

AUSTRIAN HISTORY YEARBOOK



A Guide to East-Central European Archives

CENTER FOR
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Hungary

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FOUR CENTURIES OF Hungarian archival sources relating to Habsburg history can be traced to the election of Ferdinand I as king of Hungary in 1526. Until 1918 the kingdom was joined in a dynastic union to the other territories ruled by the Austrian line of the Habsburgs, including the Bohemian Crownlands and the Austrian Hereditary Lands. Under Habsburg rule Hungary preserved its autonomous status and traditional state institutions. The officials who staffed the kingdom's governmental bodies were representatives of the Hungarian estates. Thus, these institutions not only executed the sovereign's will, but frequently asserted the interests of the estates and the nation. At the same time, however, these institutions fell increasingly under the influence of parallel, centralized bodies that had been founded and developed by the Habsburgs. The Habsburg sovereigns located the administrative center of the empire outside of Hungary. Austrian, Bohemian, German, and Italian aristocrats exercised the decisive role both in central government institutions and the sovereign's consultative bodies. There were conflicts between the dynasty, which wanted to strengthen central power, and the Hungarian estates, which insisted on maintaining Hungary's autonomy. The relationship between the central government and the Hungarian estates was, therefore, characteristically ambivalent. For this reason, from 1527 to 1918 there were several sources of Hungarian opposition to the dynasty, but there were also examples of cooperation.

The character of the Hungarian archives was also determined by the fact that the administrative center lay outside of the country. The state's central repository, the Hungarian National Archives, evolved independently from the sovereign's central archives in Vienna. It was based on the archives of the estates (*Archivum Regni*), which were founded in the mid-18th century. In the second half of the 19th century the

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