of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy was for a long time heavily criticised and labelled as pseudo-parliamentarism (*Scheinparlamentarismus*), but recent decades have seen a much more objective and differentiated picture.<sup>5</sup> Both the Parliament of Cisleithania and that of the Kingdom of Hun-

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- 3 These difficulties were presented at an early stage by: Wilhelm Schröder, “Probleme und Methoden der quantitativen Analyse von kollektiven Biographien”, in Heinrich Best, Reinhard Mann (eds.), *Quantitative Methoden in der historisch-sozialwissenschaftlichen Forschung* (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1977), 88–125; Idem, “Lebenslaufforschung zwischen biographischer Lexikographie und kollektiver Biographie. Überlegungen zu einem ‘Biographischen Handbuch der Parlamentarier in der Deutschen Reichs- und Landtagen bis 1933 (BIOPARL)’”, *HSR/HSf*, 31 (July 1984), 38–62; Wilhelm Heinz Schröder, Wilhelm Weege, Martina Zech (eds.), *Historische Parlamentarismus-, Eliten- und Biographieforschung. Forschung und Service am Zentrum für Historische Sozialforschung* (=HSR/HSf Supplement/Beiheft. 11, Köln: Zentrum für Historische Sozialforschung, 2000).
  - 4 For instance: Heinrich Best, Wilhelm Weege, *Biographisches Handbuch der Abgeordneten der Frankfurter Nationalversammlung 1848/49* (Düsseldorf: Droste, 1996). Although this is the only volume published so far, the Internet offers several databases with basic information on deputies between 1867 and 1918 (and later periods): <http://biosop.zhsf.uni-koeln.de/ParlamentarierPortal/biorabkr.htm> (accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013).
  - 5 For instance: Herbert Schambeck (ed.), *Österreichs Parlamentarismus. Werden und System* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1986); Hans Peter Hye, *Das politische System der Habsburgermonarchie: Konstitutionalismus, Parlamentarismus, politische Partitipation* (Praha: Karolinum, 1998); László Péter, *Hungary’s Long Nineteenth Century. Constitutional and Democratic Traditions in a European Perspective. Collected Studies*, ed. by Miklós Lojók. (=Central and Eastern Europe. Regional Perspectives in Global Context. 1, Leiden–Boston: Brill, 2012); Helmut Rumpler, Luboš Velek, Franz Adlgasser (eds.), *„Hohes Haus!“ 150 Jahre moderner Parlamentarismus in Österreich, Böhmen, der Tschechoslowakei und der Republik Tschechien im mitteleuropäischen Kontext* (Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2013—forthcoming).

gary were bicameral. Whereas the Upper House of the Hungarian Parliament had a long historical tradition, maintaining its composition unchanged from the pre-modern era to the reform of 1885, the Austrian *Herrenhaus* was to some extent a continuation of the panel of notables (*Verstärkter Reichsrat*) from the period before the Austro-Hungarian Compromise. Both aimed to perpetuate aristocratic influence, complemented by representatives of the new elitist groups, appointed by the ruler based on meritocratic criteria. Conversely, the lower houses of the two parliaments were elected, so their membership much more accurately reflected potential changes in the political system or social structure of the two parts of the Monarchy. In the beginning, members of the Austrian Parliament were not directly elected by voters, but were delegated by each province's *Landtag* or Diet, which is why the Austrian Parliament was rather seen in this first stage as a gathering of interest groups from various provinces; only from 1873 were the deputies elected directly. Another major change occurred in 1907, when universal male suffrage replaced the curial vote in Cisleithania. Hungary, for well-known reasons—the social and national issue, namely the fear that the lower classes and nationalities would offset the balance of power to the detriment of the Hungarian political elite—did not follow suit. Although at the beginning of the twentieth century there were several proposals for electoral reform, despite a few modifications the election law remained in essence unchanged for more than half a century. Politicians in power also recognised the anachronism of the voting system at the start of the new century, yet in spite of ever more frequent and acute political crises, the major step of introducing universal suffrage was only taken following the shock of the First World War.

Parliaments, despite critiques from both contemporaries and historiography, played an important role in Austro-Hungarian political life, parliamentary disputes were a current topic of discussion for the public sphere, and deputies enjoyed enormous social prestige. The study of the parliamentary elite is also facilitated by the fact that members of parliament (MPs) constitute a clearly defined group, central to the political elite.

In what follows we will briefly present only the most important books resulting from research or projects similar to our own, and will focus mainly on the Hungarian realm of the Dual Monarchy and on the results of our research; this is also because Robert Luft, in the introduction to the monumental recently-published work on MPs in Bohemia and Moravia, reviews the historiography on parliamentarism and deputies in Cisleithania—with an emphasis on those from the Czech crown lands.<sup>6</sup>

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6 Robert Luft, *Parlamentarische Führungsgruppen und politische Strukturen in der tschechischen Gesellschaft. Tschechische Abgeordnete und Parteien des österreichischen*

We must begin with the vast collective work presenting the entire Monarchy, with its constitutional issues as well as its parliamentarism—the central parliaments (*Reichstag*) of the two realms of the Monarchy, but also the local representative bodies (*Landtag*) of various provinces—in the series “Die Habsburgermonarchie 1848–1918”.<sup>7</sup> The development of the voting system was analysed by Karl Ucakar.<sup>8</sup> A prosopographic study of the collective biographies of life peers in the *Herrenhaus* was already published in the 1960s.<sup>9</sup> A few analyses on members of the Lower House are found in some PhD theses, but these went unpublished. The political scientist Gernot Stimmer analysed political elites primarily from the perspective of the (elite) higher education institutions from which they graduated.<sup>10</sup> Two exemplary recently-published prosopographic works on the parliamentary elite of various regions are those by Harald Binder and Robert Luft.<sup>11</sup> Recently, a lexicon of information about all the deputies in Moravia was published, and another is underway in Austria, the result of a decade’s work by Franz Adlgasser; both are very useful tools for subsequent research.<sup>12</sup> Besides these, many more books approach related topics, some written by contributors to the present volume.<sup>13</sup>

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*Reichsrates 1907–1914. I–II* (=Veröffentlichungen des Collegium Carolinum. 102/1-2, München: R. Oldenbourg, 2012), 25 sqq.

- 7 *HbsM. VII/1-2*. The parts tackling Austrian and Hungarian parliamentarism were written by Berthold Sutter, Andreas Gottsmann, Helmut Rumpler, Lothar Höbelt, László Révész, Adalbert Toth. The second volume is about the Diet in various provinces.
- 8 Karl Ucakar, *Demokratie und Wahlrecht in Österreich. Zur Entwicklung von politischer Partitipation und staatlicher Legitimationspolitik* (=Österreichische Texte zur Gesellschaftskritik. 24, Wien: Verlag für Gesellschaftskritik, 1985). The situation of the Slovene-inhabited provinces was tackled by: Vasilij Melik, *Wahlen im alten Österreich am Beispiel der Kronländer mit slowenischsprachiger Bevölkerung* (Wien–Köln–Weimar: Böhlau, 1997).
- 9 Gerald Stourzh, “Die Mitgliedschaft auf Lebensdauer im österreichischen Herrenhause 1861–1918”, in: *Mitteilungen des Instituts für österreichische Geschichtsforschung*, 73 (1965), 63–117.
- 10 Gernot Stimmer, *Eliten in Österreich 1848–1970* (=Studien zu Politik und Verwaltung. 57, Wien–Köln–Weimar: Böhlau, 1997).
- 11 Harald Binder, *Galizien in Wien. Parteien, Wahlen, Fraktionen und Abgeordnete im Übergang zur Massenpolitik* (=Studien zur Geschichte der Österreichisch-Ungarischen Monarchie. 29, Wien: Verlag der Österreichischen Akademie der Wissenschaften, 2005); Luft 2012.
- 12 *BS; MÖZ*.
- 13 The books resulted from the project: *Transformace společenských elit v procesu modernizace. Šlechta českých zemí 1749–1948* [The transformation of social elites during the modernization process. Nobility in the Czech Lands 1749–1948], for instance: Tatjana Tönsmeier, Luboš Velek (eds.), *Adel und Politik. in der Habsburgermonarchie und den*

A concise work about parliamentarism in the Eastern part of the Monarchy is by Dániel Szabó<sup>14</sup>; Jean Béranger and Károly Kecskeméti also have an interesting approach.<sup>15</sup> Sándor Pesti surveys the development of parliamentarism as an institution.<sup>16</sup> András Gerő paints a vivid, albeit somewhat one-sided picture of elections and electoral corruption;<sup>17</sup> more recently, András Cieger has approached electoral corruption as part of the political system, in the broader context of political corruption.<sup>18</sup> The first elections after 1848 were thoroughly examined by law historian József Ruszoly.<sup>19</sup>

The first sociological studies on Hungarian MPs in the Dual Monarchy date back to the inter-war period and the Second World War, and until recently these underlay all further work on the issue.<sup>20</sup> After several decades when the study of the political elites in Hungary was neglected for ideological reasons, an important work about MPs in Hungary was published in Germany, written by an emigrant. Adalbert Toth's book—based on his PhD thesis defended at the University of Heidelberg in 1969—is a very useful tool in the study of political parties and elections, and also comprises databases of deputies between 1848 and

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*Nachbarländern zwischen Absolutismus und Demokratie* (München: Martin Meidenbauer, 2011).

- 14 Zsuzsanna Boros, Dániel Szabó, *Parlamentarizmus Magyarországon (1867–1944)* [Parliamentarism in Hungary (1867–1944)] (Budapest: Korona, 1999). Szabó is the author of the 1867–1918 part.
- 15 Jean Béranger, Charles Kecskeméti, *Parlement et vie parlementaire en Hongrie, 1608–1918* (Paris: Honoré Champion, 2005). The Hungarian version: Budapest: Napvilág, 2008.
- 16 Sándor Pesti, *Az újkori magyar parlament* [The modern Hungarian Parliament] (Budapest: Osiris, 2002).
- 17 The English version: András Gerő, *The Hungarian parliament, 1867–1918: a mirage of power*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997). The Hungarian version: Budapest: Gondolat, 1988.
- 18 András Cieger, *Politikai korrupció a Monarchia Magyarországon 1867–1918* [Political corruption in Hungary 1867–1918] (Budapest: Napvilág, 2011).
- 19 József Ruszoly, *Országgyűlési képviselő-választások Magyarországon 1861–1868* [Parliamentary elections in Hungary (1861–1868)] (Szeged: József Attila Tudományegyetem Állam- és Jogtudományi Kara, 1999).
- 20 Dezső Rudai, *A politikai ideológia, pártszerkezet, hivatás és életkor szerepe a magyar képviselőház és a pártok életében (1861–1935)* [The role of the political ideology, party structure, age and profession in the life of the Hungarian Chamber of Deputies and parties (1861–1935)] (Budapest: Magyar Társadalomtudományi Társulat, 1935); Ernő Lakatos, *A magyar politikai vezetőréteg 1848–1918. Társadalomtörténeti tanulmány* [The Hungarian ruling class from 1848 to 1918] (Budapest: s.n., 1942). The information from Lakatos also underlies the analysis in the chapter by Adalbert Toth in the ample synthesis *Die Habsburgermonarchie (HbsM. VII/1–2)*.

1892.<sup>21</sup> In Hungary, research on elites started to be systematically carried out at the Department of Sociology at the “Eötvös Loránd” University in Budapest, but the political elite during the Dual Monarchy period was not included in the programme.<sup>22</sup> The study of education and intellectual training of the elites was promoted by sociologist Viktor Karády,<sup>23</sup> mainly within the framework of several research projects. Only after 2000 did construction of a comprehensive database start with a collective project led by political scientist Gabriella Ilonszki, compiling biographical information about deputies between 1884 and 2000.<sup>24</sup> As well as these analyses, several books were published containing a comparative perspective on the development of MPs in Hungary. More recently, historian József Pap resumed the topic, trying to refine the study of MPs under the Dual Monarchy, and a first volume is to be published.

The structure of this book has unfolded naturally, its content organised in accordance with the political geography at the time. Eight articles refer to the Western half of the Habsburg Empire (two for Austria, Bohemia and Moravia, one for Galicia and Bucovina), five focus on Hungary, and one article deals with the political elites of the Kingdom of Romania.

The first study, by Peter Urbanitsch, offers an overview of the integration of the “intellectual elite” into Austria’s political life between 1848 and 1914. Aware of the protean quality of the term, the author elegantly avoids opening a Pandora’s box of definitions, using instead the accepted models of the era. Start-

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21 Adalbert Toth, *Parteien und Reichstagswahlen in Ungarn 1848–1892* (=Südosteuropäische Arbeiten. 70, München: R. Oldenbourg, 1973).

22 The history of the research on elites is presented by: Gábor Kovács I., *A magyarországi polgári korszakbeli országos elitek empirikus kutatásának historikumához I.* [History of the empirical research on Hungarian national elites, 1848–1945], in László Kiss (ed.), *A cselekvő értelmiségi. Tanulmányok Huszár Tibor 80. születésnapjára* (Budapest: Argumentum, ELTE Társadalomtudományi Kara, 2010) 175–207; Imre Kovách (ed.), *Eliték a válság korában. Magyarországi elitek, kisebbségi magyar elitek* [Elites in a time of crisis. Elites in Hungary, Hungarian minority elites] (Budapest: MTA Politikatudományi Intézet, MTA Etnikai-Nemzeti Kisebbségkutató Intézet, Argumentum, 2011).

23 <http://www.karadyviktor.uni.hu/> (accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013); Viktor Karády, *Ethnic and Denominational Inequalities and Conflicts in Elites and Elite Training in Modern Central-Europe* (Budapest: Wesley Egyház- és Vallásszociológiai Központ, 2012). About the Transylvanian Elites: Viktor Karády, Borbála Zsuzsanna Török (eds.), *Cultural Dimensions of Ethnic Formation in Transylvania (1770–1950)* (Cluj-Napoca: EDR Foundation, 2008). <http://www.edrc.ro/docs/docs/elitform/Intregul-volum.pdf> (accessed: 16<sup>th</sup> August 2013).

24 Gabriella Ilonszki, *Képviselők és képviselet Magyarországon a 19. és 20. században* [Representatives and representation in Hungary in the C19 and C20] (Budapest: Akadémiai, 2009).

ing from the provisions of the Austrian election law in 1848, the main reference points for this elite category in the mid-nineteenth century were educational attainment as a main criterion and the social function of one's profession as a secondary criterion. Although their political involvement differed according to regional particularities and consecutive changes in law, members of the intellectual elite constantly gained ground as voters and as MPs, as opposed to those who enjoyed election rights on the basis of their wealth. The spirit of the era contributed heavily: the need to modernise put educated people into high office locally, and the transformation of politics into a mass phenomenon opened the path to public endorsement for intellectuals.

Still in the area of intellectual elites, Franz Adlgasser's research analyses the presence of a particular socio-professional category (lawyers) within the parliamentary elite of Austria between 1848 and 1918. Ever since the Revolution, those who worked in the field of law made up a clearly-defined group within the legislative assembly. Their training and expertise made their presence instrumental in a context where one key objective was to draw up a new Constitution. The prevalence of Law graduates also continued after 1861, in terms both of numbers and key-positions held in the legislative assembly (as presidents, vice-presidents and members of commissions) until the introduction of universal suffrage. Only the changes brought about in 1907 engendered a marked fall in the number of lawyers in the Austrian Parliament and an obvious decline in the number of key positions they held. Here the author points out the ambivalent effect of the democratization of suffrage: what was won in terms of representation was lost in terms of deprofessionalisation among the members of the new Parliament. As a result, the Parliament lost autonomy in its process of legislative analysis and became much more dependent on the expertise of bureaucrats and more open to influence through lobbying.

One traditional behaviour of the era's political elite was self-organisation into clubs. These types of associations were usually the backstage of a party, but also had vital social and economic attributes for its good functioning and public representation. Luboš Velek's study analyses the activity of the *Český klub*—the political and social forum of the Old Czech faction, founded in Prague in 1871. The forum originated in tactical disputes between the two wings of the Czech national movement and in the need of the older generation, who promoted parliamentary non-participation between 1872 and 1878, to publicly validate their position. Thus from its foundation, the selection of club members relied on the manifestation of an exaggerated ideological purity, which in the long run proved harmful to good internal order. The club, along with the newspapers published by its main founder (J. S. Skrejšovský), was meant to be a point of reference for supporters throughout Bohemia, as well as a rallying point for the older genera-

tion of Prague's civil society. Its primary role was political, and the socio-cultural activities it hosted also echoed that role through the ideas it promoted and the debates it engendered.

In the second half of the nineteenth century, regardless of the generation to which they belonged, members of the Czech elite faced a new common problem in their political endeavour: "the social question" generated by the accelerated development of modern capitalism. Politicians and entrepreneurs were most interested in the topic, given their direct relationship with those involved and the quick spread of social-democratic ideas. The article by Jiří Šouša and Jiří Štaif follows how these two elite categories responded to this challenge, using comparative analysis. In the case of the first group, the opinions of some representative personalities of Czech politics are presented (F. Palacký, F. L. Rieger, T. Masaryk), as well as the legislative measures for social protection taken during the decade preceding the Great War. Attitudes among entrepreneurs are illustrated by the ideas of several prominent Bohemian industrialists and by the description of patriarchal relations between owner and employees. This latter model, preferred by most entrepreneurs, could not, however, make up for the lack of a legal framework suited to the new social realities, nor could it withstand ideological pressures and increasingly radical Social Democrat demands over the long term.

Returning to parliamentary elites, this time in Moravia, Jiří Malíř's study analyses the composition of the provincial Diet between 1848 and 1918, which—given the particularities of the provincial electoral system (census suffrage, electoral colleges, virilists)—was a political melting-pot and offers a highly interesting historical case study. The old elite, made up of great landowners, tried for as long as possible to maintain its position ahead of the new elite, whose members owed their status to their education and professional abilities. The fact that this new elite was divided along national lines (Czechs and Germans) further complicated the political game and, at the same time, the entire system of recruitment, promotion and accession to the status of people's representative. When the creation of ethnic constituencies meant that the national criterion was no longer a bone of contention, the Czechs made an important step towards the elite position of power, but ideological gaps between the various factions of both nationalities maintained the motley character of regional politics.

In a similar vein, Lukáš Fasora's research focuses on the development of relations between local politics within the German communities and their representation in the Diet of Moravia between 1880 and 1914. Their several ideological factions, the increasingly obvious rise of the Czech element, the pressures caused by social change and Social Democratic influences, all contributed to changes in attitude among the German voters and the gradual strengthening of

the national-radical trend. Even though the transition from Liberalism to radicalism is sometimes difficult to spot, certain aspects—such as the debates on education or attitudes towards the Jewish electorate—clearly delineate differences in perspective between the two factions. Competition was especially tough at the municipal level, where radicals gradually started to win local council seats, which strengthened the faction and allowed them to send more representatives to the provincial Diet. Nevertheless they still did not outnumber the German Liberals, and on vital national matters, members of the two factions acted in concert until the dissolution of Monarchy.

Moving towards the Eastern areas of the Empire, Harald Binder's study analyses the characteristics of the elite in Galicia, especially MPs returned from this province to the central parliament of Cisleithania in the early twentieth century. He starts by identifying those factors which influenced the crystallization of the political elite in an underdeveloped province, and the selection and promotion mechanisms which functioned in the media and political parties. The article also studies the socio-professional composition of the elected body, in connection to their ideological standpoint, in an attempt to identify the relevance of the biographic factor in shaping the parliamentary elite. An additional analysis is made of public career trajectories by political affiliation and original social class. Last but not least, the role of ethnic delimitation in a multi-ethnic province is highlighted, amid growing manifestations of national identity.

Along with Galicia at the Eastern edge of Cisleithania was the Duchy of Bukovina, whose representatives, regardless of nationality, made every effort to win and maintain political autonomy in 1849 and 1860. Mihai-Ştefan Ceauşu's study follows how the Romanian political elite contributed to this effort through the activity of its representatives in the Diet of Bukovina after 1861. Although divided into various factions, the Romanians, generally represented by great landowners and those with noble titles, maintained a certain prevalence inside this legislative body throughout the period studied. Their position was endangered not by other nationalities, but by the emergence of a new generation of Romanian intellectuals and by social changes at the beginning of the century. These new circumstances led to great turmoil within the Romanian National Party and even to its division into three factions and, obviously, to the temporary diminution of its capacity for political action.

The section on Hungary opens with József Pap's study of the social composition of the parliamentary elite of Hungary at the beginning of the twentieth century. Based on the 1901 election results and a thorough prosopographic investigation, the author tracks certain indicators vital to understanding the socio-professional structure of the Parliament in Budapest. The following factors are investigated: the age of accession to office, the geographic origin of the candi-

date and his connections to the constituency represented, the link between the ethnic profile and the preceding factors, noble lineage and religious confession. More concise, but similarly interesting, information on education and generational succession is also provided. The conclusions reveal the prevalence of deputies of noble descent, accession to office during early adulthood, an excessively high percentage of law graduates, and a generally balanced distribution across confessions, but differentiated across parties. The social composition of Parliament seems to reflect the fundamental changes of the era very little, and does not reflect the expectations of voters (the level of whose political culture remains questionable). It can rather be seen as the product of decisions and political games among the higher elite—basically a result of the strategies for power preservation and perpetuation developed by those in power.

A micromonographic incursion into this general picture is made easier by the study of András Cieger, who focuses on the political elite of the counties of the sub-Carpathian area (Bereg, Ung, Ugocsa, and Máramaros)—both MPs and higher county civil servants. His research builds on a solid prosopographic basis, paying special attention to career trajectories and regional attachments, and then analyses the role of financial possibilities, of personal and family influence in intra-elite power relations. Within this latter aspect, ties developed in clubs and masonic lodges are analysed separately, along with the recruitment strategies for future members from the social class immediately below. His conclusions emphasise the primary role played by personal and family interest in the games of power, as well as the gap between the members of the elite and the mass, which they represented as politicians.

The following study, by Ovidiu Iudean, Alexandru Onojescu and Vlad Popovici draws up a prosopography of MPs elected in the counties in Eastern Hungary (Csanád, Arad, Bihar, Szatmár, Szilágy, and Máramaros) for the whole period between 1861 and 1918. The text begins by presenting general indicators regarding the electoral situation in the counties under study, the results of elections and the delegates' time in office. Furthermore, the research focuses on identifying the membership of the three generations that made up the parliamentary elite in those regions, as well as the similarities and differences between them. The results indicate that, between the first and the second generation, electoral structure and behavioural differences were relatively few, being mostly generated by external factors—the political context in which they occurred. Only from the third generation did more striking signs of socio-professional and electoral behaviour dictated by the spirit of the era appear. However, they were more limited than in the Western half of the Dual Monarchy.

Going East to the former Grand Principality of Transylvania, Judit Pál's study analyses MPs elected to urban constituencies before the administrative

reform of 1876. The fact that various “rotten boroughs” shared electoral privileges with the larger towns of the province led to conspicuous inequalities. Basically, a few townships with formal urban status and a few hundred voters would send one deputy to the Hungarian Parliament, whereas elsewhere an entire county would only send two. Consequently, a new practice quickly caught on to name or even impose candidates from the centre who had little or nothing to do with their nominal constituency, thus provoking debates over their capacity to represent the real interests of those who had voted for them. The conclusions of the research underline that this phenomenon was one result of electoral corruption following the Compromise, but also highlight, from a sociological perspective, its direct connection to the level of economic development (the low percentage of industrial and trade professions) and the level of illiteracy in those towns, whereas there was no relevant connection to the level of ethnic fragmentation.

A broader chronological perspective, but narrower in terms of ethnicity, is put forward by Nicolae Bocşan’s study of the metamorphoses undergone by the Romanian political elite in Transylvania between 1848 and 1920s; the author concludes that this elite evolved along with the society it represented. Prior to the Compromise, one could not truly speak of a political elite, but rather of an elite whose members acted on different levels of society (religion, administration, culture) and who inevitably took on a political role when events imposed this. The formation of national parties and parliamentary activity within the new framework after 1867 gradually led to the crystallisation of a new political elite, and the end of the century brought the first signs of its professionalisation, as did the emergence of a new, more pragmatic, and ambitious generation. The experience gained at the beginning of the century, after re-engagement with political life in Hungary and the backroom deals in Vienna, helped the Romanian political leaders pass the test of 1918 with flying colours and subsequently integrate into the Romanian political system.

The professionalisation of the Romanian political class, in the Kingdom of Romania this time around, is also the subject of Silvia Marton’s study. Initially, the development of the Romanian political elite beyond the Carpathian Mountains was very similar to that in Transylvania: persons with higher education and more experience of debate and desk-work took on the role of people’s representatives. The emergence of the new state sped up the professionalisation process, due to more frequent elections and, of course, due to the much larger political space that politicians in the Kingdom of Romania enjoyed, compared to their compatriots in the Habsburg Empire. Once organised, the parties became vehicles of access to various positions, and political clientelism and election-rigging mechanisms via the obedient administration became means of political ascension. This system created a professional political class adapted to its require-

ments and dependent upon it, for whom winning the competition (elections) prevailed over any other objectives, including obeying the law.

A quick overview of the studies featured in this book reveals, besides the diversity of topics, recurrent aspects that transcend the regional level of research. Throughout Central and Eastern Europe, the political elite, be these conservative or liberal, centralist, federalist or nationalist, entered an ever more pronounced restructuring. The determining factors of this process were both internal (generational change) and external (social and mind-set changes, broadening intellectual horizons, ideological pressure). The greater the social openness, the extent of democratization and emergence of the civic spirit (as was the case in the Western provinces of the Monarchy), the more accelerated the restructuring of the political elite and the more marked the internal polarisation.

The parliaments of the two parts of the Empire were quite different even before 1907, when universal suffrage was introduced in Cisleithania. The deputies of the Monarchy did not form a homogenous group, and study of MPs needs to take into consideration the complex social and political context. The differences and disputes between political/ideological or national/ethnic groups and camps (to name but two of the most important factors creating group identity in parliament) captured the attention of contemporaries and for a long time were a *topos* for historiography on the matter. These differences notwithstanding, there were several common aspects, as well, some even surprising at first. From this point of view, the prosopographic approach, to the fore in this book, is one of the most appropriate methods to tackle the subject. Via this method, we can hope to answer a series of issues raised by the understanding of the socio-political ensemble in Central Europe at the end of the modern era.

Alongside the above-mentioned factors, the process of elite restructuring also supposed the presence of an important catalyst: the emergence, during the last quarter of the century, of the elite intellectual substratum. The level of education, personal capability and the constant impetus for public recognition helped them access the local administrative and political structures, thus becoming indispensable to the political elite. In time, the most driven and capable overcame this level and managed to become part of the elite.

Most of the studies in this book mention the effects of the social changes that started in 1880–1890 on the restructuring of political elite composition in Central Europe. In the context of census suffrage, intellectuals were the cement between the increasing number of voters and delegates, ultimately depending on their representatives if the games of power in capitals were to materialise at the local level. Of course, in most cases, its members obeyed the centres of power, since their socio-professional status depended on their political attitude. How-

ever, this does not in the least diminish the lever function that intellectuals took on within the political time machine.

Given the context, the phenomenon of political professionalisation would have not been possible if professionals (who made up the political elite) had not benefitted from the support of a territorial apparatus, accompanied by financial and professional benefits. The model had been successful in the context of census suffrage, given the high number of voters vulnerable to pressure and incentives, but the gradual increase in the number of voters and the spectre of universal suffrage led to its extension. It thus became necessary to co-opt as many influential people as possible at local level, and intellectuals made many such available (civil servants, free-lancers, journalists, school and church personnel). Not only the members of the elite benefited from the effects of their political activity, but also the electorate, so that intellectuals thus became players in the formation of political culture.

Another issue raised in research on Austria, which is worth extending in the future to all territories of the Monarchy, is the extent to which the restructuring of the political elite and the appearance of “professional” politicians triggered a regression in the elite’s good functioning and efficiency. Starting from the suggestions made by Franz Adlgasser and Peter Urbanitsch, with a moderate twist of generality, we may assert that as more and more elite members became political professionals, the level of professionalism fell among the elites in other fields of expertise, vital to the good functioning of the state (jurisprudence, public administration, etc.). We believe the statement especially holds true for the younger generation, as the age of job entry drops markedly. Premature entry into the ranks of the political elite and skipping the stages of a proper *cursus honorum* saw people in the legislative fora with theoretical training, but lacking experience. The exceptional character of some newcomers could not make up for this drop in the age and experience of the majority of their peers, and the need to become a professional in the field of politics could usually prove time-consuming and negatively affect professional accumulation. When this occurred in local and regional fora, dominated by intellectuals less well trained and less capable than the elite, this only heightened its impact on the administration’s organisation and functioning. Certainly, until in-depth research can be carried out throughout the Central European region, such assumptions remain speculative.

It goes without saying that the fourteen papers presented above tackle only a small part of the broad subject of the history of modern political elites in Central and Eastern Europe. When we started this project, we set out to gather, as far as possible, works on the former Habsburg Empire and the national neighbouring states, but the difficulties this imposed and especially the lack of time proved to be a much bigger hurdle than we had anticipated. Luckily, the topic diversity

and the great geographic area covered by the studies partially make up for the absence of articles on the Southern Slavic regions. Moreover, the micro-monographic character and focus of the articles included led to some good case studies. These allow us to compare the development and behaviour of political elites in various Central European regions in a time frame marked by numerous radical changes at political, social, economic and ideological levels. We can only hope that our initiative and the authors' efforts will provide readers with diverting texts and researchers with useful references.

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