

ADMINISTRATION AND THE EXERCISE OF POWER IN THE SZEKLER SEAT OF CIUC, GIURGEU AND CASIN IN THE 18TH CENTURY (1708–1780)

The subject of our research is the functioning of the seats of Ciuc, Giurgeu and Casin between 1708–1780/81: the levels of power, the individual actors and institutions. In our book we reconstructed the official functioning of the chief royal judges between 1708–1781 and the relations between the seats. In addition to exploring the history of events, we sought to answer a number of interrelated questions.

The spatial framework of our study covers the historical regions of Giurgeu (Gheorgheni), Upper-Ciuc, Lower-Ciuc and Casin. The lower limit of the time frame of our study is the year 1708, when the troops of Ferenc Rákóczi II were expelled from Transylvania (except for the Metaliferi Mountains), and the Habsburg power started to rebuild the administration that had been previously disintegrated between 1703 and 1708. 1708 marked the beginning of a completely new era in the political and governmental history of Transylvania, which also had an impact at the level of the jurisdictions. The upper limit of the time frame of our research is 1780/81. With the death of Maria Theresa, an era in the history of the Empire, Transylvania and the region of Ciuc came to an end. The last chief royal judge of this period was Ádám Henter, whose death (1781) coincided with the end of the Queen's reign, only a few months apart. Joseph II's reign, which lasted for a decade, marked a separate period in the history of the region, under the influence of Josephine reforms.

We have examined the differences between the exercise of power by the seat before and after the Habsburgs' takeover, together with the characteristics of chief royal judge's exercise of power. By its tracing the nature over the course of the 18th century, we sought to determine whether changes in the exercise of the power of the chief royal judge and in the characteristics of the office could be detected. In addition to the chief royal judge, we also examined how many levels of power could be identified in the seat and the distribution of offices by level of power. We also considered important to clarify at which levels of power the *primipilii* and the commoners were present. In reconstructing the history of the offices, we sought and interpreted data that sheds light on the characteristics of the offices, their powers and their legal framework. Our basic assumption is that the social conditions and changes in the seat are closely linked to both the exercise of power and the institutional system. In our research, we have examined the details of these relationships in search of answers to the question of what they represent. For each institution, we interrogated the sources on specific questions: what were the characteristics and functioning peculiarities of the seat, the seat assembly and the continuous courts; what was the social stratification of the seat; were the common-

ers and the *primipilii* really displaced from the seat assemblies, as previous research had claimed? It is now almost a truism in the literature that the organization of the continuous courts brought about changes in the judiciary and in the administration. What were these changes at the level of a single jurisdiction? We seek to answer this question in the case of Ciuc. In looking at the offices and institutions of the seat, we could not ignore the composition of the offices. Reconstructing personal careers sheds light on who and which families dominated the scenes of power in the seat. In this context, we would like to find answers to the question of how the office renewals worked and at what level and in what form the central power intervened in their mechanisms. In addition to the organisation of the continuous courts, the establishment of the border guard was another milestone in the life of the Szekler community. Previous research and literature on the organisation of the border guard has mainly focused on the history of the organisation, the military and social aspects, and on the Siculeni-massacre. Less attention has been paid to the administration of the seat and the series of officials that embodied it. In this book, we will examine the events of 1762–1764 in order to answer the question of the impact the military organisation had on the administration and institutions of the seat. And, after the establishment of the border guard, what were the consequences of the new administrative and social situation for the functioning of the seat? How did the former order of the *primipilii* and commoners relate to the exercise of power in the seat and at what level did they remain present in the administrative life of the seat?

We also focus on the functioning, unity and distinctiveness of the four co-seats. We seek answers to the question of how the internal autonomy of the co-seats manifested itself. What were the characteristics of this autonomy and to which institutions were they attached? Also unexplored and unclear in detail is the question of the relationship between a jurisdiction vs. the higher authorities, but also the extent and practice of the higher authorities' involvement in the life of the seats. In order to: grasp the specificities, mechanisms and jurisdictional framework of the exercise of power in the seat; to reconstruct the personal composition of the ruling elite; to get to know the institutional functioning of the seat; we need to examine the following institutions and offices one by one: seat-assembly, main court of the seat, vice-court of the seat, vice-seat-assembly, continuous court, chief royal judge, vice-chief royal judge, notary, assessor, perceptor, inspector commissarius, *stationalis commissarius*. In the context of historical development, our topic has been examined not only from an institutional but also from a social-historical point of view, with a particular emphasis on the archontological and prosopographical approach. On the basis of the sources used in the research, we have compiled a list of officials from Giurgeu, Upper-Ciuc, Lower-Ciuc and Casin.