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*HISTORY. CIVILIZATION. CULTURE* DOCTORAL SCHOOL

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

DOCTORAL THESIS  
RESUMÉ

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**Key words:** Szekler seat of Ciuc, administration, exercise of power, chief royal judge, vice royal judge, notaries, perceptors, assessors, primipilii, the seats justice courts, Gubernium.

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 thesis 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. In our thesis we have not dealt with historical geographical issues, nor have we made the development and changes in the administrative boundaries of the seat the subject of our historical introduction. As the timeframe of our study does not cover the reign and reforms of Joseph II, we have not examined the question of the changes in the administrative boundaries as a consequence of his reign.

The lower limit of the time frame of our study is the year 1708, which is justified by the fact that 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 disintegrated between 1703 and 1708. Zsolt Trócsányi regarded 1708 as the beginning of the second Habsburg establishment, as distinct from the first period between 1690 and 1703. 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 Kuruc officials who had fled or died were replaced by new imperial officials as early as 1708-1709. This was also the case in Ciuc with the accession of János Kászoni.

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 life of the region, with the influence of Josephine reforms.

We have examined the differences between the exercise of power by the seat before and after the Habsburgs and the characteristics of the exercise of power by the chief royal judge. By tracing the nature of the exercise of the power of the chief royal judge 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 it 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 shed 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 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 are.

For each institution, we interrogated the sources on specific questions: what were the characteristics and peculiarities of the functioning of the seat, the seat assembly and the continuous courts, what was the social stratification of the seat, were the commoners 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 organisation of the continuous courts brought about changes in the judiciary and 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 the Siculeni-massacre. Less attention has been paid to the administration of the seat and the cadres of officials that embodied it. In this thesis, we will examine the events of 1762-1764 in order to answer the question of the impact of the military organisation 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, and 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 and the higher authorities, and 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, station-  
alis commissarius.

From a methodological point of view, Sándor Pál-Antal's approach to the history of offices, functions and institutions is a good example to follow, as he examined each of the offices and institutions, their relationship to each other and their role in the functioning of the seat in the light of primary sources.

Dáné Veronka's study "*The officials of Torda County during the principedom's reign*" and "*His Excellency the Prince's court decides the following*" served as further methodological parallels in the study of officials and institutions. In the *Court Practice of Torda County during the Principality*, when presenting the composition of the officials, Dáné's main criteria were origin, wealth, education, skills, career and contacts. In the case of the Transylvanian counties (especially Torda), Dáné also looked at the levels of power and the hierarchical order of the offices, identifying the hierarchy of the officers: chief bailiff, chief royal judge, notary, deputy bailiff, vice-magistrate. The notary was closer to the chief bailiff than to the deputy bailiff in terms of the exercise of power and influence in the county, mainly due to his qualifications. The same conclusion was reached in the case of Ciuc, that the chief notary of the seat belonged to the level of power of the chief royal judge.

In our thesis, we have only adapted our research to the methodological framework of Veronka Dáné, and as far as our resources and the extent of source processing allowed, we have also tried to take into account certain elements of her system of criteria.

We used a qualitative approach in our research, which was framed within the framework of elite research and institutional history. We have examined our topic in the following ways:

1. Characteristics of offices and institutions;
2. The mechanism for filling posts;
3. Staff composition and careers;
4. The relationship between the seat and higher authorities;
5. The relationship between social status and the exercise of power;

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. The completeness of the lists of names and dates of office is commensurate with the extent to which the available source material has been processed. The identification of each individual seat official by name will be carried out in later stages of the research. As the source material progressed, we tried to identify the vice-chief royal

judge, the notary, the assessors and the perceptor for each year, based on the correspondence, assembly and legislative protocols, decrees, wills, official certificates, pay slips, royal appointments, official petitions, private correspondence and other types of sources. The commissarii were more difficult, as they are less frequently mentioned by name in the sources. In addition to the officials, we have also listed the persons who held some kind of seat or continuous court post and we have met them by name in our research. Examples include the procurator of the court or the ianitor (doorkeeper).

In the course of our work, we also used the method of prosopography, which emerged as a tool for political history, but is now mainly used in social history research. By their very nature, these two fields of research have provided useful approaches to the study of the careers of the officials of the Szeklers and the links between their social affiliations and their position in the power hierarchy. We are thinking here in particular of the position of the primipilii, whose status as officials is one of the important issues of the period. The group studied was defined along the lines of the above-mentioned offices, i.e. all those who held at least one of them. Using the prosopographical method, we have tried, as far as the sources allow, to gather information on the career of each official: when and which offices they held, whether they held special posts (diocesan, gubernatorial, chancellorship, court embassy), and, in the case of the assessors, their social status, since assessoratus was traditionally considered a primipilii and armalistic post. The scarcity and randomness of the source base limits such an analysis for Ciuc. György Kövér's observation that more sources have been preserved on actors belonging to higher social strata and levels of power than on officials of lower status is particularly valid for the jurisdiction under study. Even in the case of the former category, however, there is no guarantee that we will find sources and answers to the aspects of our study that we have chosen. Kövér's point echoes Lawrence Stone's warning that the success of a prosopographical study depends on the availability of sufficient sources and data of sufficient quality on the group under study. It is possible - as was the case in our study referring to the seat of Ciuc - that we have a wealth of data on some actors, but no data at all or nothing to the point of uselessness on others. We have used the above-mentioned prosopographical procedures to good effect in the study of the personal composition of the offices and the reconstruction of their careers, but the type of sources and the extent to which they have been processed have not allowed us to create and analyse the final prosopographical product, the personal data archive. The presentation of the personnel composition of the offices, the description of the careers of the traceable actors and the lists of officials we compiled resulted in a specific mixture of prosopography and archontology.

At the beginning of our thesis we formulated the questions we were looking for answers to in our research. Some questions were answered satisfactorily, others only partially. In the case of the latter, we believe that the partial results indicate the need to extend and deepen the research. After all,

the questions we have answered also give rise to new ones, the sources we have uncovered prepare us to explore new ones, and draw our attention to the importance of more in-depth research.

In the course of our research, we sought to answer the question of what changes were observed between the exercise of power by the seat before and after the Habsburg establishment, what were the characteristics of the exercise of power by the chief royal judge, and how the characteristics of the office changed during the 18th century. We believe that these questions should be treated as a whole, since the answers to them cannot be separated. The conclusions outlined are drawn from the data collected, with all data supported by primary sources.

At the beginning of the 18th century, as a consequence of the Habsburg establishment, slow but gradual processes of transformation began in the power mechanisms of the Szekler seats. This slow but fundamental change affected primarily the apex of the seat's administration and executive power, the institution of the chief royal judge, but by the second half of the century it had spread to all levels of the institutional system. A marked difference could be discerned between the exercise of power and the perception of power by the chief royal judges of the Habsburg period and the preceding period. The office of the chief royal judge of the principedom period was rooted in and relied on the local elite and represented mainly their interests. His election is clearly a reflection of the will of the seat, even if exceptions are occasionally found. In contrast, the office of chief royal judge in the Habsburg period (taking into account the effect of the abolition of the office of chief captain) became primarily an institution of central power. The mechanism, and even the name, of the election of the chief royal judge was significantly transformed, merging with a new procedure, the *candidatio*. From the 18th century onwards, the intention of the central power became dominant in the election of the chief royal judge. In the procedure for the renewal of the office of chief royal judge, three changes can be identified in comparison with the previous period: the Gubernatorial nomination is reviewed by the Ministerial Conference in Vienna, on the basis of the Court Chancellery and its opinion, and the appointment is approved and signed by the Emperor. Although the assembly of the seat ranks the nominees, indicating the number of votes they receive, the ranking, and even the composition of the staff, is reviewed by the Gubernium, which can change it at its discretion. However, the Gubernatorial nomination was not a *fait accompli*. Since the last word was spoken in Vienna, the aspirants for the office of chief royal judge, with their supporters and connections in the imperial city, could change the outcome of the two candidacies (as we have already mentioned in the case of István Daniel). Thus, compared to the procedure for the election of the chief royal judge in the time of the Principality, there were significant changes in the 18th century. These new mechanisms of the renewal were not unknown to the previous literature, but our research has expanded and detailed the process, thus enriching the basic research on the subject.



From the point of view of the exercise of power, the first half of the 18th century was also a period of reorganization for the seat of Ciuc. This also coincided with a change in career strategies influenced by the changing political situation. From the second decade of the 18th century, the Szekler (land owner) elite clearly followed a Habsburg orientation, with some of them breaking with the old patterns of career building even before Ferenc Rákóczi II, while others only seized the opportunities offered by the Viennese court after 1708-1711. Ferenc Lázár's reign and the principle of power he represented was a revival of the pre-Habsburg localism that briefly interrupted this process, but after his death the transformation continued with Kálnoki.

The functioning of the power of the chief royal judge is inseparable from the direction of national and imperial politics and the interrelationships between the elites who exercise and increasingly usurp power. The power of the chief royal judge was subordinated to national and imperial politics and interest groups, as the selection of the chief royal judge moved out of the traditional seated framework and into the decision-making level of the governorate and then Vienna. This does not, of course, mean that the seat assembly was completely disempowered in the process of the election of the new chief royal judge. In some cases, local will and the will of the central power met (examples in our research period include the second election of Ferenc Lázár, Pál Haller, Pál Bornemisza, Ádám Henter and László Sándor). The intention of the central power in relation to the chief officers was, in turn, largely influenced by the tactics of the national aristocratic elite and its interest groups, their short- and long-term strategy to secure power, which reached the imperial elite attending the Ministerial Conference meetings through the Court Chancellery or even bypassing it, with the help of extensive networks of contacts. The details of the rise to power of János Bornemisza, János Haller and Ferenc Kálnoki to the chief royal judge support our above statement (Elek Orbán in the case of the seat of Aries and István Daniel in the case of the seat of Odorhei). Through official subordination and networks of connections (political, family, client-patronage), this Viennese and national elite also influenced the local elite in the seat (landed gentry, wealthy lords with noble titles), sometimes directly, sometimes indirectly. The existence and the nature of this influence could only be perceived and indicated during our research: the opposition of some of the seat's elite and the commoners to Bornemisza, János Haller and Ferenc Kálnoki, but also signs of support from other parts of the seat's elite (including the commoners) towards the same persons. In addition to the ever-present divisions among the Szekler elite, the influence of factors outside the seat is also suspected, but further research is needed to explore and identify these. Exploring the networks of relationships and client-patron relationships could provide answers to the question of how the aforementioned influence of the Viennese and national elite is realised at the level of the seat, broken down by individuals and events.

When examining the functioning of the chief royal judges of the Szekler region, it is important to note that it would be a mistake to interpret the Szekler chief royal judges after the Habsburg establishment as puppets of the central power. They had a definite vision of the exercise of power, they acted according to their clearly defined, delimited, personal, but at the same time orderly interests, they built their own careers, in the course of which they successfully exploited the opportunities provided by Habsburg rule. In addition, they were able to build up their own room for manoeuvre within the increasingly centralised framework of the monarch's power, often following and using absolutist models (e.g. János Bornemisza, Ferenc Kálnoki). However, their autonomy sometimes came up against the limits of the central power, which could generate conflicts between the chief royal judges and the national authorities (Kálnoki is a good example, but so was István Daniel of Odorhei).

The period from 1763 to 1764 was a milestone in the life of Ciuc. The circumstances and consequences of the establishment of the frontier guards had an impact on the social and administrative life of the seat until 1848. This coincided with the organisation of the continuous courts. The new administrative and legislative institution opened a new era in the history of the exercise of power in the seat.

Before 1764, the chief royal judges enjoyed a relatively wide margin of manoeuvre, freedom of action and a looser dependency relationship with the chief authorities. After 1764, however, this changed, and the royal judges were subject to much stricter and more systematic control by the central power, which was mainly reflected in the increase and regularization of gubernatorial supervision and control. This was mainly due to the establishment of permanent courts, since the chief royal judges, as presidents of the court, had to attend its meetings regularly and could only be absent with good cause and with the permission of the Gubernium. The regular reports and extracts from the minutes of the permanent courts sent to the Gubernium also made the work of the chief royal judges much more thoroughly and regularly verifiable, and the permanent court could react and reflect more frequently. There is a striking difference between the chief royal judges in the first and second half of the century: the former are sometimes seen as self-righteous, free-acting local 'lesser kings' who sometimes even defy the orders of the Gubernium or the court (see Ferenc Kálnoki), while the latter are obedient, 'short leashed' officials who even need the permission of the Gubernium to travel to their private estates for Easter. Simplifying the phenomenon, one could say, somewhat exaggeratingly, that after 1764 the chief royal judge became a bureaucrat.

Through the exploration and study of primary sources, we have been able to reconstruct the careers of the chief royal judges between 1708-1781, the relations between the seats, the circumstances and consequences of their accession to the office, the characteristics of their exercise of power and many details that were previously unknown in the literature. We believe that all this constitutes basic research and will help further research, as we have succeeded in outlining the main features of

the office of the chief royal judge and the exercise of power associated with it during the period. We have gained a good insight into the scope of the office of the chief royal judge, its powers and the flexibility and gradual consolidation of the limits of these powers. We have outlined how and to what extent the personal goals, methods of exercising power or personality traits of some chief royal judges fitted within the legal or perceived legal framework of the office. We have outlined the relationships between the chief royal judges and the society of the seat, the officers of the seat, the Gubernium, the Chancellery, the General Headquarters and other national offices.

The distribution of local power is also linked to the transformation of socio-economic relations in the seat. The exercise of power in the seat was distributed at different levels and to different degrees among the seat's official elite. This distribution of power was also a function of social status. With the increase in the number of armalists and the social and administrative upgrading of the noble letters, the power of the primipilii was reduced, but not completely eliminated. The extent of this decline will be quantified by identifying the exact and as complete as possible number of the officials from the ranks of the primipilii and of the armalist. From the reign of Maria Theresa onwards, the ennoblement of the primipilii became more common. Several families that played an important role in the administration of the seat were granted noble titles: Czikó of Mindszent, Endes of Cíkzsentszentsimon, Lázár of Taploca, Kovács of Bánkfalva, Lestyán of Cíkzsentszentkirály, Puskás of Gyergyóditró, Zöld of Cíkmadéfalva, Csedő of Cíkzsentygyörgya and others. With the acquisition of the armorial letter, governmental positions and posts became available to well-connected and ambitious young people from the seat (we find people from the seat of Ciuc in the staff of the Transylvanian Court Chancellery, the Gubernium, the Exactoratus, Commissariatus and the Royal Court. This process was one of the main reasons for the loss of power of the primipilii. The rise of the wealthier and well-placed primipilii families from their former social strata led to the weakening of the primipilii order. The other reason for the loss of the primipilii's weight was economic: the enforced taxation of the first half of the century and the constant presence of the occupying imperial army (not to mention the devastating plagues and years of infertile harvests) destroyed a large part of the wealthier middle classes of primipilii and commoner families and farms. The increasing burden, the impoverishment, the growing number of people exempted from various taxes and burdens, the growing role of armalists and landed gentry in the exercise of power in the seat, triggered repeated protests and movements of discontent among the horse-owning classes. When our resources allowed, we have addressed these social problems and tried to place them in the proper context of the exercise of power and administration.

Among the main causes of the dissatisfaction movement of the primipilii, we could identify the loss of weight of the social class in the exercise of power in the seat. In the early part of the century, this phenomenon can be traced mainly to the conflict with the armalists over the appointment of the

assessors. We have also seen that the local elite, and the once powerful primipilii class, were not passive observers of the changes that were taking place. In the middle of the century, a new movement of discontent emerged, demanding the extension of the right to hold office to the primipilii. Following the organisation of the frontier guard, the armed primipilii and commoners formed a new social and legal category, the military order. It can be stated that the military order did not completely break away from the seat's society but remained institutionally linked to the seat through the assembly of the seat, the joint trials that took place on the courts and the military assessors.

The question of the relationship between the primipilii and the exercise of power by the seat is far from being resolved and clarified. The evolution of the social and administrative role and weight of the primipilii cannot be reconstructed by examining a single jurisdiction. We are faced with a question that would require a socio-economic and administrative history of the entire social group of the Szekler primipilii. Our research has therefore only achieved partial, initial results in this area, but it is intended to indicate the inevitability of research in this area in the context of the 18th century Szekler administrative and social history and elite research.

Examining the levels and processes of the exercise of power in the Ciuc region, we can see that at the beginning of the century the Habsburg power did not directly interfere in the internal relations within the seat, but indirectly, by using and exploiting internal forces, shaped the traditional institutional framework inherited from the principdom era, which was becoming increasingly obsolete. The career strategies adapted to the new power structure were successful for those who were able to seize the new opportunities offered. There is a mutual interdependence between the elites (also) exercising local power and the early modern state. The elite gained new career prospects, while the state was able to control its most remote areas more and more effectively, ensuring its main objectives of maintaining the army and continuity of taxation. The effectiveness of state power *"depended on the reconciliation of central and local interests."* From the reign of Maria Theresa onwards, the central power's interference in the life of the jurisdictions increased. The traditional administrative framework was modified only in small steps before 1764: from the 1740s, gubernatorial commissioners appeared at the assemblies where the chief royal judges were elected, and from the 1750s the candidature procedure was extended to include the vice-regal magistrates, increasing their term of office to two years. Pál Haller (with the agreement of the Gubernium) attempted to unify the courts of the co-seats and unify the seat elections, taking them out of the hands of the co-seat assemblies and transferring them to the power of the main seat assembly. It has been seen that the latter two attempts were unsuccessful and provoked considerable protests from the co-seats. Ten years later, however, Haller's reforms were implemented in the framework of the continuous courts.

The vague but real manifestations of consciousness of social order and opposition that emerged during the periodic resistance to change were not only in defence of the orders institutions and rights,

but also of the specific and collective "idea of freedom" of the natio Siculica. The rhetoric of defending 'ancient Szekler freedom and privileges' was already anachronistic during Rákóczi's War of Independence, and within the Habsburg Monarchy it became increasingly unacceptable to the central power from the second half of the century onwards and an obstacle to be avoided by the centralising state.

As for the levels of power and the offices associated with them, we have identified the most important characteristics of the offices, the specificities of the powers and the system of office relations. If we consider the seat as a spatially bounded human community, we can identify the village administration and its actors (village magistrate, jurors, notary) at the lowest level of power. If we look at the seat as an administrative entity and a national political factor, the village magistrates are no longer part of the seat's exercise of power. Although the village magistrates were the members of the seat assemblies, which played an important role in the administration of the jurisdiction, and even had the right to vote, they cannot be considered as actors in the exercise of seat power, since their administrative powers extended to the boundaries of the villages they represented. In the seat assemblies they represented the taxpaying free class, which thus indirectly participated in the exercise of seat power, but their village leaders - unlike the seat officials who also participated in the seat assembly - did not have any co-seat or all-seat jurisdiction. By seat power exercisers, we mean those actors who had some administrative and/or judicial power over at least one or all of the co-seats. The jurisdiction of a vice-royal judge, a notary, assessors and inspector commissaries (except when a commissioner of inspectors was active in the whole seat) was extended to a co-seat. The jurisdiction of the perceptors was extended to two seats (tax administration, like commissariat, was considered part of the administration - this is confirmed by the fact that the perceptors were already seated on the continuous courts, but not on the previous main seat courts), and the chief royal judge and the chief notary had all-seat jurisdiction. As we have seen in the chapter on the vice-royal judges, the chief royal judge or the Gubernium had the right to appoint a vice-royal judge to head the whole seat (after 1764, the Vice/Permanent Chair of the court could be held by the vice royal judges selected for that purpose, and even the notary, the perceptor or even ana could replace the chief royal judge - no examples of the latter were found before 1764). We know for certain that the substitution of assessors for the chief royal judge was not regular, because when it occurred the Gubernium demanded an explanation from the seat. The official who replaced the chief royal judge exercised all-seat jurisdiction (except for the presidency of the main seat court before 1764). During the period of the continuous courts, the official title of the deputy chief royal judge was *substitutus/interimaris praeses*. The deputy president of the court had jurisdiction only over his own court, unlike the chief royal judge, who presided over both courts of the seat of Ciuc. The chief royal judge usually resided at the Ciuc-Casin court, while the vice-presidency of the Giurgeu board was held by the vice-judge there. The vice-judges, like the

assessors and notaries, exercised all-seat jurisdiction when the chief judge assigned them to the main seat court as associate judges.

On the basis of our data, we have identified the following levels of power: the highest level or first line included the chief royal judge; the second level included the vice-royal judges and the chief notary of the seat; the third line included the assessors, the perceptors and the inspector commissarius(s). Since the stationary commissarii were subordinate to the inspectors, they could be placed in the fourth tier. The order of power at the associate level varies from the first to the second, with the vice-royal judge and the notary.

We also made a number of observations on the functioning of institutions and offices, revealing several specificities that have not been reported in the literature on the subject. We have expanded and detailed the responsibilities and jurisdictional characteristics of the various offices. In the case of the vice-royal judges, the main roles of the office have been defined and described. The previous literature has so far given only a superficial and general description of the 18th century characteristics of the office. In this thesis, we have detailed the administrative, judicial and border protection powers and functions of the vice-royal judges. We have shown that, although they did have a great deal of influence in the seat (especially in periods without a chief royal judge), their exercise of power was limited by the Gubernium, which regularly and in detail interfered in the work of the vice-royal judges and in the life of the seat. We have also shown that the Gubernium played a much greater role in the functioning of the seat(s) than research has previously thought.

For each of these posts, we have also described the composition of the staff. Based on the available data, we have been able to identify a number of officials from the seat. We have also reconstructed the career paths of the officials who have been in office for a longer period of time and who have played a more significant role in the life of the seat.

In parallel with the officials, we also looked at the institutional background. We have clarified the social composition of the seat assembly, dispelling the earlier misconception that, like the seat of Mures, the commoners and the primipilii were displaced from the seat assemblies at the beginning of the 18th century, which thus became noble institutions. This process did not take place in the case of Ciuc during the 18th century. Even after the organisation of the border guards, the former primipilii and pixidarii were not excluded from the seat assemblies, and the former order of the primipilii was represented by its assessors even at the continuous courts. One of our important conclusions is that the process of the reorganization of power in Szeklerland cannot be reconstructed along the lines of the Mures-parallel, as it has been presented in the literature so far.

We have also established the relationship between the general assembly of the seat and the chief royal judges, and we can observe the absolute predominance of the latter. We have detailed the powers and functions of the seat assembly: its activities in the areas of finance, taxes, its role in the election

and appointment of emissaries to the general assembly of Transylvania, the procedure for issuing noble certificates, and the role of the renewal of the office. In the latter case, it was clarified that only those officials whose jurisdiction covered the whole seat (chief royal judge, notary-general, inspector commissarius - when there was a single commissioner in the seat) or at least two associate seats (perceptor) were elected at the seat assembly. Vice royal judges, notaries and assessors were elected at the level of the associate judges. From 1764 onwards, the autonomy of the co-seats was considerably reduced, and the elections to the co-seat assembly were abolished along with the vice courts, since, from the time of the establishment of the continuous courts, the entire seat election took place at the seat assembly. Two distinct types of seat assemblies were also identified: ordinary and extraordinary seat assemblies. The former category included assemblies that met three, four or even more times a year to discuss administrative and legal matters, while the latter included the general assembly to elect (candidate) and inaugurate the chief royal judge. The latter type could also be called an extraordinary, ceremonial assembly. With regard to the financial resources of the seat assembly, we have learned that before the reign of Maria Theresa, as in the case of the seat, the expenses (food, wine, accommodation) were covered mainly by the seat taxpayers and the settlements, and from the 1740s onwards the amount of money to be spent on the seat assembly was centrally determined and had to be provided from the seat treasury. In the course of our study, we have also paid attention to the relationship between the seat assembly and the Gubernium. We have found that the Gubernium extended its influence to the seat assembly. The High Authority often by-passed the chief royal judge and entered into direct contact with the assembly, as it did with the vice royal judges. It could interfere in the proceedings of the assembly, forbid it from sitting and give it instructions.

We also consider it an important achievement to demonstrate the existence of co-seat assemblies. In previous literature, no attention has been paid to these particular assemblies, which were one of the cornerstones of the separate status and a certain degree of autonomy of the seats, and which regulated the internal life of the seats. It was at these meetings that the statutes of the co-seats were adopted and, until 1764, the co-seat officials were elected. The assemblies of the co-seats were related to the vice courts, as were the seat assemblies to the main seat court and may have been separated from each other at some point during the principality. After the establishment of the continuous courts, the vice courts and the main seat courts ceased to exist, and the election of officials was removed from the jurisdiction of the co-seats and became the responsibility of the joint seat assembly. At the present state of our sources, we do not yet have an answer as to whether the co-seats survived the establishment of the continuous courts, but since the new courts effectively absorbed the functions of the co-seats, vice courts and main seat courts, we believe that the separate meetings of the co-seats no longer had any reason to exist. In our paper we have outlined the basic features of the functioning of the co-seats' assemblies, established the location of the assemblies and identified some of their

powers. In spite of the scarcity of sources, we consider it necessary to continue research on the assemblies not only in the case of Ciuc, but also in the case of the other Szekler jurisdictions.

We have also uncovered new data on the functioning of the main seat courts that have not been previously reported in the literature. We have shown that there was not a single court of appeal, to which the litigants from each of the vice courts appealed their cases, but that the chief royal judge and his colleagues held separate courts of appeal (*derékszék*) in each vice court. The separate status of the main seat courts, together with the vice courts and the co-seat assemblies, embodied a kind of separation, a kind of autonomy, of the co-seats. This was not only an administrative feature, but also a matter of principle for the Szekler population, a guarantee of the '*ancient Szekler freedom*'. It is in the light of this mentality that one can understand the resentment (in the case of the seat of Odorhei, vehement protest) that the erection of permanent courts and the abolition of the old administrative and legislative framework aroused in the Szeklers. We have also outlined the attempts of some chief royal judges (Ferenc Lázár, Pál Haller) to "unite" the main seat courts for a short period of time, but these proved to be short-lived attempts due to the resistance of the seat. We have also explored the characteristics of the composition of the courts and have learned that the chief royal judge appointed the members of the courts from among the officials of the co-seats on the basis of his personal choice and preference. We have also been able to add new information to our research on the time and place of the court of appeal and its relationship with the higher authorities.

Our research has given us a good insight into the relationship between the seat and the central authorities. In particular, the official and sometimes semi-official relationship between the seat and the Gubernium has been clearly established. Throughout the century, we observe a strong control of the seat by the Gubernium, which varied in intensity and nature from period to period. Before 1764, this control was more irregular and looser than after the establishment of the perpetual courts. Before 1764 (and more emphatically before 1750), the Gubernium was in direct official contact with the seat officials, sometimes by-passing the chief royal judge, who was seldom absent from the seat. For the vice royal judges, this governmental supervision was two-faced: it restricted, controlled, censured and prosecuted them, but at the same time it provided them with advice and guidance in the performance of their official duties. With the reign of Maria Theresa, the functioning of the jurisdictions became increasingly centrally regulated. In the case of Ciuc, the increase in the presence of the central power in the seat was already noticeable in 1742, when the Gubernium sent its first commissioners to the assembly of the seat electing the chief royal judge. At the time, this move provoked strong protests from the seat, but after a few years it became a 'natural' part of the process of the candidature. A similar process could be observed in Hungary as early as the 17th century. The central power, in addition to the national authorities, gradually tried to strengthen its presence in the jurisdictions. In the free royal towns of Upper Hungary, the Chamber of Szepes sent commissioners to participate in



the annual elections and to intervene in them. The towns tried unsuccessfully to prevent the activities of the Chamber commissioners. It seems that in Transylvania (in our case, in Szeklerland) this process can only be observed after a delay of a century.

From the 1750s, central control of the elections was strengthened, as the vice royal judges were candidated by the seat assembly and the choosing of the chief royal judge had to be approved by the monarch. In the period of the continuous courts, the appointment of assessors and notaries was also subject to the monarch.

As far as the Supreme Military Command was concerned, it did not always contact the officers of the seat through the Gubernium, but often communicated his intentions directly or presented the seat's magistracy with ready facts.

The period 1762-1764 brought confusion and uncertainty to the administration of the seat, sometimes even calling into question the legitimacy of the civil administration. The extraordinary activity of the officers of the seat is seen in the period of the organization of the border guards. In our thesis, we have analyzed this activity in detail, revealing the historical details of the events and the connections that can be drawn from them. We have shown the negative consequences of the military organization for the administration, the resistance it provoked from the officials of the seat and the consequences of this resistance. In discussing the organization of the border guards, previous literature has paid little attention to the seats administration and the role of the officials. By exploring the issue in more detail, we have not only provided new historical events for research, but also brought new context and approaches to the subject, showing that the failure of the organization before the events in Siculeni was largely due to the resistance of the seat officers. As for the role of Pál Bornemisza in the organisation of the border guards, we believe that we have succeeded in somewhat shading the one-sided negative image of him that has been created in the literature so far.

We have tried to trace the administration of Ciuc during the period of the organization of the border guard, mainly through primary sources. We considered it important to return to the sources, to study and interpret them, because in the period under study, the effects on the administration of the seat, its reactions and the consequences of the effects have not been analyzed and interpreted on the basis of primary sources practically since Szádeczky. Historical works published in the last century have focused mainly on military organization, social conflicts (especially Marxist historiography), atrocities during the organization and, more specifically, the events in Siculeni. Everything concerning the seats administration, officials and related jurisdictional issues was taken from the seminal works of Elek Jakab and Lajos Szádeczky-Kardoss. However, it can also be noted that the two authors do not analyze the situation of the administration and the seats jurisdiction separately, but treat it as a side issue of the events, Elek Jakab dealing with it in less detail, Szádeczky in greater detail.

When examining the impact of the organization of the border guards on the administration, the middle and lower leadership of the seat are seen as one, while the role of the chief royal judge is interpreted separately. Since Domokos Teleki and Elek Jakab, Bornemisza has been clearly categorised by historiography as a 'pro-emperor', 'collaborator', with strong moral judgement. However, a deeper examination of the sources shows that his role is not so clear, cannot be simplified and cannot be categorically classified as belonging to either of the opposing sides. There is no doubt that, like all the actors of the period, he acted primarily in his own interests. As a lord in office, for him, advancement in office was clearly linked to the service of the Queen. In addition, or in contrast to this, he is not seen as an uncritical servant of the will of the monarch or of the commander-in-chief. In contrast to the military officers, Bornemisza always recognized the legitimacy of the jurisdiction of the seat, participated in its exercise, and repeatedly identified with its aims, its complaints and its procedures. It is enough to look at the protesting officials meeting in Delne and his official statement at the seat assembly at Frumoasa to see that the picture of his role is already becoming nuanced. Looking at the middle and lower leadership of the seat, we clearly see the self-defense of an administrative entity with particularistic rights and an archaic sense of community, which is trying to assert and preserve its own interests by using its own limited means. We believe that the failure of the first phase of the border guard organization, apart from the lack of military organization, was mainly caused by the varying degrees of resistance from all three levels of the seat's leadership.

The earlier historical literature (as well as the most recent works) discussed the purpose, circumstances and processes of the organization of the border guard and the resistance of the Szekler people in a rather biased way, lining up behind the interpretation and moral judgement of Domokos Teleki, Elek Jakab and Szádeczky. The historiography of the 19th and 20th centuries was not free of national bias. In the most recent monographic summary of the history of the Szeklers, we find the same approach. The chapter dealing with the establishment of the border guard system interprets the central power's approach as a "*method that disregards Szekler military traditions and Szekler characteristics*". We believe that, in the pursuit of objectivity, it is necessary to move away from the centuries-old view of historical events, processes and individuals as moral categories of 'good and evil'. It was contrary to the interests of a centralizing, growing empire to take account of particularistic community rights or traditions. The Szekler community did indeed experience events as unlawful and wrongful, but they insisted on privileges that did not exist in practice: the old way of being a soldier (including nobles), in return for tax exemption, and service under the command of Szekler officers within the borders of Transylvania. All of this was an anachronism at that time, which an early modern state acting in its own interests could no longer consider. However, it was not an unrealistic grievance to see the way in which officials and the people were treated during the first period of organization, which was accompanied by real illegalities, both in public and criminal law. This was the level at

which the state had to set limits, since its own objectives and interests were threatened by the public and social anarchy that was the consequence of the situation. Both regular and adequate levels of taxation and the organization of the army saw the damage caused by this chaos. As the seat officers themselves put it, with the destruction of the '*vivum aerarium*' ('living treasury'), the interests of the sovereign (state) itself were being undermined.

During events, tensions were caused not only by the military-civil conflict, which had always existed, but also by the clash between two poles with diametrically opposed views on the relationship between state and society and with conflicting interests. On the one hand, there is the growing and modernizing state and the upper echelons of officials and the military, who have every interest in it, while on the other, there is a social, legal and administrative entity with a slowly anachronistic community and political consciousness, which is attached to particular privileges and a separate status, and which has no interest in the strengthening of the centralizing state. The Habsburg state, which followed enlightened absolutist models, had a fundamental interest in unification, the elimination of particularistic power structures, and the bringing of society under closer control, thereby increasing the efficiency of the empire. Tax, administrative and legal reforms, which always led to conflicts at the local level, especially in communities with strong particularistic consciousness and practices, served this purpose. Nor did the imperial officers who arrived in Ciuc share the same conception of the state as the officials in the seat. The resulting sharp contrast was inevitable since the military officers could not understand the basis on which imperial subjects were questioning the will of the high command and the emperor. Even without detailed jurisdictional rules and regulations, it was clear to them that from the moment of their arrival in the seat they would overwrite the jurisdiction of the local authorities. This conviction is reflected in their actions and the whole nature of their activities. The military officers neither understood nor wanted to understand the legal and historical arguments of the seat's resistance. In their perception, it was nothing more than a defiance of the ruling power. Interestingly, in one of their letters of complaint (14 June 1763), the seat officials themselves referred to the military officers' point of view, stating that the latter were only concerned with the service of the monarchy, to which they were subordinate, and were convinced that their actions and procedures were promoting what they considered to be the right cause. In contrast, the officials of the seat clung resolutely to the argument of legality, which in their narrative also meant obedience to the ruler, since the ruler sanctioned the legal and administrative framework against whose violation they protested. In such a context, a conflict-free solution was inherently impossible. Only the former could emerge victorious from the confrontation between the centralizing-unifying state and the archaic (medieval-style) social order. The latter had to change and evolve. However, the Habsburg state's European backwardness was characterized by the fact that the border guard, based on peasant militia, was considered underdeveloped from the moment of its creation. Despite this, or in addition

to it, state power achieved one of its important goals, tightening control and strengthening the state's presence in one of the most underdeveloped peripheral provinces of the Empire.

As far as the reconstruction of the system of relations between the actors in power is concerned, it was a secondary (but not insignificant) aspect in the context of our research. Official sources are less suitable than private correspondence, diaries, and various personal records for revealing the network of relationships and patron-client relations. In order to reconstruct the entire network of relationships of the powerful figures in the Szekler region, it would be necessary not only to examine all the family archives and private correspondence in Szeklerland, but also to examine private correspondence in the archives of the Transylvanian noble families. Such a task could not be undertaken within the scope and conditions of this thesis. In the course of our research, however, we found in the material from the seats of Ciuc and Trei Scaune and among the published sources some personal documents that shed light on some details of the network of relations of a certain person in power (János Bornemisza, János Haller, Ferenc Lázár, Ferenc Kálnoki, Ferenc Boros, Tamás Bors, László Czíkó, Ádám Henter). The patron-client relationship between the chief royal judge Kálnoki and the chancellor László Gyulaffi was revealed with complete certainty, as frequent personal correspondence between the two non-equals can be observed. According to Olga Khavanova, this phenomenon is a clear sign of the existence of a patron-client relationship between two correspondents.

Not only personal documents, but also official sources help us to examine the negative relations in the network of relations. The condensation of a major interpersonal conflict within (or even outside) the seat can be traced in the gubernatorial source material. These conflicts, where they were well traced in the source material, were processed as small case studies and incorporated into the history of the office of a chief royal judge (János Bornemisza/János Haller-Lázár Ferenc, Ferenc Kálnoki-Tamás Kálnoki, Ferenc Kálnoki-Daniel István, Ádám Henter-Tamás Henter, Ádám Henter-Loding Miklós). These conflict stories, packaged in case studies, are not only stories of the competition for positions of power and influence, but also of the personalities of the individuals behind (and sometimes above) the positions of office. To quote Győző Ember, the researcher of the history of public administration cannot forget that *"he is not dealing with rigid bodies, with inanimate laws, but with living people whose private lives, social, economic and intellectual relations have always had a decisive influence on the way their official lives were conducted."* We do not believe it is necessary to argue that this statement applies to all levels of the hierarchy of office and power.