

MEMBERS OF THE STATUS ASSEMBLY IN HÁROMSZÉK AND BRASSÓ COUNTIES

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Abstract. Following the Reformation, in the absence of a Catholic bishop, the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania was established in the mid-17th century by secular nobility to represent Catholic interests. By the 18th century, the Status was led by the bishop, though Habsburg rulers later transferred its authority to a Catholic Committee (1767–1867). The Status-assemblies led by Bishop Mihály Fogarasy (1866, 1868) restored Catholic self-governance, culminating in a governing council in 1873. The Status had jurisdiction over educational, property, and foundation issues, while ecclesiastical matters remained under episcopal control. The annually convened assemblies in Kolozsvár [Cluj] included local authorities, clerical and lay representatives from across Transylvania, with elected lay delegates and notable participation from regions such as Háromszék [Trei Scaune] and Brassó [Braşov].

Keywords: Roman Catholic Church, history of Transylvania, Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania, Status Assembly, lay governance, Háromszék, Brassó.

Introduction

During the more than half-century existence of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the representation of Transylvanian Catholic affairs was carried out by the Transylvanian Roman Catholic Status, an institution with roots dating back to the era of the Principality. The first attempt at its reorganization took place in 1848; however, it was nearly two decades later, under the influence of favourable domestic political developments, that – through the assertion of legal rights – this institution, embodying Catholic autonomy, gradually took shape.

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The method for electing lay representatives to Status assemblies – which occasionally served as vociferous arenas of Transylvanian public life – was first regulated by the assembly of 1848 and subsequently reaffirmed by the 1866 assembly. This latter gathering, held with the majority participation of the clergy, formulated an organizational statute that led to the strengthening of episcopal authority. Nonetheless, Bishop Mihály Fogarasy postponed its implementation, fearing that lay representatives would gain excessive influence over ecclesiastical affairs. The decisions made at this assembly are, however, of notable importance, as they served as a starting point for the subsequent regulation of Status's operations.

Election of representatives to the Status Assembly

The Status assembly convened two years later, in February 1868, once again defined the organizational and operational rules of Status, including the election of representatives, through a two-tier system.² In the first stage, the parish general assembly elected delegates to participate in the archdeaconry-level electoral assembly, which was responsible for selecting the actual representatives to the Status General Assembly. Each parish was entitled to send one lay representative for every 1,000 believers to the electoral assembly of its archdeaconry. The electoral delegates at this level then elected two lay representatives to represent the archdeaconry in the general assembly of the Status.³ Archdeaconries were further entitled to an additional representative for every 6,000 believers. Thus, the Barcaság-Sepsi-Miklósvár archdeaconry could send two while the Kézdi-Orbai archdeaconry up to six representatives from the territory of the Transylvanian bishopric.

Free royal cities such as Brassó, as well as parishes with a population exceeding 5,000 and having the right to elect their parish priest – such as Barót [Baraolt], Altorja [Turia de Jos], Gelence [Ghelința], Lemhény [Lemnia], Polyán [Poiana (de Arieș)],

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- 2 Archives of the Roman Catholic Status of Transylvania [ARCST], Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1866, Kolozsvár, 1883, 10; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 15.
 - 3 Election of the representatives took place in accordance with the descriptions included in chapters II–IV of the minutes recorded at the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 15–17.

and Kézdiszentlélek [Sânzieni]⁴ – could send their own representatives to the annual assembly in their capacity as patrons.⁵ According to the election statute, any Catholic male who had reached the age of 24, “held an independent civic profession, and possessed an honest and moral character” was eligible to become a Status assembly representative. Convicted individuals and those undergoing bankruptcy proceedings were excluded.⁶ The assemblies were intended to be held each summer during school recesses, rotating annually among different archdeaconries. The submission of proposals required the signatures of ten representatives, each of whom could speak on any given issue no more than twice. Decisions were adopted by simple majority, except in cases concerning the acquisition, sale, or mortgaging of fixed assets, which required a two-thirds majority.⁷ The Status assembly deliberated on the approval of annual budgets, defining the educational, ecclesiastical, and foundation asset management policies, Catholic educational and pedagogical matters, the examination of disputed patronage rights, representation of the Church before the state, and the election of the Church’s high council (later known as the Board of Directors) and its own officials. Its jurisdiction did not extend to matters of doctrine and morals, ecclesiastical rites, the structure of ecclesiastical governance, or limitations on property rights concerning church benefices.⁸ Despite the detailed regulation of the Status assemblies, Bishop Mihály Fogarasy – concerned about the rise of radical liberal forces and the perceived strengthening of lay influence – refused to convene another assembly. He made the organization of a subsequent session contingent upon the establishment of national Catholic autonomy. At the request of Status, the monarch abolished in August 1867 the Catholic Commission (*Commissio Catholica*), which had been established in 1767 by Empress Maria Theresa and operated alongside the Transylvanian Gubernium. Its responsibilities were transferred to the Provisional

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- 4 I use the official Hungarian place names of the time (in the Austro-Hungarian Empire) and add their corresponding present-day Romanian names in square brackets following each first occurrence.
 - 5 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 15–17.
 - 6 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 17.
 - 7 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 17–18.
 - 8 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, Kolozsvár, 1903, 19.

Catholic Commission, now subordinated to the Ministry of Religion and Public Education. Nevertheless, the Transylvanian Catholic foundations remained under state administration.⁹ The shifting domestic political landscape intensified efforts towards establishing ecclesiastical autonomy in Transylvania. Ultimately, Bishop Mihály Fogarasy convened a new Status assembly for May 1873. In his opening address, he reaffirmed the validity of the 1868 regulations concerning the organization of the general assembly and the election of its representatives and went on to state the following: “In this regard, we have no other task than, avoiding theoretical disputes, to determine the regular convening of the Status assembly of our Transylvanian diocese based on previous legal practice and on the national framework, and thereby to realize the existence and functioning of our self-governance.”¹⁰

At this assembly, a request was submitted to Ágoston Trefort, Minister of Religion and Public Education (1872–1888), for approval of a 24-member Board of Directors – referred to as the Committee (*bizottmány*) – elected in accordance with Presidential Decree No 896/1867. This body was officially recognized by Decree No 1008/1873 and took over the responsibilities of the former Provisional Commission.¹¹ The Board’s authority extended to the execution of general assembly resolutions, the management of educational and pedagogical affairs, and generally to “all secular matters of the Transylvanian bishopric”, with the exception of doctrinal, ecclesiastical governance, disciplinary, and liturgical issues, which remained under episcopal jurisdiction. Comprising 8 clerical and 16 lay representatives, the Board of Directors became a permanent component of the Status assemblies.¹²

While at the assembly of 1873 the balance of participants still favoured ecclesiastical delegates (with 55 clerics compared to 43 laymen),¹³ from 1882 onwards, when the Status assemblies were convened annually,¹⁴ representation followed a 1/3 clerical to

9 László HOLLÓ, *A világiak által vezetett egyházmegye I*, Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2009, 121–122.

10 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1873, Kolozsvár, 1873, 3.

11 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1873, Kolozsvár, 1873, 3.

12 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1873, Kolozsvár, 1873, 7–8.

13 HOLLÓ, *A világiak által vezetett egyházmegye*, 124–125.

14 Prior to this, Status assemblies were convened in the years 1866, 1868, 1873, 1874, 1876, 1877, and 1879. Because of the warlike circumstances, Status assemblies did not take place

2/3 lay ratio. These assemblies were chaired by the incumbent Catholic bishop, or, in his absence, by a secular president acting in his stead.¹⁵ According to a resolution passed at the 1882 Status Assembly, representatives were elected for a six-year term.¹⁶ In addition to the lay representatives elected by the archdeaconry districts, ex officio lay members of the Status Assembly included representatives of the following groups: patrons of parishes, dignitaries, Catholic members of the House of Magnates, lord-lieutenants and deputy lord-lieutenants, the mayors of more prominent towns, representatives of the royal treasuries,¹⁷ members of the courts of appeal in Kolozsvár and Marosvásárhely, as well as directors and representatives of Catholic secondary grammar schools. Parishes with over 3,000 members were entitled to delegate an independent lay representative; however, this threshold was raised to 5,000 in 1913, in accordance with the 1866 regulations. In cases where parishes with the right of electing their parish priest had more than 10,000 adherents, they were permitted to delegate an additional representative.¹⁸ Based on the above regulation, from 1912 onwards, the city of Brassó was represented by two delegates at the assemblies.¹⁹

The election of lay representatives for the archdeaconry districts retained its two-round format as stipulated by the 1866 Status Assembly resolutions. First, a parish assembly was convened under the chairmanship of the parish priest, at which a representative was elected “from among their own number”.²⁰ This delegate, acting as an elector, then chose the two lay representatives who would participate in the Status Assembly. The 1873 Assembly designated 16 electoral districts in accordance with the number of archdeaconries, enabling the election of 42 lay delegates. It also

in 1916 and 1919.

15 HOLLÓ, *A világiak által vezetett egyházmegye*, 106.

16 HOLLÓ, *A világiak által vezetett egyházmegye*, 132.

17 The Directorate of Finance and the Directorate of Forestry in Kolozsvár, as well as the Chief Mining Offices of Marosújvár [Ocna Mureș] and Zalatna [Zlatna], were also represented,

18 Parishes entitled to delegate a representative: Ditró [Ditrău], Gyergyóalfalu [Alfalău / Joseni], Gyergyóremete [Remetea], Gyergyószentmiklós [Gheorgheni], Kolozsvár, Marosvásárhely, Csíkszereda [Miercurea Ciuc], Nagyszeben [Sibiu], Petrozsény [Petroșani], Székelyudvarhely [Odorheiu Secuiesc], and Brassó [Brașov].

19 Archives of the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Alba Iulia, Sfântu Gheorghe Collective Archives [ARCAAI-SGCA], Archives of the Brașov Parish (ABP), Documents of the parish and archdeaconry, Bishop's Circular No 6428/1912.

20 The filial churches delegated representatives jointly with their mother parishes, ARCAAI-SGCA, Archives of the Lunga Parish (hereinafter as ALP), Registered documents, 186/1901.

reduced the representation threshold from 6,000 (as per the 1866 resolutions) to 5,000 faithful, thus allowing electoral districts to send one additional lay delegate to the annual assembly for every 5,000 adherents above the base figure. It is important to note that free royal towns and the parishes with the right to elect their priest could delegate individual representatives. Accordingly, Kolozsvár sent three, while Brassó, Nagyszeben, Gyergyószentmiklós, Gyergyóalfalu, Gyergyóditró, and Csíkkarcfalva [Cârța] each delegated one lay representative to the annual assemblies.²¹

The Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvár archdeaconry, which encompassed the Catholic parishes of Alsó-Háromszék and Brassó counties, was divided into two electoral districts and thereby entitled to send two representatives. According to the 1874 division, the first district included Barót, Miklósvár [Micioșoara], Hídvég [Hăghig], and Illyefalu [Ilieni], totalling 4,950 adherents, while the second district comprised Sepsiszentgyörgy [Sfântu Gheorghe], Sepsikőröspatak [Valea Crișului], Mikóújfalu [Micfalău], Sepsiszentiván [Sântionlunca], Türkös [Turcheș], Bodza [Vama Buzăului], Tömös [Timișu de Jos], and Töröcsvár [Bran], with a total of 5,180 faithful.

The Kézdi-Orbai archdeaconry, encompassing the predominantly Catholic settlements of Felső-Háromszék [Depresiunea Târgu Secuiesc], was divided into seven electoral districts as follows: 1) Torja [Turia] and Futásfalva [Alungeni] (4,671 faithful); 2) Kézdiszentlélek, Kézdiszárazpatak [Valea Seacă], Kézdikővár [Petriceni] (5,463); 3) Kézdiopolyán [Poian] and Esztelnek [Estelnic] (5,188); 4) Lemhény, Bereck [Brețcu], and Ojtoz [Oituz] (5,601); 5) Ozsdola [Ojdula] and Gelence (6,492); 6) Nyújtód [Lunga], Kézdisárfalu [Tinoasa], and Kanta [Canta] (4,258); 7) Szentkatolna [Catalina], Imecsfalva [Imeni], and Zágón [Zagon] (4,083).²²

The election of archdeaconry representatives to the Status Assembly thus took place within an indirect voting system, whereby the electors chosen in each electoral district cast votes on behalf of their respective constituencies. Despite the long terms of office, not all parishes availed themselves of the opportunity to send delegates to the archdeaconry assemblies. This likely explains why the

21 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 7.

22 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Documents of the parish and archdeaconry. The organization of the Catholic Church's self-government within the Diocese of Transylvania, 1874, s.n. 2–3.

meticulously delineated system of electoral districts rapidly disintegrated. From the early 19th century onwards, parishes of each archdeaconry sent collectively a representative for the election of two lay delegates who would then represent the district. Accordingly, in 1883, only five settlements from the Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvár archdeaconry sent delegates: Sepsiszentgyörgy appointed József Künnle; Sepsiszentiván, Ferenc Seethal, a landowner; Barót, Ferenc Gergely; Illyefalva, Ferenc Fazakas; and Miklósvár, András Gyenge – to the assembly to be held in Brassó in September, which ultimately elected József Künnle and Ferenc Seethal based on the gathered delegates' confidence.²³ In the villages, electoral participation was minimal – in Miklósvár, for example, only ten individuals, primarily members of the parish council, took part in selecting the delegate to be sent to the headquarters of the archdeaconry.²⁴ Elsewhere, representatives were often drawn directly from among the parish council members.

Clerical representatives to the Status assemblies were elected at archdeaconry meetings. According to the 1874 regulations, archdeaconries with fewer than 12 parishes could delegate one clerical representative, while those with more were entitled to two. The Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvár archdeaconry, comprising 13 parishes, elected one cleric, while the Kézdi-Orbai archdeaconry, with 17, elected two,²⁵ generally selecting from among the current deputy archdeacons. In the former, the deputy archdeacon-priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy or Barót and the archdeaconry school inspector were typically delegated to the annual Status Assembly. Archdeacons were invited *ex officio*,²⁶ and in case of their absence, district secretaries substituted for them. The parish priests of Brassó consistently

23 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Documents of the parish and archdeaconry; Minutes of the lay representative election held in Brassó on 14 September 1883, (no series number).

24 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Documents of the parish and archdeaconry; Minutes of the lay representative election held in Brassó on 11 September 1883, (no series number).

25 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Documents of the parish and archdeaconry; The organization of the Catholic Church's self-government within the Diocese of Transylvania, 1874, s. n. 2.

26 There were, however, certain occasions when the office of archdeacon was held by the parish priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy. For instance, in 1901, the bishop appointed Manó Fejér, parish priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy, as the district's ecclesiastical representative, In: ARCAAI-SGCA, Archives of the Sfântu Gheorghe Parish (hereinafter as ASGP), Registered documents of the parish, 177/190; In 1919, in the absence of Abbot Meisel of Brassó, the archdeacon was substituted by parish priest Károly Székely, ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGP, Registered documents of the parish, 27/1919 v.

prioritized attending the assemblies and, indeed, benefited from the Kolozsvár–Brassó railway line, which made travel easier compared to their fellow priests from Felső-Háromszék. The latter generally participated only when matters concerning their district were on the agenda – as revealed in a letter by József László, parish priest of Lemhény and district secretary. For instance, László Bálint, parish priest and archdeacon of Bereck, cited administrative duties²⁷ and poor health as reasons for his absence from the extraordinary Status Assembly of December 1895, which deliberated on the purchase of the Eszterházy estate in Alsóbajom [Boian].²⁸

The election of representatives for a six-year term was regulated by the Status Assembly of 1866 and subsequently by that of 1882. The electors delegated by the parishes were instructed “to engage in the election of such representatives who, besides the prevailing opinion of the majority, are believed to most closely fulfil the criteria outlined in the gracious episcopal call”.²⁹

Concerning the election of lay representatives, Bishop Mihály Fogarasy issued the following directive in his Circular No 1857/1867 addressed to the archdeacons: “It is unnecessary to remind Your Reverend Eminence of the utmost prudence and caution required in preparing and conducting the elections, so that, setting aside political partisanship, only the most devout members of our Church – religious, morally upright, intelligent, and composed Catholics – may be delegated to this important organizing assembly, whose wise and mature deliberations may bring forth benefit and blessing.”³⁰

Political affiliation, therefore, was not among the selection criteria. Rather, commitment to the Church and a morally sound lifestyle served as the principal benchmarks for nomination. Preference was generally given to county officials of the highest rank – lords-lieutenant, deputy lord-lieutenants – or, should they belong to a different denomination, to judges of the Court of Appeal, public prosecutors

27 ARCAAI-SGCA, Documents of the Office of the Archdeacon of Kézdi-Orbai (hereinafter as OAKD), Registered documents, 351/1895.

28 In 1916, Mihály Bagoly priest-deputy archdeacon of Kézdiszentkereszt [Poian], Cf. ARCAAI-SGCA, OAKD, Registered documents, 388/1895, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 11.

29 ARCAAI SGCA, Archives of the Sânzieni Parish [ASP], Registered documents, Minutes recorded on 8 December 1867 at the Transylvanian Status Assembly, on behalf of Poian.

30 ARCAAI SGCA, OAKD, Registered documents, Episcopal Circular No 1958/1867.

or their deputies, members of parliament, and the mayors of former free royal cities,³¹ who were all summoned to Kolozsvár.³² At the same time, the 1897 Status Assembly declared that individuals affiliated with Freemasonry could not become members either of the Board of Directors or of the Assembly itself.³³

Status assemblies were typically attended by approximately 100 participants,³⁴ who, as members of the political and state administrative apparatus, exercised substantial influence and opinion-shaping authority.³⁵

According to the practice of lay representative elections developed in the second half of the 19th century, once the protocol of the district-level elections had been submitted, the bishop issued a personal invitation to the chosen representatives. Among the invited lords-lieutenant, we can mention József Potsa, who served for multiple terms on the Board of Directors (1873, 1893; Sepsiszentgyörgy); Mihály Mauer, royal chamberlain and lord-lieutenant (1893, Brassó); Zsigmond Mikes, lord-lieutenant (1915, Brassó); and, following the change of sovereignty, MP Baron Béla Szentkereszty (1929–1931, Árkos [Arcuş]), who, owing to his strong ties with the Romanian political elite, played a key role in securing public rights for denominational schools and, as a board member, in defending the rights of Status. Among the patrons, we find Count János Nemes the Elder (1834–1905), a landowner from Hídvég (1868, 1893);³⁶ Baron Béla Szentkereszty (1893) and Baron Tivadar

31 In 1913, the parish priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy would have gladly welcomed the town's mayor as a participant in the Status Assembly, but the bishop emphasized that no exceptions could be made; the leaders of towns with settled council were not eligible for invitation, ARCAAI SGCA, ASGP, Registered documents, Circular No. 6690/1913.

32 ARCAAI SGCA ASGP, Registered documents, 4440/1906, 55/1913 v.

33 HOLLÓ, A világiak által vezetett egyházmegye, 173.

34 At the 1868 Status Assembly, 103 out of the 196 invitees were present, including 57 clerical and 46 lay members, cf. Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, 12.

35 LÓRÁND PÉNZES, "A Státus ujjászervezése és jelenléte az erdélyi közéletben", *Keresztény Szó* 20.6 (2009) 21–23 (22).

36 His father, also named János Nemes (1792–1868), was an imperial and royal chamberlain a veritable privy councillor of state, who in early 1861 became the head of the department established under the newly reorganized Gubernium for the administration of Roman Catholic religious and educational affairs – an office that existed for barely one year. D. TÓTH Béla, "Az Erdélyi Királyi Főkormánysház visszaállítása (1860–1861), *Korunk* 3 (2001) 16–29, <https://epa.oszk.hu/00400/00458/00045/kiraly.htm> (downloaded: 2.11.2024).

Béldi, landowners from Árkos and Bodola [Budila] respectively.³⁷ In proportion to the number of faithful belonging to the two archdeaconry districts, they were able to delegate a significant number of lay representatives to the Status Assembly. In 1911, of the 148 lay representatives, 10, and of the 73 clerical representatives, 5 came from the two districts, representing 14.8% and 3.65%, respectively, of the total number of representatives. The number of lay representatives further increased after the change of sovereignty. While in 1893 the Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvár District had only two representatives – Ferenc Seethal of Sepsiszentiván and Arthur Bogdán of Sepsiszentgyörgy –, by 1929, this number had doubled. In addition to Ferenc Seethal of Miklósvár (heir to the Kálnoky family's estates there), Gerő Temesváry of Uzon [Ozun], Rezső Kovásznai of Zernyest [Zărnești], and Dr Károly Kontasveller of Fogaras [Făgăraș] were also invited to attend the Status assemblies.³⁸ However, it was not only the increase in numbers but also the rising prestige of the representatives from Háromszék, or those holding estates in the region (too), that mattered, some of whom served as members on the Board of Directors or as vice-presidents of Status, actively promoting the interests of Transylvanian Catholicism. One such vice-president was Zsigmond (III) Szentkereszty of Zágón (1850, Kolozsvár – 1921, Kolozsvár), President of the Royal Regional Court of Nagyvárad [Oradea],³⁹

37 ARCAAI-SGCA, Archives of the Baraolt Parish (hereinafter as ABP), Printed publications, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 5.

38 Cf. Minutes of the Status assemblies held in the years 1893, 1929, 1930, 1934, 1942, and 1943.

39 He completed his studies at the Faculty of Law of the University of Kolozsvár. He first served as a judge of the Court of Appeal in Marosvásárhely, then as President of the General Court in Kolozsvár. He presided over the final hearing of the highly publicized Memorandum Trial of 1894, following which he was promoted to the Curia in the capital. Subsequently, he was appointed President of the Royal Regional Court of Nagyvárad, and, in recognition of his merits, he was awarded the title of Privy Councillor. On this occasion, the parish priest of Zágón also extended greetings on behalf of the parish, as his father, István Szentkereszty, had served as chief churchwarden of the Zágón parish. Alongside his professional duties, he was also notable for his support of church and cultural initiatives: he was chief churchwarden of the Roman Catholic parish in Zágón, initiator of the building fund for the Marosvásárhely theatre, and member of the organizing committee for the Matthias Corvinus Monument in Kolozsvár. In 1885, he married Erzsébet Sándor of Csíkszentmihály (1859–1945), daughter of József Sándor, Minister of the Interior. The couple had three children: a daughter, Zsófia Erzsébet (born 15 September 1886 – died 5 August 1972); a son, Zsigmond György (1888–1925), who worked in Budapest

who held the vice-presidency of Status for eight years. He was among the first to emphasize the importance of adapting to changed circumstances while preserving autonomous rights. Following his death from a stroke, a requiem mass was offered for him in the Piarist Church.⁴⁰ As has already been mentioned, the office of lay president of Status was held by Ákos Béldi of Uzon, Lord-Lieutenant of Kolozsvár County (1846–1932) and lifelong member of the House of Magnates. However, apart from his hereditary title, he had no other connection to Háromszék, and so he will not be discussed in greater detail herein. Among the members of the Board of Directors, we find Dénes Kálnoky, Supreme Royal Judge of Háromszék;⁴¹ Lord-Lieutenant József Potsa, patron of the grammar school in Kézdivásárhely [Târgu Secuiesc];⁴² and Aladár Király, who served as deputy lord-lieutenant between 1914 and 1915 and as lord-lieutenant in 1917.⁴³

as a ministerial secretary; and another son, György (born 1892, Kolozsvár – died 1915, Budapest), who fought as a reserve lieutenant in the First World War, The premature death of this latter son deeply affected his parents and surviving family members, In his memory, two foundations were established in his name, aimed at supporting the education of patriotic, academically gifted boys in financial need, One supported wounded students from the Faculty of Law at the Franz Joseph University in Kolozsvár, and the other assisted war orphans or children of disabled parents studying at the Premonstratensian Secondary School in Nagyvárád. Zoltán BICSOK – Zsolt ORBÁN, *Isten segedelmével udvaromat megépítettem, Történelmi családok Erdélyben*, Miercurea Ciuc: Guttenberg, 2012, 477; László BALOG – MÁLNÁSI Levente, *Források Zágón egyház- és művelődéstörténet. „... Nincsen jobb mint Isten kezében ajánlani magamot...”*, II, Miercurea Ciuc: Státus, 2014, 189–190; László BALOG – Levente MÁLNÁSI – Lajos Levente SÁNDOR – Márta Mária KOVÁCS, „...Hagyatéku hagyod utódaidnak...” *Elvetélt álmok nyomában, Fejezetek a zágóni báró Szentkereszty család életéből*, Miercurea Ciuc: Státus, 2016, 23–26, ARCAAI-SGCA, Fond 714, A zágóni Szentkereszty család iratai, *Szentkereszty Pál családtörténeti levelezései, német nyelvű feljegyzései*, 1938, 3; Szentkereszty de Zágón family, <http://genealogy.euweb.cz/hung/szentksty.html> (downloaded on 27.08.2024).

40 *Religio*, 61.332 (1902).

41 Krisztián TÓTH, “Az Erdélyi Római Katolikus státus igazgatótanácsának 1873-as újjáalakulása és dualizmus kori tevékenységi köre”, *Studia Theologica Transsylvaniensia* 2 (2021) 331–360 (352).

42 ARCAAI SGCA, ABP, *Vegyes nyomtatványok* [Various printed publications], Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 18.

43 ARCAAI SGCA, ABP, *Vegyes nyomtatványok*, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 7; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 10; Minutes of the Status

Conclusions

To conclude, the representation of Catholics from the two archdeaconries became a constant at the Status assemblies that embodied the self-governance of Transylvanian Catholics. Among the clerical representatives, the parish priests and archdeacons of Brassó were the most consistent participants, while among the lay delegates, the lord-lieutenants of Háromszék frequently made their voices heard at the general assemblies held in Kolozsvár.

Addendum. Status Assembly Representatives of the Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvar and the Kézdi-Orbai Archdeaconries (1868–1918)

Lay Representatives of the Barca-Sepsi-Miklósvar Archdeaconry

Baron Nándor Rauber and Dr. Nándor Otrobán (1868, 1879)⁴⁴

Dénes Kálnoky, Chief Royal Judge of Háromszék (1868, 1873–1875)

András Bogdán⁴⁵

József Künnle, lawyer from Sepsiszentgyörgy (1882)⁴⁶

Assembly Meeting of 1917, 8.

44 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, 11; *Közművelődés* 2.48 (1879) 377.

45 Of Armenian descent, member of a Roman Catholic family, His father, Lukács Bogdán, a merchant, opened a shop in Sepsiszentgyörgy in the early 19th century, His brothers: Lukács (1806–1848) and István (1810–1885), the latter served as chief churchwarden of the Roman Catholic parish of Sepsiszentgyörgy, He continued his father's business as a merchant, In the city's new Catholic cemetery, they built the Chapel of the Holy Cross – also suitable for celebrating the holy mass – in 1861, followed a year later by their two-storey family residence with a neoclassical façade, He played an active role in the city's leadership: he was treasurer and later committee member of the local casino, member of the municipal representative body and the county administrative committee, and member of the Roman Catholic church council and school board of Sepsiszentgyörgy, Lajos DEMETER, *Sepsiszentgyörgy személyiségei Életrajzok, életutak*, I.: A–J., Sfântu Gheorghe: Sepsiszentgyörgy, 2013, 93,

46 József Künnle served twice as a Member of Parliament and was a pillar of the Catholic Church in Sepsiszentgyörgy, He successfully reclaimed the parish's capital funds in the Kézdi-Orbai district, represented the Count Nemes family as a legal counsel, and managed the Ábrahám Nemes Foundation, His election was supported by Simon Kovács, the parish priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy and district secretary, ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Registered documents of the parish and archdeaconry, 505/1883.

Ferenc Seethal, landowner from Sepsiszentiván (1882)⁴⁷

Artúr Bogdán, bank official and managing director from Sepsiszentgyörgy, supporter of the Church (1889–1895)⁴⁸

József Potsa (1893 [?])⁴⁹

Benedek Köntzei (1901–1907)⁵⁰

Tivadar Künnle, lawyer from Sepsiszentgyörgy⁵¹

47 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Registered documents of the parish and archdeaconry, Minutes of the election of Status Assembly representatives (14 September 1883).

48 Artúr Bogdán (1859–1939) was of Armenian descent and came from a Roman Catholic family known for supporting the Church, His father, András Bogdán, a landowner, became managing director of the Háromszék County Savings Bank in 1876, He attended secondary school at the Realschule in Brassó, and later studied at the Vienna Academy of Commerce, After serving one year in the Imperial and Royal 2nd Hussar Regiment, he returned to Sepsiszentgyörgy in 1880 and joined Háromszékvármegyei Takarékpénztár Rt. [Háromszék County Savings Bank Co.] as a cashier, eventually becoming its director general in 1889, In 1905, he received the nobiliary particle (*praedicatum*) “of Szépmező”, was later knighted in the Order of Franz Joseph, and from 1910 held the title of Royal Counsellor, As a banking executive, he helped found county savings banks, the Jókai Printing House, and the local Association of Bank Employees, He chaired the board of trustees of the civic schools and teacher training institute in Sepsiszentgyörgy, was member of the local casino, the Catholic church council, the municipal council, the county administrative committee, and – after the change of sovereignty – served as a board member of the Háromszék branch of the Magyar Party and was President of Előpataki Gyógyfürdő Birtokosai Szövetkezet [Proprietors’ Cooperative of the Előpatak [Válcele] Health Resort]. Cf. DEMETER, *Sepsiszentgyörgy személyiségei* I, 94; ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGP. Volumes. *A Sepsi-szentgyörgyi róm, kath egyháztanács és megyegyűlése tanácskozásairól felvett jegyzőkönyvek 1885–1908*, II, 42–45.

49 Potsa had already served as deputy lord-lieutenant of Küküllő County [Comitatul Târnava] when he acted as a lay representative at the Status Assembly, ARCAAI SGCA, Archives of the Brețcu Parish (hereinafter as Bepl), *Historia Domus 1869–1933*, Vol. I, 74; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 4.

50 Benedek Köntzei, President of the Chancery of Háromszék County, was affectionately nicknamed “Pope Benci” by friends due to his devout religiosity, He died in September 1916 after being struck by a military train in Torda [Turda], which led to the loss of one leg and ultimately his death from the injuries, *Közművelődés* 39.38 (1916) 1–2.

51 He also served as secretary of the preparatory “Committee of 15” for the Status Assembly, See: Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 12.

János Temesváry, large estate owner from Uzon, chief churchwarden of the parish of Szentiván (1911–1917)⁵²

Pál Béldi, chief county notary and chamberlain

Tivadar Künnle (1896–1901 and 1907–1921), who also served as President of the “Committee of 15” within Status⁵³

Aladár Király (1916–?)⁵⁴

Elected Clerical Representatives

Ferenc Vas (1868)⁵⁵

Ferenc Vargyasi, priest and teacher of Brassó (1873)⁵⁶

István Vincze, rural dean and parish priest of Barót (1893)⁵⁷

Manó Fejér, parish priest of Szentgyörgy (1905)⁵⁸

Károly Székely, rural dean and parish priest of Sepsiszentgyörgy (1911–1917)⁵⁹

Ignác Korbuly, parish priest of Barót (1918)

Lay Representatives of the Brassó Parish

Joakim Pánzél, member of the Electoral Board (1868)⁶⁰

Gábor Vajna, lawyer (1889, 1893, 1914, 1915, 1917)⁶¹

52 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 7; 1914, 9; Minutes of the Regular General Assembly of Status in 1917, 9.

53 ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGP, Registered documents of the parish, 16/1902, 28/1919 v; *Erdélyi Tudósító* (1 March 1920), 1; *Közművelődés* 40.47 (1917) 2.

54 ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGP, Registered documents of the parish, 2/1918.

55 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Registered documents of the parish and archdeaconry, 180/1873.

56 Ibid.

57 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 6.

58 ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGy, Registered documents of the parish, 290/1905.

59 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 7; ARCAAI-SGCA, ASGP, Registered documents of the parish, 27/1918; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Regular General Assembly of Status in 1917, 10; *Közművelődés* 2.48 (1879) 377.

60 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Mixed volumes, Minutes of the board meetings of the Braşov parish in the period of 13 September 1871 – 28 February 1881, 95; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, 29; Minutes of the Regular General Assembly of Status in 1917, 11.

61 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 7; Minutes of the Regular General Assembly of Status in 1915, 12.

Árpád Papp, lawyer (1895)⁶²

János Zakariás, lawyer and parish prosecutor⁶³ (1899, 1914–1915, 1917)⁶⁴

Gábor Vajna, lawyer and churchwarden (1905, 1912)⁶⁵

Mihály Szent, ministerial councillor and financial director (1912)⁶⁶

Lay Representatives of the Kézdi-Orbai Archdeaconry

Baron János Apor and Ignác Szentiványi (1868, 1879, 1882)⁶⁷

Gyula Szatsvay, lawyer from Kézdivásárhely (1911)

Zsigmond Bánffy, lawyer from Kézdivásárhely and Péter Gábor,⁶⁸ Chief Magistrate of Kézdivásárhely (1893)⁶⁹

Gyula Cseh, Chief Magistrate of Kézdivásárhely (1911–1917)⁷⁰

62 ARCAAI-SGCA ABP, Mixed volumes, Minutes of the board meetings of the Braşov parish in the period of 1890–1897, 290.

63 Zakariás was elected as parliamentary representative of the Covasna electoral district, thereby becoming an ex officio member of the Status Assembly. As a result, Gábor Vajna was elected in his place.

64 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 9; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 12; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 11.

65 ARCAAI-SGCA, ABP, Registered documents of the parish and archdeaconry, 867/1905.

66 From 1912 onwards, the parish of Brassó was entitled to send two delegates, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1912, 13.

67 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, 11; ARCAAI SGCA ABP, Registered documents of the parish and archdeaconry, 361/1882.

68 Imre Gábor was born in Bereck in 1847. His father, also Imre Gábor, was a postmaster, Mayor of Bereck, Member of Parliament, and the younger brother of cannon-founder Áron Gábor. He studied in Brassó, Csíksomlyó [Şumuleu Ciuc], and Nagyszeben [Sibiu], completing his legal studies in Kolozsvár and Budapest. Between 1869 and 1876, he served in the military, leaving with the rank of lieutenant. Upon returning home, he became a vice-notary and then an investigating magistrate at the district court in Kézdivásárhely. He represented the Bereck electoral district in Parliament for three consecutive terms. From 1883, he was chief magistrate of the Kézdi District and in 1895 was elected Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Háromszék County. He passed away in Sepsiszentgyörgy in 1899 and was laid to rest in his wife's family crypt in Kézdiszázarpatak, DEMETER, *Sepsiszentgyörgy személyiségei*, 191–192.

69 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 6.

70 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 9.

Lajos Biró, teacher at the secondary grammar school in Kézdivásárhely (1914–1917)⁷¹
József Elekes of Szentkatolna, landowner (1893) and János Apor of Alsótorja, landowner (1893)⁷²

Clerical Representatives of the Kézdi-Orbai Archdeaconry

Károly Bálint, parish priest and rural dean of Kézdiszentlélek (1868)⁷³
László Bálint, parish priest of Bereck and district secretary (1877)
József László, parish priest of Lemhény (1893)⁷⁴
József László, rural dean and parish priest of Lemhény (1911)
Mihály Bagoly, parish priest of Kézdiszentkereszt and rural dean (1917)⁷⁵

County Officials from Háromszék Invited by Virtue of Their Office

Patrons, Dignitaries, and Members of the House of Magnates
Baron Béla Szentkereszt, landowner from Árkos (1911, 1912, 1914, 1915)⁷⁶
Tivadar Béli, landowner from Bodola (1911, 1912, 1915, 1917)
Béla Elekes,⁷⁷ retired lord-lieutenant and chief churchwarden of the Kézdivásárhely secondary grammar school (1911, 1912, 1915, 1917)⁷⁸

71 Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 11; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 9.

72 ARCAAI SGCA, OAKD, Registered documents, 311/1889.

73 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1868, 24.

74 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 6.

75 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 10.

76 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 7.

77 Béla Elekes (1854, Szentkatolna – 1928, Kézdivásárhely) became a royal court judge in Kézdivásárhely in 1896, later a judge of the Court of Appeal in 1902, and was an honorary member of the local casino. He went on to serve as lord-lieutenant of Háromszék County, was named an honorary citizen of Kézdivásárhely, and was knighted in the Order of Leopold.

78 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 7; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1912, 11; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 10.

Lord-Lieutenants and Deputy Lord-Lieutenants

Mihály Maurer,⁷⁹ Member of Parliament for the Hermány [Cașolț] constituency in Brassó County, royal chamberlain, Lord-Lieutenant of Brassó County between 1890 and 1900 (1893)⁸⁰

Count Zsigmond Mikes (successor to the above), lord-lieutenant (1911, 1912, 1914, 1915, 1917)⁸¹

Dr. Aladár Király, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant of Háromszék County (1911)⁸²

Members of Parliament

This group generally included 13 representatives. According to my research, from Háromszék County's constituencies, only Attila Hollaky,⁸³ representing the district

79 Mihály Maurer (Ürmös [Ormeniș], Felső-Fehér County, 1847–1921), Unlike most contemporary lord-lieutenants, he did not have academic qualifications of a graduate but attended the Theresianum in Vienna, an elite institution for aristocratic youth, In his youth, he travelled extensively across Europe before returning to his family estate in Felső-Fehér County, In the 1887 parliamentary elections, he was elected as a representative for the Hermányi constituency of Brassó County on a Liberal platform, though he did not serve long in Parliament, In May 1890, he was appointed lord-lieutenant of Brassó County, replacing András Bethlen. He held this post for ten years, resigning in 1900 due to health issues. Judit PÁL, “Erdélyi főispánok a Tisza éra végén” II, *Korunk* 20.4 (2009) 67–76.

80 ARCAAI SGCA, Bepl, Mixed volumes, *Historia Domus 1869–1933*, Vol, I, 74; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 4.

81 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 10; Minutes of the Regular General Assembly of Status in 1917, 8.

82 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 7; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1912, 11; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 8.

83 His father moved from Lesnyek [Leșnic] in Hunyad [Hunedoara] County to his wife's hometown, Nagyajta [Aita Mare], where their son Attila Hollaky was born in 1838. He began his secondary studies in Nagyszeben, continued in Brassó with the Evangelicals, and completed them at the Reformed Gymnasium in Marosvásárhely. He began his legal studies in Nagyszeben and completed them in Marosvásárhely. He then returned to his father's estate in Székelytamásfalva [Tamașfalău], where he passed away in 1923. In 1881, he was elected magistrate of Orbai Seat and between 1882 and 1907 served as chief magistrate. From 1910, he represented the Covasna constituency in Parliament, He was highly active in public education and economic development, including work

of Kovászna, participated once in the proceedings of the Status Assembly (1911[?]-1917).⁸⁴

Clergy Participating Ex Officio

László Bálint, parish priest of Bereck and archdeacon (1893)⁸⁵

József Meisel, parish priest of Brassó and archdeacon (1908-1917)

Mihály Bagoly, parish priest of Kézdi-Szentkereszty, deputy archdeacon, later rural dean (1911, 1912)⁸⁶

Dániel Oláh, parish priest of Kézdiszentlélek and archdeacon (1914-1931)⁸⁷

Directors of Boys' Schools

József Erőss of Vargyas, Director of the Catholic Grammar School of Kézdivásárhely (1911, 1912-1917)⁸⁸

on the expansion of the Covasna health resort. He served as trustee for state-run schools, was managing director of Kovásznai Takarékpénztár Rt. [Covasna Savings Bank Co.], a board member of Kovásznai Fürdő Rt. [Covasna Health Resort Co.], and president of the local casino. Cf. Etelka SZABÓ, "Kovásznai arcok a múltból (9). Hollaky Attila", *Székely Hírmondó*, <https://www.hirmondo.ro/korkepek/kovasznai-arcok-a-multbol-9-hollaky-attila/> (downloaded: 8.08.2024); Magyar országgyűlés 1910-1915, in Ferenc VÉGVÁRY – Ferenc ZIMMER (eds.), *Sturm-féle országgyűlési almanach 1910-1915*, Budapest, 1910, https://library.hungaricana.hu/hu/view/OGYK_Almanach_1910-1918_1/?pg=0&layout=s (downloaded: 24.03.2024).

84 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848-1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 7; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 6; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 11; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 9.

85 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848-1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 7.

86 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848-1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1912, 13.

87 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848-1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 13; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 10.

88 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848-1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 9; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 12; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 10.

Károly Péter, Kézdivásárhely (1915)⁸⁹

Directors of Secondary Grammar Schools

Lajos Ágoston, Brassó (1914)⁹⁰

Grammar School Representatives

Vidor Hassák, priest and teacher, Kanta (1893)⁹¹

Dénes Szélyes, teacher, Brassó (1911, 1912)

Balázs Tóth, teacher, Kézdivásárhely (1911, 1912)⁹²

György Bálinth, teacher, Brassó (1915)⁹³

Ferenc Szlávik, teacher, Brassó (1917)⁹⁴

Catholic Mayors of Free Royal Cities

Brassó

Assessors to the Holy See

Gergely Gidófalvi, parish priest of Kézdivásárhely and archdeacon (1893)⁹⁵

Elek P. Csiszér, Franciscan superior, Brassó (1914–1915)⁹⁶

Dénes Szélyes, teacher at the secondary grammar school of Brassó (1914–1915)⁹⁷

89 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 12.

90 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 9.

91 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 7.

92 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1911, 8.

93 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 12.

94 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1917, 11.

95 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1893, 6.

96 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 11.

97 ARCST, Fond IV, 4/e, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting 1848–1946, Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1914, 8; Minutes of the Status Assembly Meeting of 1915, 11.

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