

Abstract: Members of Parliament and collective biography: Some thoughts on methods, perspectives, and challenges

In view of Franz Adlgasser's recently published monumental biographical encyclopedia on the deputies to the Austrian Reichsrat, the article recapitulates some aspects which have shaped the discussion on collective biography in the past thirty years. In spite of the paradigm shift away from the social sciences and quantification to culturology and narrativization, the prosopographical approach to understanding the structure of political elites remains worthwhile. This holds true in particular for the Habsburg Monarchy, where a focused perspective on the members of parliament opens an analytic pathway into comprehending the complexity of the fractured political culture of the Austrian state in its entirety, from the short-lived „Spring of Nations“ to the dissolution of the empire.

Keywords: Parliamentarism; Habsburg Monarchy; prosopography; collective biography; methodology

Schlagworte: Parlamentarismus; Habsburgermonarchie; Prosopographie; Kollektivbiographie; Methode