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POLITICAL REPRESENTATION AT THE HUNGARIAN DIETS
BETWEEN 1687 AND 1765

Dissertation abstracts

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I. Literature review

Realizing how important it is to gather the historical sources for the study of Hungarian Diets, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences' Committee on History launched a subseries within the *Monumenta Hungariae Historica* series, entitled *Monumenta Comititalia*. In the introduction of the first volume published in 1874 Vilmos Fraknói, the editor, pointed out that the Assemblies and their decisions besides their political impact had a social and educational influence as well; therefore the investigation of the Diets was of paramount importance. The Committee made its aim to explore and publish critical editions of all the sources related to and the laws passed at the Diets. They wished to continue the work of Márton György Kovachich, who had already begun to collect the legal sources at the beginning of the 19th century. The Committee members gathered material in town, county, and state archives, also copying or ordering copies of the documents preserved abroad. The series began with the publication of documents from after 1526 because of Kovachich's already published corpus of the earlier material which the Committee's work could not significantly augment. They also reviewed earlier source editions, which often did not satisfy scientific requirements. Between 1874 and 1917 twelve volumes were prepared containing sources up to 1606. The Academy's Committee on History decided to continue the series in 1962. For this they formed an editorial board consisting of Győző Ember from the National Archives, György Székely from the Hungarian Historical Society, Ágnes R. Várkonyi from the Academy's Institute of History, György Vértes from the Library of Parliament, and Zsigmond Pál Pach. They started to gather and copy the material held by Hungarian institutions and cooperation was started with the Austrian State Archives in Vienna and the Historical Institute of the Romanian Academy. Within the framework of the latter cooperation Zsigmond Jakó began to catalogue the sources to be found in Romania. All the sources written between 1607 and 1790 were gathered, but because of the documents' great number only those were published which, "besides referring to the Diet, contained significant data related to political thought, to the solutions of the country's main problems and to standpoints in political, social, etc. controversies."

As a result of these endeavours several source collections were published. Thus István Hajnal edited and published the documents referring to the Diet planned for 1642, a Diet, which was however cancelled. In the introductory study to this edition he presented the negotiations preparing the Diet mainly focusing on the role of the Palatine. Katalin Péter described the way in which the representation of political power relations forged an alliance against the ruler between the estates despite their denominational differences at the Diet of 1646–1647. Mihály Zsilinszky at the end of the 19th century compiled the history of the Diet of 1708 held in Pozsony (today: Bratislava). Ferenc Salamon presented the Diet of 1741, focusing on the coronation of Maria Theresa. Two works of political history were published about the Diet of 1764–1765, one signed by Mihály Horváth, the other by Benedek Konrád Stefancsik. The activity of this Diet was analyzed in detail by Henrik Marczali, Győző Ember, Ákos Timon, and Ferenc Eckhart.

The past few decades saw the emergence of the cultural historical perspective in political analysis all over Europe. This method was used by Barbara Stollberg-Rilinger when she attempted to define precisely the Holy Roman Empire and to describe the representation of imperial elections. Hungarian scholars have also begun to show interest in this method. Besides the analysis of 18th century Diets the social scientific examination of the persons and estates invited to these gatherings as well as the exploration of the assemblies' cultural history has also started. Joachim Balchke investigated the political collaboration between the Catholic bishops and the monarchs, while András Forgó studied the religious orders present at the Diets and their political role. Ákos Barcsay compared the coronations of Charles III, Maria Theresa, and Leopold II. János Kalmár examined the Diets called together in the first half of the 18th century, especially the Diet of 1708. He also analyzed the coronation of Queen Elisabeth Christine in 1714. István M. Szijártó prepared a monograph on the institutional history and activity of 18th century Diets, discussing the persons who sat at the Lower Table, the representatives of counties, towns, and the substitutes for absentees. The representation of 16–17th century coronation ceremonies was studied by Géza Pálffy. Collaboration between historians and scholars from neighbouring fields of study resulted in the presentation of coronation flags

and coins.

II. Methodology

The research finds regarding the institutional and political history of Hungarian Diets are being enriched by the exploration of the symbols that can be found in political communication. These result in a thorough understanding of political culture. My dissertation examines, following the methodology of cultural and social history, the political representations discernible in the ceremonies of the Hungarian Diets held between 1687 and 1764. The aims of the thesis were: to describe the order of ceremonies, the visualization of symbols in the form of garments and the decoration of the buildings lining the route of the royal procession; to scrutinize the persons entrusted with ceremonial tasks; to examine the political language of the orations; as well as to present the negotiations preceding the ceremonies. By analyzing the reception of the monarch, the opening of the Diet, the coronation of King and Queen, the election of the Palatine, and the sanctioning of laws one can understand how the people of the age perceived themselves and their environment. The course of the ceremonies as well as the symbols used in them were almost unchanged signifying continuity and legitimacy, while the rare and small modifications also clarified the changes in the political power balance. When analyzing the ceremonies I tried to find out the political message behind the symbols used in them and the political reasons which lead to their modification. I also applied the methodology of social history in the analysis of the ceremonies, since the persons representing the Diet and the Estates at certain ceremonies were selected from among those present at the Diet. In case of these persons not only the family relations needed investigation, but also the political groups they represented. During the 18th century political influence shifted from the Higher Table towards the Lower Table and the counties. My main question related to the social historical approach was: for what reasons were the persons participating in the deputations selected? The sources contain no information on this. However, on the basis of the lists one may conjecture that representatives from the Lower Table were re-elected for certain ceremonial tasks because they stood for certain political groups, while in case

of the aristocracy the political influence of the family determined the choice most often.

The orations held at the ceremonies were created by using the devices of rhetoric, the orators sometimes achieving quite artistic effects. The content and the system of concepts to be found in these speeches mirror the audience's expectations. When presenting the ceremonial addresses, I inquired into the political events and changes of the given period as well as into the rhetorical devices applied to express them. Since not all the orations survived and some have only been preserved in an abridged form, neither the analysis, nor the results could be comprehensive. Nevertheless, even a partial analysis of the political communication discernable in the addresses led to important observations.

The sources of the thesis were the parliamentary diaries, the official *ordos*, and the documents of the conferences preceding the ceremonies. These documents are to be found in the National Archives of Hungary, in the Manuscript Collection of the National Széchényi Library, and in the Austrian State Archives in Vienna. The parliamentary diaries contain the delegates' notes and reports. They often describe how the planned ceremonies were realized, and offer details missing from the official documents. Examining these one can obtain a better view on how political communication was interpreted in the age.

III. Results

The period between 1687 and 1764 brought important changes in Hungarian history. Symbolical communication in parliamentary ceremonies was an instrument for formulating responses to these transformations. The Hungarian kings' order of succession was modified twice: at the diet of 1687 the Estates gave up their right to elect the King of Hungary freely and accepted the hereditary rule of the Habsburg dynasty as well as the principle of male primogeniture. Female succession was also recognized in 1722 when the Estates accepted the *Pragmatica Sanctio*. The European wars of succession caused by this act also influenced the operation of the Hungarian Diet. The ceremonies connected with the Assemblies offered possibilities of political representation to both parties outside the conferences which showed

the real power relations. The royal entry and coronation stand out among the representational occasions, since ambassadors of European countries also participated at these, who could also perceive and interpret the symbolical communication.

The addresses to the monarch, besides containing praise, also reflect on political changes, such as the issue of hereditary rule, the Rákóczi Movement at the beginning of the 18th century and the period of consolidation following it. The causes for convening the Diet were also discussed in the speeches. The structure and the rhetorical elements of the orations underwent a change in the mid 18th century. Up to 1741 the addresses contain several quotations and paraphrases from the Bible, from antique works or from liturgical texts. After 1741 a change is discernible; orators no longer used quotations and similes to describe political events or to praise the monarchs. Besides conforming to the changing rhetorical fashions, the orators also shaped their speeches according to the targeted audience. Even before 1741 there was a difference between the addresses made for royal entries and for other ceremonial occasions. Orations embellished with many quotations, similes, and figures of speech were due to monarchs arriving to the kingdom and emphasized the importance of the ceremony. The weight of the event was conferred not only by the – occasionally first – meeting between King and Estates, but also by the presence of several foreign ambassadors, who compiled notes and reports for European kingdoms or even for newspapers. The addresses held at the Diet were simpler; some sections, topics were not elaborated on, e. g. hereditary rule or the monarch's virtues. These orations presented the content prescribed in the directory, but they were less ceremonial and solemn than the speeches of the royal entry being adapted to the given occasion. For example when the royal proposal were presented, orators encouraged successful discussions, urged the Diet to collaborate with their monarch and to strive for the common good.

The election of the palatine, the ceremony of presenting the King's proposals made possible a symbolical "exchange" between the King and the Estates of Hungary, while the first session and the closing of the National Assembly established communication between the two houses. Consequently, in order to reach a thorough understanding of the political

communication, it is necessary to examine, besides the representations the King and the Estates directed to one another, the debate over precedence between the different political groups as well. The debate over precedence is perceivable in the changing composition of the deputation welcoming the monarch or the royal commissioners. As the power of the Lower Table grew, its political groups tried to gain representation in these deputations, their attempts often generating debates.

The examination of the persons fulfilling ceremonial tasks has also revealed the political power relations. The ceremonies at the Diets were a representational occasion not only for lay dignitaries, but also for prelates for whom it was of similar importance to preserve and display their status. This is exemplified by several Archbishops of Esztergom, who entrusted the conducting of the liturgy to their suffragan bishops, but performed other ceremonial tasks themselves (e.g. orations). The Archbishops of Esztergom were followed in the hierarchy by the Archbishops of Kalocsa, who believed that they had the right to act as a substitute in these cases; however they could not enforce their view in the course of the debate.

The coronation ceremony received a detailed discussion in the thesis. The ceremonial order, fixed centuries before and thus far basically unchanged, suffered a significant modification in the 18th century. The acclamation pronounced at the coronation was cancelled, thus removing from the ceremony the Estates' approval of the monarch, an element which alluded to the Estates' right to elect the King freely. The rest of the secular ceremony remained unchanged. Nevertheless, the liturgical texts show some small differences compared to the *Pontificale Romanum*, the episcopal office book which codified the coronation liturgy. A comparison between the pontifical and the archival sources revealed that some expressions expressing the monarch's hereditary right to rule, taken from medieval ordos were inserted into the prayer text referring to the sovereign. By this the order of succession was made clear for all persons present in the coronation church.

The other sumptuous ceremony was the royal entry. Its main components remained unchanged for centuries. Two elements, the parade of the troops equipped and maintained by the nobility at the border of the country and the gun salutes fired by the burgers were discontinued because

of safety reasons following the anti-Habsburg movements. The monarch's arrival to the Hungarian Kingdom and to the coronation town, Pozsony had four stops: small deputations welcomed the sovereign at Wolfsthal, at the border of the Kingdom, at the gates of the town, and finally in the royal castle. The Habsburg monarchs, who also bore the imperial title of the Holy Roman Empire, were accompanied by their court, so that the courtiers may become parts of the rulers' power representation. The garments worn by the participants and the decoration of the buildings lining the route of the procession were parts of the symbolic communication. Maria Theresa simplified the royal entry in 1751 because of financial reasons; she omitted the first station. Since her crowning was followed with interest by other European countries and thus the ceremony gave her an excellent opportunity to display her political power during the War of the Austrian Succession, this change was not implemented at her coronation, but later, with the occasion of a less scrutinized event. Monarchs usually made their appearance at Diets to be crowned. In other cases they delegated royal commissioners. Although these commissioners represented the sovereign, their entry was simpler, with fewer stations. They were saluted only once, on behalf of the Diet on the banks of the Danube. Their place in the hierarchy also differed from the ruler's: once a debate over precedence occurred between them and the Palatine, and the latter prevailed.

The analysis proved the importance of political representation at the Hungarian Diets. It was a tool wielded both by the King and the different political groups of the Estates, and serious debates could arise over the possibility of expressing one's political status.

IV. Papers published on the topic of the dissertation

Az uralkodó bevonulásán elhangzott köszöntőbeszéddek mint politikai reprezentációk [Welcoming orations held during royal entries as political representations]. In: *Hatalmi diskurzusok. A hatalom reprezentációi a tudományokban és a művészetekben*. Szerk. Bíró Csilla, Visy Beatrix. Bibliotheca Nationalis Hungariae, Gondolat Kiadó. Budapest, 2016. (Bibliotheca Scientiae et Artis 8.) 63-71.

A magyar uralkodókoronázás egyházi szertartása a 18. században [The ecclesiastical ceremony of Hungarian royal coronations in the 18th century]. In: *Egyház és reprezentáció a régi Magyarországon*. Szerk. Báthory Orsolya, Kónya Franciska. MTA-PPKE Barokk Irodalom és Lelkiség Kutatócsoport. Budapest, 2016. (Pázmány Irodalmi Műhely Lelkiségtörténeti tanulmányok 12) 121-131.

Ceremoniálne príchody panovníkov do Bratislavy v 18. storočí. In: *Korunovácie a pohreby: Mocenské rituály a ceremónie v ranom novoveku*. Szerk. Tünde Lengyelova, Pálffy Géza. Békéscsaba, Budapest: Historický ústav Filozofického vyskumneho centra Madarskej akademie vied [Historický ústav Filozofického výskumného centra Maďarskej akadémie vied]; Vyskumny ústav Slovakov v Madarsku [Výskumný ústav Slovakov v Maďarsku. 2016. (Kor/ridor knihy; 2.) 69-88. [Fordította: Galina Šándorová]

Királykoronázás eszméje a XVIII. századi magyar rendi gondolkodásban [The idea of royal coronation in the thought of the 18th century Estates]. In: *Eszmetörténeti tanulmányok: Dolgozatok a 2012. november 10-én, Piliscsabán rendezett konferencia előadásaiból*. Szerk. Bojtos Anita, Novotnik Ádám. Budapest-Piliscsaba, 2016. 185-199.

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Ad dignitatem regiam sublevetis. A 18. századi magyar királykoronázások történetéhez [Ad dignitatem regiam sublevetis. On the history of 18th century Hungarian royal coronations]. In: *Az 1712. évi pozsonyi diéta egy ciszterci szerzetes szemével*. Szerk. Forgó András. Pannonhalmi Főapátsági Levéltár, A Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Veszprém Megyei Levéltára. Pannonhalma, Veszprém, 2013. (Fontes ex Archivo

Sancti Martini editi I. / A Veszprém Megyei Levéltár kiadványai 32.), 65-109.

Az 1712. évi királykoronázás [The royal coronation of 1712]. In: *Ius Coronandi. Katalógus az Esztergom-Budapesti Főegyházmegye gyűjteményeinek koronázási emlékeiből rendezett kiállításához*. Szerk.: Hegedűs András. Esztergom, Esztergom-Budapesti Főegyházmegye Főszékesegyházának Kincstára, 2012. 27-33.