

*Actes del 53è Congrés de la Comissió
Internacional per a l'Estudi de la Història
de les Institucions Representatives i Parlamentàries*

J. SOBREQUÉS, J. AGIRREAZKUENAGA, M. MORALES,
M. URQUIJO i M. CISNEROS (coordinadors)

**Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International
Commission for the History of Representative
and Parliamentary Institutions**

Volum II / Volume II



PARLAMENT DE CATALUNYA



Museu d'Història
de Catalunya

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*Studies presented to the International Commission for the History
of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions (volume LXXXII)*



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Museu d'Història
de Catalunya

Barcelona, 2005

BIBLIOTECA DE CATALUNYA, DADES CIP

International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. *Congress (53è : 2003 : Barcelona)*
Actes del 53è Congrés de la Comissió Internacional per a l'Estudi de la Història de les Institucions Representatives i Parlamentàries = Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions. - (Studies presented to the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions ; 82)
Textos en anglès, català, castellà i francès. - Referències bibliogràfiques
ISBN 84-393-6798-8 (o.c.)
I. Sobrequés i Callicó, Jaume, ed. II. Catalunya. Parlament III. Títol IV. Títol: Proceedings of the 53rd Conference of the International Commission for the History of Representative and Parliamentary Institutions V. Col·lecció: Études présentées à la Commission internationale pour l'histoire des assemblées d'États ; 82
1. Corona catalanoaragonesa. Corts - Història - Congressos
2. Parlaments - Història - Congressos 3. Parlaments - Península Ibèrica - Història - Congressos
342.53(091)(061.3)

Primera edició, juny del 2005 (edició núm. 224)

© Publicacions del Parlament de Catalunya, 2005
Parc de la Ciutadella, s/n • 08003 Barcelona
Tel. 933 046 635 • Fax 933 046 636
A/e: edicions@parlament-cat.net

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Departament de Cultura. Generalitat de Catalunya
Palau de Mar • Pl. Pau Vila, 3 • 08003 Barcelona
Tel. 932 254 700 • Fax 932 254 758
A/e: www.mhcat.net

Assessorament lingüístic: Departament de Serveis Lingüístics

Imprès a: Indústries Gràfiques Gabriel Gibert, SA (Tarragona)
Enquadernat a: Enquadernacions Fontanet, SL (Lleida)

Tiratge: 850 exemplars

ISBN: 84-393-6798-8 (obra completa)
Dipòsit legal: B-28535/2005

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*From the Representative Assembly to the Foral Palace: prosopographic study of the political elite of Alava in the construction of the liberal state (1800-1876)*¹

MIKEL URQUIJO GOITIA,² *University of the Basque Country*

This paper forms part of a broader project to study the political elites in the building of the liberal state, with special interest in members of the Parliament and the representative assembly.³ To advance in this direction certain questions have been posed following Ivor Crewe:⁴ Was there a renovation of elites between the Old Regime and the New? Was there a national elite or would it be more appropriate to talk of local elites? And if there was a national elite, what was its relationship with the local elites? Should we talk of an elite or elites? Was there a political elite, another economic elite, etc., or was there only one elite in the sense employed by McDonogh?⁵ What was the degree of power of the elite over the non-elite?

The approach was based on team work and the prosopographic method. Some years ago, the team began work on a series of projects with a geographical and temporal delimitation that would enable us to obtain a solid empirical sample which would be comparable with the results of other investigations. In this respect, we decided to circumscribe our study to Vasconia in the period from 1800 to 1876.⁶ To this end, work has been taking place on a series of biographical dictionaries of the

1. This paper has received support from the Ministry of Culture and Education, within the framework of the research project *Prosopography of the peripheral administration during the formation and consolidation of the Spanish constitutional State (1812-1874)* (PB98-0144), and from UPV/EHU as part of the research project *Elites and political power during the 1800s: the construction of the peripheral administration of the Liberal state based on the study of interaction between the foral administration and the state administration*. (UPV 021.323-HB030/99).

2. Department of Contemporary History, the University of the Basque Country (hcupgom@lg.ehu.es).

3. Of special interest within this area is the project *European Political Elites in comparison: the long road to convergence* (EURELITE) financed by the ESF (www.eurelite.unijena.de).

4. CREWE, I. 'Introduction: Studying Elites in Britain', in *British Political Sociology Yearbook*, vol. 1 *Elites in Western Democracy* (1974) p. 12.

5. McDONOGH, G.W. *Las buenas familias de Barcelona. Historia social del poder en la era industrial*, Barcelona, Ed. Omega, 1989, p. 6-9.

6. A broader explanation of the choice of this chronological framework can be found in the introduction to the forthcoming *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales, Consultores y Secretarios de Gobierno de Álava (1800-1876)*.

Basque political elite that provide detailed information on its protagonists and enable us to draw the necessary conclusions.⁷ The first of these works was the *Diccionario biográfico de los parlamentarios de Vasconia (1800-1876)*⁸; it was followed by the *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales y burócratas y patricios de Bizkaia (1800-1876)*⁹; the *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales, Consultantes y Secretarios de Gobierno de Álava (1800-1876)*¹⁰ is now in the process of publication; and the *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales de Guipúzcoa (1800-1876)* is soon to be published. These four volumes provide a solid empirical basis for study of the political elites of Vasconia,¹¹ and will allow for comparative study. Hence, this contribution is but preliminary and is based on the above-mentioned work on the province of Alava.

1. Some preliminary concepts

Let us first consider some preliminary concepts. Limitations on space demand that this be brief.

Firstly, we must approach a definition of elite. The first definition we can offer is that of a 'select or ruling minority',¹² we can also refer to the classics: V. Pareto and G. Mosca, or to the more recent definition by Bottomore.¹³ But we consider it of interest and operative at the present stage of our research to use the definition offered by F. Acosta Ramirez: 'Any group or individual which by virtue of its political, economic, social or cultural position is able to accede to and control the political process of decision making that determines the structured elements of the economic and/or political system of a community – the latter understood at any of its levels, national, provincial or local. In our opinion, this unites the characteristics of the elite we wish to study.'¹⁴ Consequently, our study sets out to focus on the social group that

7. On the use of biographies as a contribution to concrete knowledge of social, political and cultural history, see ENGELBERG, E. & SCHLEIER, H. 'The Contribution made by Historical Biographies of the Nineteenth and Twentieth Century towards deepening Historical Biography', in *17.º Congreso Internacional de Ciencias Históricas. II. Sección Cronológica. Metodología. La biografía histórica*, Madrid: Comité International des Sciences Historiques, 1992, p. 1105-1108.

8. Published by the Basque Parliament in 1995.

9. Published by the Juntas Generales de Bizkaia in 1995.

10. Hopefully to be published before the end of the year, by Diputación Foral de Álava.

11. There is a first approach to the prosopography of the parliamentary members in URQUIJO GOITIA, J.R. 'Análisis prosopográfico de los parlamentarios de Vasconia (1808-1876)', in *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, (1996) no. 93, p. 97-121.

12. REAL ACADEMIA ESPAÑOLA. *Diccionario de la lengua española*, Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 2001, vol. I, p. 873.

13. An overview of these definitions in BOTTOMORE, T. *Elites y sociedad*, Madrid: Talasa, 1995, chapter 1, a reflection on the spread and use of the concept of elites in historical studies in CARASA, P. 'De la Burguesía a las Elites, entre la ambigüedad y la renovación conceptual', in *Ayer* (2001) no. 42, p. 213-237 and from an Italian viewpoint in MANISCALVO, M.L. 'L'élite tra società e storia: il concetto e la realtà', in ALIBERTI, G. and ROSSI, L. (a cura di) *Formazione e ruolo delle élites nell'età contemporanea*, Napoli: Edizioni Scientifiche Italiane, 1995, p. 197-224.

14. ACOSTA RAMIREZ, F. 'Los estudios sobre élites en Andalucía: estado de la cuestión', in CARASA, P. (ed.) *Elites. Prosopografía contemporánea*, Valladolid, Universidad, 1994, p. 261.

controls the political and economic process of a community, in this case the province of Alava. However, use of the term elite does not entail 'returning to the old history and claiming protagonism for great personages who mark a historical period, nor for formal or visible parties and institutions. Elites are social groups of limited access, but informal, not exactly equivalent to parties or political organisations. And their position of superiority derives, in part, from their socio-economic status, but also, to a large degree, from their position in the political and cultural hierarchy. We thus distance ourselves from the aristocratic positions of the creators of the term *elite*. Pareto and Mosca believed in a fundamental division of society between minorities equipped with better natural aptitudes and creative capacity, on the one hand, and passive masses, on the other, formed by beings born to imitate and be led. In no respect does our use of the concept follow this path, which has today been broadly criticised and surpassed. But we do believe that there are people with greater resources and capacity to influence the development of political events and changes. This derives from their social position, more than from their individual aptitudes – a position that is, of course, connected with their wealth, but also with their profession or with their situation in relation to the political and administrative apparatus of the State or to political and social organisations and networks that are not strictly linked to the State.'¹⁵

A second question requiring specification is the concept of prosopography. Once again, in this we refer to the guidance of P. Carasa. By prosopography we understand 'a retrospective investigation of the common characteristics of a sample group of historical protagonists, through collective analysis of an ensemble of uniform variables concerning their lives.'¹⁶ That is to say, prosopography is a method of studying a social group in order to 'explain the external trajectory and the interpretation of individuals and groups themselves within their particular changing context, especially with respect to the origin, motives and effects of their actions.'¹⁷

2. Alava and its institutions¹⁸

The province of Alava lies in the north of Spain, close to the Cantabrian sea. Since the end of the Middle Ages, it has had a representative¹⁹ assembly denominated *Junta*

15. FUENTE MONGE, Gregorio L. de la. *Los revolucionarios de 1868. Elites y poder en la España liberal*, Madrid: Marcial Pons, 2000, p. 243.

16. CARASA, P. 'La recuperación de la historia política y la prosopografía', in Carasa, P. (ed.) *Op. cit.*, p. 46. An interesting complementary explanation can be found in this same volume (p. 315-327) by Jean Pierre Dedieu.

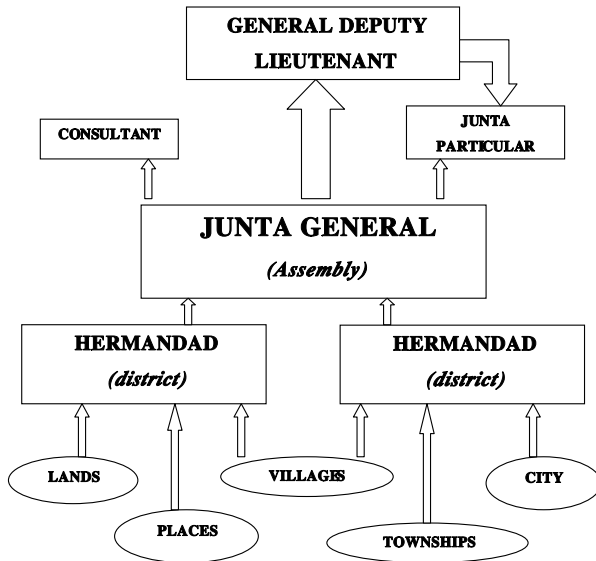
17. BURDIEL, I. y ROMEO, M.C. 'Los sujetos en el proceso revolucionario español del siglo xix: el papel de la prosopografía histórica', in *Historia contemporánea*, (1996) no. 13-14, p. 150-151.

18. A more detailed explanation of the institutions of Alava can be found in *Juntas Generales de Álava. Pasado y presente - Iragana eta orainaldia. Arabako Batzar Nagusiak*, Vitoria - Gazteiz, JJGG de Álava, 2000.

19. The use of the term 'representative assembly' is understood in terms of the definition by professor A. Marongui, as assemblies that are representative and deliberative in a collegiate sense, see MARONGUI, A. 'Parlamento (storia)', in *Enciclopedia del Diritto*, Milano, Giufre Editore, 1981, vol. XXXI, p. 724-757, especially p. 730-731.

General, which was territorial in character.²⁰ This exercised military, economic-fiscal, judicial, administrative and legislative powers. In short, it ruled over a large part of the internal affairs of the province. It therefore played an important role in the development of transport, education, welfare, economic and other factors.

This assembly met twice a year in ordinary sessions, from 4 to 7 May, in the province, and from 18 to 25 November, in Vitoria, the capital, and as often as needed in extraordinary sittings, always in Vitoria,²¹ for a duration of no longer than three days. The procurators of the *hermandades* (districts),²² one or two for each, the secretaries, one for the city and townships and another for the *tierras esparsas*,²³ the mayors of the *hermandad* of Vitoria, and in the case of Juntas held in the *tierras esparsas* the two mayors of the host *hermandad*, under the presidency of the General Deputy, who had 'voice but no vote.' Also eligible to participate in the *Juntas* were the consultants or any person called upon to advise or inform the Assembly.



20. Some questions can be raised concerning the nature of this assembly, since at the start of the nineteenth century rights of participation were debated there. The right of noblemen to participate was affirmed. However, since official confirmation of nobleman status required a costly legal process, we see that there was an economic restriction on participation. That is, it was an assembly of census representation. Later, over the course of the nineteenth century the census restriction was confirmed.

21. The extraordinary Juntas were more frequent at times of political instability such as during the War of Independence. The low number of extraordinary meetings during the reign of Isabel II shows us the degree of stability achieved by the institutions during this period.

22. The procurators were the representatives designated by the *hermandades*. The system for election of procurators was established by each individual *hermandad*, i.e., there was no common system. In the mid-nineteenth century, procurators had to be laymen, legitimate sons, older than 25 years, born in, or from a family that was native to Alava, Bizkaia or Gipuzkoa, to personally reside in an 'open house' in the *hermandad* represented and own 40,000 Maravedis of property in the province, to be free of legal charges and provincial debt, not to be in the employment of the government or in receipt of a provincial salary. The office was held for two years, and renovation was carried out annually by halves (Agreement 7.05.1841).

23. The *tierras esparsas* comprised the province outside the capital.

Given the non-permanent character of the Assembly, other institutions were formed to govern the province in periods when the Assembly did not sit. Chief among these was the *Junta Particular*, which governed the *Hermandad* of Alava between meetings of the *Junta General*. In the nineteenth century it comprised seven members elected by the *Junta General* for one year under the presidency of the Deputy General.

Because of his administrative responsibilities, it was also the *Junta General* that elected the General Deputy, the highest provincial magistracy. His authority was unipersonal and his mandate for three years. Those eligible for election had to be laymen, residents of Alava²⁴ with an 'open house' and from a family native to the province; they had to have property there, 'a proven and enlightened education'²⁵ and sufficient wealth to keep themselves with decorum. This post was incompatible with any other provincial or government position. The duties of the General Deputy included execution of the decisions of the *Juntas*, both *General* and *Particular*, presidency of the *Juntas*, summoning of the *Junta Particular* and the extraordinary *Juntas Generales*, directing provincial administration, appointing those employees not appointed by the *Juntas Generales*, acting as military commander of the province and maintaining public order. The General Deputy was the main civil leader of the province, there only being a representative of the king in exceptional cases, and he also administered justice in the *hermandades*, among other duties.

A Lieutenant General Deputy was named to act as substitute for the General Deputy during absence or illness. The Lieutenant had no special powers of his own, except when substituting for the General Deputy, when he assumed all the latter's powers.

To exercise his functions, the General Deputy could draw on the advice of the 'Fathers of the Province',²⁶ the *Junta Particular* and the consultants. The latter were the counsellors of the province, chosen by the *Junta General* from amongst those jurists with a knowledge of *foral* legislation. This post was for life,²⁷ remunerated and incompatible with any other and the function was to advise the General Deputy and the *Juntas*. The importance of the post lay in two dimensions. Firstly, the consultants provided the legal foundation for the activities of the *foral* institutions. Their advice was required continually throughout the nineteenth century, a time of continuous litigation with the Government on the scope of the province's powers. Secondly, the consultants held their posts for life, which meant that they were the *memory* of the *foral* institutions, more so if we remember the length of time for which some of them held their post,²⁸ in comparison with the limited mandate of the provincial office-holders.

24. Prior to 1804 they had to be residents of Vitoria.

25. ORTIZ DE ZARATE, R. *Compendio Foral de la Provincia de Álava*, Bilbao: J.E. Delmas, 1858 (reed. Vitoria: Dip. F. de Álava, 1983), p. 30.

26. The Fathers of the Province were all former General Deputies and were appointed by the *Junta General* for their services to the Province. This honour was for life and it involved advising the *Junta General*, the *Junta Particular* and the General Deputy, and representing the Province when required.

27. Although not always, at the start of the century some consultants were replaced.

28. Blas López held the post of consultant between 1816 and 1857, and later Mateo Benigno Moraza between 1857 and 1876.

The post of Government secretary was also important. His functions²⁹ in the nineteenth century were to act as chief of the provincial administration and to certify the decisions of the Deputation, together with the General Deputy. This post, like that of consultant, was for life, thus its occupants were another important part of the *provincial memory*.³⁰ On the other hand, the nineteenth century saw development of the provincial administration and construction of *small emergent states* in the *foral* territories, similar to developments throughout all of western Europe. Thus, the person with overall responsibility for this work gradually acquired importance in the provincial administration.

To these must be added other elected posts, such as the receivers, the juridical procurators, the city and township and *tierra esparza* secretaries, the Commissioners in Court before the Government, the Agents in Court and other employees of the Deputation, under the supervision of the assembly.

But our study did not focus on all of them. Instead, once we had outlined this institutional picture and carried out an initial observation of its workings, we proceeded to select the group that we considered to be the political-administrative elite of the province. We observed that the authority of greatest importance and power, which would develop and consolidate over the nineteenth century, was the General Deputation. Therefore, the first group we selected comprised the General Deputies and the Lieutenant Deputies who occasionally substituted for them. Two further groups were added to these.³¹ Firstly, in carrying out their duties the Deputies could draw on the help of their advisors: the Fathers of the Province and the Consultants. If we bear in mind that the former are already implicitly included as they are former General Deputies, we only need add the consultants to our list. The second and final group to be added is that of the Government Secretaries, since they were the heads of provincial Administration and close collaborators of the General Deputy. The reason for this was their growing importance in the light of the development of provincial administration, parallel to the spread of bureaucracy in the Spanish Government. Their direct contact with the highest *foral* authority for decision making and their lifelong occupancy of the post must also be borne in mind. We then began to work on compiling biographies of the General Deputies, the Lieutenant General Deputies, Consultants and Secretaries of Government in the *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales, Consultores y Secretarios de Gobierno de Álava (1800-1876)*.

29. These are defined in Title no. 4 *De la Secretaría de Gobierno*, del *Reglamento General para las oficinas y dependencias de la M. N. y M. L. Provincia de Álava*, Vitoria, Imp. De los Hijos de Manteli, 1863; p. 6-7.

30. Telesforo de Nestares occupied this post for 32 years.

31. The criterion employed by Ch. Charle to select high ranking functionaries: salary and permanence in hierarchical position, could be valid for this case, see CHARLE, Ch. *Les hauts fonctionnaires en France au XIXe siècle*, Paris, Ed. Gallimard, 1980, p. 17 and ff.

3. The political-administrative elite of Alava

The study carried out in preparing the Dictionary enabled us to establish a series of variables common to all the personages studied.³² To this end, we divided them into three groups: the General Deputies and their Lieutenants, the Consultants and finally, the Secretaries. As we shall observe, the profile of the first category differs considerably from the other two.

Furthermore, we divided the General Deputies and the Lieutenants into four chronological groups. The first from 1800 to 1820, deeply marked by the French invasion and the return of absolutism. The second from 1823 to 1839, marked by the second return to absolutism and the Carlist civil war. The third from 1844 to 1870, whose central axis was collaboration with the regime of Isabel II. The final group was from 1870 to 1877, during which important political changes occurred, brought on by the revolution of 1866 and the suppression of the *foral* institutions.

3.1. THE POLITICAL ELITE OF ALAVA

With respect to the origin of the General Deputies of the first period, we can say that all of them were from Alava, with the exception of one whose family was from the province. Thus, they all fulfilled the first requirement of the regulations.

They were invariably members of the landowning nobility, rural proprietors and merchants. Thus, we find an elite of landowners and wealthy urban merchants; in short, those who controlled the economy of the province, given over to agriculture in the greater part and trade in the capital. Except for two cases, for which we lack data, their relatives had participated in municipal government or had represented their municipalities in the *Juntas Generales*, a third of them had held responsibilities in the provincial government and some had served the national government. In short, we are not dealing with a group of newcomers to power, but rather one that had formed part of the political elite since the previous century. These premises enable us to see that we are dealing with a provincial elite that held sway over the politics and economics of the entire province.

Their place of death serves as an example of their mobility. Half of those for whom we have data died in Vitoria, but the remainder died either in France or in other parts of Spain, possibly indicating that they were obliged to travel outside the province due to political or material interests or for personal reasons. In any case, it was not a group shut up in its own home territory, but one with an open-ended life cycle.

Their age of death shows a high life expectancy, the majority dying at older than 60, which concords with a comfortable economic situation and better living conditions than the majority of the population.

32. The file used is fairly similar to that of CHARLE, Ch. *Les Elites de la République, 1880-1900*, Paris: Fayard, 1987, p. 20. The data on the personages used for this work can be found in *Diccionario biográfico de los Diputados Generales, Consultores y Secretarios de Gobierno de Álava (1800-1876)*, Vitoria, Diputación Foral de Álava, 2003.

Educational data are scarce. We only have information for half of the subjects. The largest group is that which received military training, against one with a university education and others who studied at the Royal Seminary of Bergara, a prestigious Enlightenment-influenced educational institute.³³

The majority were either persons of independent means or merchants, this being a faithful reflection of their family origin. Independent income was mainly from rural properties, but some combined this with income from urban properties.

All held other posts in addition to those of the General Deputation. The majority had held municipal posts, either in the town councils or as representatives to the *Juntas Generales*. Two had also been members of parliament and more than half had been in government, in various administrative positions and in one case as a minister. During the French occupation and following the suppression of the *Foral* Deputation between 1810 and 1812, several held positions of responsibility in the institutions created by the monarchy of Joseph Bonaparte.

What seems to have been infrequent was a second appointment to the post. The majority held the post of General Deputy for one term, but the majority of General Deputies had previously held the position of Lieutenant General Deputy.

One question posed was whether holding the post of General Deputy served as a stepping stone towards other positions or whether it represented the culmination of a career. We cannot provide a decisive answer, since if we consider the age at which they held this position and the other responsibilities they assumed, we can see that there are cases where it meant the end of a political career and others where it was practically the start.

Finally, with regard to ideological evolution we find a clearly defined profile. These were enlightened individuals who were to collaborate with the French, who survived the return of absolutism without great problems and subsequently found a place among the moderate sectors of liberalism. Here we can advance two hypotheses. The first would be that these men of private means, imbued with enlightenment culture, were supporters of the gradual reforms promoted by conservative liberalism. And the second would be that their material interests prompted them to adapt to the different changes of regime in order to maintain their social, political and economic status. The exception to these proposals would be Nicasio J. Velasco, Lieutenant to the General Deputy during the absolutist restoration, who tried to carry out a political purge, without great success given the dynamics of provincial politics and the moderate position of the political elite of Alava.

This period closed in 1820 with the suspension of the *foral* institutions and their replacement by constitutional institutions. But with the return of absolutism in 1823, the *foral* institutions were restored. The leaders of these institutions can be characterised as follows.

No variations were found with respect to origins in comparison with the previous group. They were all natives of Alava, with one exception, who was closely linked to the province through his family. Their families were similar to those of the pre-

33. On this institute see LARRAÑAGA ELORZA, K. *Las manifestaciones del hecho ilustrado en Bergara*, Bergara: Bergarako Udala, 1991.

vious group: nobles or rural and urban proprietors, although the merchants had disappeared. Again, the majority had had experience of government at local, provincial or national level. That is, provincial politics continued to be controlled by families that had been doing so for generations, all comfortably well off by means of income from rural and urban properties.

Data on place of death reveals a group that continued to be mobile, reflecting an open-ended life cycle. Age of death, never lower than 60 and even close to 90 in some cases, once again shows the high life expectancy arising from the good standard of living associated with wealth.

Once again, educational data are scarce and in those cases where information is available, a military education or education at the Royal Seminary of Bergara predominates.

Again, all were of independent means, yet now there were no merchants or military officers.

On this occasion, we find individuals with lesser degrees of political activity and recognition outside the province. The majority held municipal and provincial responsibilities, but not Government positions or parliamentary seats.

Once again, most occupied the position for only one term, the exception being Inigo Ortés de Velasco who did hold office a second time due to the Carlist civil war. As in the previous period, the General Deputies had previously been Lieutenant General Deputies.

The majority were older on holding office than those of the previous period. None occupied the post before the age of 36. If we add to this the fact that the majority did not hold other responsibilities, we can conclude that this represented the culmination of their political career. However, many continued to collaborate with the *foral* authorities as Fathers of the Province, especially as mediators before the Government in the always complex negotiations over fiscal exemptions.

Ideological evolution was generally similar to that observed for the earlier period. The first two General Deputies, N. J. Velasco and V. Verástegui, were two absolutists, the former more radical than the latter. While after 1829, the General Deputies Otazu, Arriola and Ortés de Velasco, were enlightened individuals, sympathetic to the reforms of Joseph Bonaparte and inclined towards the conservative liberalism within which defence of the *fueros* was framed in the 1830s.

Following the convulsive period of the Carlist civil war and another suspension of the *foral* institutions, a new period opened from 1844 onwards, which saw growth of the power of the provincial institutions and the administrative structure dependant on them. The General Deputies and Lieutenants are characterised as follows:

In terms of origin, the pattern was as in the previous groups. They were born in the province and those not born there had family ties with it. We note a decline in the proportion of natives of Vitoria against those born elsewhere in the province. Thus, elite families of Alava who were not natives of the capital began to acquire more power in provincial politics.

We observed some variations with respect to family origin. The presence of the nobles declined proportionately, although together with the rural and urban propri-

etors they continued to account for half of the total. However, we now find families from the 'liberal professions', lawyers, and even the son of a clerk. The elite opened up to men of law who were to play a fundamental role in the development of the new liberal state. As a result, we also find some politicians whose families had no previous history of political prominence. There continues however to be a predominance of those proceeding from families with a background of political responsibilities. The majority had been politically involved at municipal, practically all at provincial and several at national level. Hence, political *pedigree* continued to be a marked feature of those governing Alava.

Regarding place of death, many died outside the province, again reflecting an elite with an open-ended life cycle. The age of death continues to be high, always above 60 and in one case older than 90, again testifying to a wealth-associated high standard of living.

Educational data continue to be sparse. Nevertheless, we detect one important change: a rising number have a university education and of these only one completed his studies at Oñate, the closest university, the remainder studied at Valladolid, Seville or Madrid.

Regarding income, some were jurists but the majority continued to have private means. The lawyers also had income from family inheritances, dowries, and from properties they themselves had acquired.

The political *cursus honorum* shows us that practically all held more responsibilities than that of General Deputy. The majority were active in municipal politics, half occupied a seat in the Parliament, either in the Congress or the Senate or both, and one, Pedro Egaña, was a member of Government. Thus, we can conclude that the different levels of public administration and representation were interconnected for these protagonists.

Once again, we find that a second term in office was infrequent, while it was normal to have held the post of Lieutenant prior to that of General Deputy.

The age at which office was held varied widely for this group, from the legal minimum of 25 up to 65 years of age: Thus, we can conclude that the role of General Deputy or Lieutenant could either be the culmination of a political career or a stepping stone to further responsibilities, depending on the individual case.

The ideological profile of the personages is clear-cut. The majority were moderate liberal *fuéristas*, following the pattern of Pedro Egaña. However, it must be noted that some had a Carlist background, such as Pedro Varona, who was to accept the conservative monarchy of Isabel II following the defeat of Don Carlos, and that others were conservative liberals, such as Ortiz de Zarate or Medieta, who at the end of Isabel II's reign were to move from conservative liberalism towards Carlism.

The final period is the briefest, but of no less importance given the changes undergone in Spanish political life. We do not consider the Deputation that opens this period, since it was elected during the reign of Isabel. We focus on the subsequent *foral* executives, elected from 1870 onwards.

In this new period, we find that half of the *foral* executives were not born in the province, but had established themselves there, although we do not know whether they had family connections there or not.

We have no family references for half of them. The other three comprised a nobleman, the son of a clerk and the Marquis of Urquijo, who we can consider a 'self-made man'. Hailing from a family of labourers, he managed to amass a considerable fortune and establish an important network of social and political relationships. Data on the political involvement of their families are sparse, yet it would appear that several were not political newcomers.

Place of death reveals a career that led them to leave Alava. And age of death fell in comparison with the previous group, although it was always above 50 years.

Educational data are scarce again, although for those for whom we do have information, we see that they studied in Valladolid, Alcalá and Vitoria.

Income is more varied than the previous group. We find individuals of private means, jurists and a businessman, with investments in numerous fields (banking, urban speculation, among others). However, the majority also received income from rural properties.

The majority had rather limited political experience, involving municipal and provincial posts. Only one of them came to occupy a seat in parliament. Unlike the previous periods, the executives did not occupy the position of General Deputy and Lieutenant, but only held one. This more limited experience and the fact that they held only one of the two offices leads us to think that the complex situation demanded persons of a certain profile, in which credibility in the eyes of the government predominated over prior experience in the *foral* administration. The political situation also meant that individuals linked to the regime of Isabel were not likely to occupy public office.

Following this line of reasoning, it can be concluded that the office of General Deputy in these years did not represent the culmination of a political career; rather what was sought was to maintain the *foral* institutions in difficult circumstances.

Finally, in ideological terms, all can be considered as liberals, in the broad sense of the term, compared to the Carlism³⁴ that was emerging in these provinces. The only point of discord lay in the attitude to the suppression of the *foral* institutions decreed by the Government of Cánovas. We can observe a division between compromising and intransigent *fuerristas*, within an overall adherence to liberalism.

3.2. THE ADMINISTRATIVE ELITE OF ALAVA

A second group to study are the consultants. These were the most important bureaucrats in the *foral* administration. They served as juridical advisers and the memory of the institution, since they remained in their post for long periods. For this group, the chronological division made reflects how, over the course of the nineteenth century, there was a move towards simplification of the institution. While prior to 1839 we know of 15 consultants, in the following years we only find seven.

34. The Carlism of this period must be seen in the light of its relation to the religious question. The recognition of the Kingdom of Italy in the 1860s led the more conservative elements of liberalism towards *neo-Catholicism*. This move, exemplified in Antonio Aparisi, found an important echo in the Basque provinces and was the basis for the rebirth of Carlism following the dethronement of Isabel II in 1868 and of the new religious legislation passed by the Parliament of the Democratic *Sexennium*.

Indeed, the period that opens with the reign of Isabel II consolidates the function of these individuals, reduces their number and increases their importance.

In origin, the majority of the consultants were from Alava, although before 1820 some had been born in other provinces. Hence they had roots in the province although this was not an indispensable requisite. Their family origins had nothing in common with the General Deputies and Lieutenants. They were persons of modest origin, whose families had no significant political background. Therefore, we are dealing with persons who attained the position due to their personal merits or through connections, but in few cases can it be held that they reached this post through their forming part of the provincial elite. The two most outstanding consultants, Blas López and Mateo B. Moraza, were sons of a hotelier and a clerk, respectively.

Place of death shows us that, unlike the political elite, their life cycle was not so open-ended; practically all died in the province. Age at death reflects high longevity for the period, indicating a comfortable lifestyle arising from their professional careers.

All had a university education. Therefore, in spite of modest family origins, they must have had some economic power to be able to pay university fees. More so if one considers that the preferred institution was the University of Valladolid. Given this education, logically the consultants tended to be jurists, which offered them a livelihood, supplemented by income from properties they themselves acquired.

Given that the post was for life, in many cases this represented the culmination of their career, although all had previous professional experience, since they did not obtain the position before the age of 30. On occasion, this experience had been as juridical advisers to municipal government or in the legal system.

The time in the post was lengthy, especially after the 1820s. Outstanding in this respect were León López de Samaniego, consultant from 1826 to 1858, a period of 21 years, Blas López with 43 years in the post and Mateo B. Moraza with 28 years.

Where it can be determined, their ideological affiliation reflects the evolution of the contemporary political situation: absolutists and conservative liberals before 1839, moderate liberals during the reign of Isabel II and in the Democratic *Sexennium*. One exception is Fermin Herrán, who evolved from liberalism to republican *fuerismo*.

The final group, the government secretaries, also constituted an important element in the *foral* administration. Indeed, they headed it as the official in charge. They too were few in number and spent a long period of time in the post.

Practically all were born in the province. Although we do not have data for all, we can indicate that this group were not part of the provincial elite, but rather they were persons who had earned trust through their work.

Data on place and age of death show a group that had achieved a comfortable position but did not have an open-ended life cycle.

They do not appear to have had a university education; rather they were clerks by profession who had acquired the necessary training to occupy this position. Before occupying the post of secretary, practically all had earned their living as clerks and their incomes came from exercise of their profession.

They reached the post of secretary with a certain professional experience, since none occupied it before the age of 30. And given that the post was for life, they re-

mained in it for long periods. The most noteworthy in this respect were V. V. Cigaran, who held the post for 27 years, and Telesforo de Nestares for 32 years, at the time of the development of the *foral* administration.

Ideologically, the same can be said as for the consultants, they reflected the political situation of the time. Before the 1840s we find individuals who were close to absolutism, and subsequently moderate liberals.

4. Conclusions

We now turn to conclusions that can be drawn from this review of various groups in the political-administrative elite of Alava. These conclusions will then be compared with those obtained in the study of the members of the provincial parliament.³⁵

The first conclusion is that the profile of politicians and bureaucrats differed substantially, as was expected. This difference can be observed in family origins, education, professional and economic situation and political career.

4.1. A POLITICAL ELITE OF PRIVATE MEANS

The members of the political elite were either born in, or their family was native to the province. Over the course of the century, there was a notable drop in the proportion born in Vitoria, and a corresponding rise in those born in other parts of the province.

With regard to family background, an evolution is observed over the course of the century. Until 1839, those governing the province of Alava were nobles, rural proprietors and urban merchants. Following 1844, there was a drop in the proportion of nobles, and lawyers, and even the son of a clerk, became members of the elite. This evolution is logical in the context of the construction of the liberal state, in which jurists played a major role. Their professional income was combined with income from properties, obtained as inheritance, marriage dowries or through purchase. In the final period analysed, we find a greater variety among members of the elite, one exceptional example being the Marquis of Urquijo, a 'self-made' businessman. Also of note is the network of personal relationships formed through marriage among members of the elite.

The General Deputies of Alava came from families that had previously occupied different responsibilities at local,³⁶ provincial and national level, and their descendants would continue to do so.

35. All references to the members of parliament in the following section are taken from Urquijo Goitia, J.R. 'Análisis prosopográfico de los parlamentarios de Vasconia (1808-1876)', in *Revista de Estudios Políticos*, (1996) no. 93, p. 97-121.

36. Control of local power by the land-owning elite was a characteristic common to Spain, the United Kingdom and Prussia during the nineteenth century, although the systems involved differed. In the British case, control was through the justice system and municipal councils, in Prussia through the bureaucracy and local representation, and in Spain through political clientage, which made it possible to control local representation. See SPRING, D. (ed.) *European Landed Elites in the Nineteenth Century*, Baltimore – London: The John Hopkins University Press, 1977.

One important feature is how the elite of Alava sought direct connections with the different national governments over the course of the century. To this end it used its network of political relationships. The following are examples: M. L. Urquijo, an outstanding figure at the court, was the son of F. P. Urquijo, elected General Deputy in 1800. In 1812, Miguel Ricardo Álava, a general in the army and future minister, was elected General Deputy. Pedro Egaña, elected General Deputy in 1864, had previously been a deputy on eleven occasions and twice a minister in 1846 and 1853,³⁷ and he was a staunch defender of Alavese interests before the government throughout the reign of Isabel II. Finally, following the overthrow of Isabel II, which brought an end to Egaña's influence, the *Juntas Generales* elected a new General Deputy to represent the interests of the province, Estansilao de Urquijo. Known as the 'banker of the revolution', the new General Deputy could draw on an important circle of contacts at the court and was in favour with the new monarch, Amadeo I, who granted him the Marquisate of Urquijo in 1871. In short, the provincial elite not only concerned itself with controlling the resources of provincial power, but was also careful to have defenders before the government, regardless of regime, to protect their interests.³⁸

Place and date of death reveal that the elite travelled, either for political or material interests, or for personal reasons, but in any case the members of this elite did not remain shut away in their place of origin. Secondly, their longevity – the immense majority died at over 60 years – reflects a comfortable standard of living.

Educational data are quite scarce, compared with other areas for which we have more comprehensive data. In any case, the available data permit us to draw some interesting conclusions. At the start of the century, they were educated either in the militia or at the Royal Seminary of Bergara. As the century advanced, a university education became increasingly common, normally in law, and at various Spanish universities. Their levels of education are similar to those of Basque parliamentary members during the same period.

Many of these individuals also possessed good libraries, reflecting a solid general formation and an awareness of the European intellectual currents of the time. This interpretation is strengthened by the evidence that they participated in literary gatherings and wrote press articles. Outstanding in this respect was their work in cultural publications in Vitoria, or in cultural activities – the case of Fermin Herrán.

The political elite of Alava was basically formed by persons of private means. Their income came from rural and urban properties. At the start of the century, there was a high level of involvement by members of the principal trading families of Vitoria. In the period of Isabel II, as pointed out above, we find the entry of several lawyers who combined their professional incomes with that from their properties. In short, variation was limited, although we can point to increased numbers of

37. URQUIJO GOITIA, J. R. *Gobiernos y ministros españoles (1808-2000)*, Madrid, CSIC, 2001, p. 202.

38. The role of the elite in mediating between the province and the government through their representatives, was also common in parliamentary members in other areas of Spain, see CARASA, P. 'Elites castellanas de la Restauración: del bloque de poder al microanálisis', in *Historia contemporánea*, (1996) no. 13-14, p. 164-165.

'liberal professionals' in government.

The majority of the members of the *Foral* Deputation of Alava followed political careers over the course of their lives at local, provincial and national level. Many held municipal responsibilities in their native towns or places of residence, either on the municipal councils or as representatives to the *Juntas Generales*. Similarly, their obtaining the post of General Deputy was usually preceded by a period as Lieutenant General Deputy. Holding both posts was normal, as was also, on occasion, subsequent election as a parliamentary member, which occurred in the cases of Pedro Egaña and Genaro Echevarria. Some, such as Egaña and general Álava, were appointed ministers. To this must be added other government functions, such as participation in the administrative institutions created by Joseph Bonaparte in the Napoleonic period.

Hence, we can conclude that the different levels of administration – local, provincial and national – and representation in the *Juntas Generales* or Parliament,³⁹ were interconnected in the sense that they were held by members of the same elite. As pointed out regarding their family circles, the political elite of Alava always sought to have representatives in the highest echelons of power to protect their interests.

Ideologically, their characterisation is fairly clear-cut. At the start of the century, the Alavese elite were within the cultural-ideological parameters of the Enlightenment; the Napoleonic period saw a more Francophile turn, one of its members, M. L. Urquijo, being amongst the closest collaborators of Joseph I. The elite survived the return of absolutism without excessive difficulties: first under the tutelage of two absolutists, relieved towards the close of the reign of Fernando VII by conservative liberals who defended the *foral* status of these provinces. Thus began *fuерismo*, the creed of Alava's moderate liberals, who were to lead the political representation of this province in the reign of Isabel II.⁴⁰ This liberalism, incarnated in its origin by Fausto Otazu, Iñigo Ortés de Velasco and the consultant Blas López, was to have a defender in the court until 1868 in the figure of Pedro Egaña. Subsequently, an attempt was made to rebuild this privileged relationship through a new Deputation formed by the Marquis of Urquijo, as the man at the court, and Ramón Ortés de Velasco, the son of Iñigo Ortés de Velasco and as such heir to the *fuерista* elite of the period of Isabel linked to this *fuерista* policy.

4.2. THE FORAL BUREAUCRACY: THE ALAVESE MANDARINS

Like the political elite, the bureaucrats were natives of the province, yet from modest families without a background of previous public activity; however, the families obviously had sufficient income to pay for the education of their sons. Unlike the political elite, the majority died in the province, suggesting that their work led them to remain in Vitoria. On the other hand, their longevity reflects a comfortable lifestyle resulting from their professional position.

39. In this instance, deputies from outside the province are scarce, URQUIJO GOITIA, J. R., p. 105.

40. Unlike the Catalan bourgeoisie, which was to evolve from an enthusiastic liberalism towards conservatism over the course of the nineteenth century, in Alava there was a predominance of conservative liberalism, see FONTANA, J. 'La burguesía española entre la reforma y la revolución (1808-1868)', in *Revueltas y revoluciones en la historia*, Salamanca: Universidad, 1990, p. 125-133.

There was one major difference among members of the group concerning education: whereas the consultants had a university education in law, the secretaries were clerks who had not received a university education. The function of each group explains this difference. While the former were legal advisers, the latter carried out administrative functions for which, at that time, it was not necessary to have a knowledge of law.

In all cases, their main source of income was their work, although some supplemented this with income from properties they had acquired.

Normally their political careers began outside the realm of public administration, either as lawyers or clerks, subsequently moving on to occupy the post of consultant or secretary. In many cases this work was for life, which meant that they occupied their posts for decades.

Given that the occupants of these positions enjoyed the trust of the *foral* authorities, their ideological affiliation ran parallel to that of the latter, as occurred in the south of Italy following reunification.⁴¹

4.3. ANSWERS TO SOME QUESTIONS

Having reached this point, I shall seek to answer some of the questions posed at the start.

Firstly, in Alava we can talk about an elite, as opposed to a number of different elites. This social group was pre-eminent both in economics and politics, in culture and other spheres of society. This elite was linked by personal relationships, forming a social group, and it was conscious of this.

Secondly, this group was formed by nobles, rural proprietors and merchants, who controlled the resources of local and provincial power, yet they managed to adapt to the new structures of the Liberal State. However, this elite did not remain closed in upon itself, instead it allowed the entry of new members without rupture with the traditional groups,⁴² as is shown by the appearance of new figures such as Pedro Egaña, who did not hail from a family of local notables.

Third, following on from the preceding point, the elite incorporated new blood between the Old Regime and the New, and broadened out to include new members without this representing a rupture. In this, our results are in line with those of Jesús Cruz in his study of the notables of Madrid, where he notes that the bourgeois revolution was promoted by a group of old and new elements that gradually transformed society and the state.⁴³

Fourth, this local elite was well related to the national elite, especially in the political sphere, through the networks of relationships described above.

41. PARELLA, R. 'L'élite amministrativa: i prefetti nel Mezzogiorno dall'Unità a Depretis', in ALIBERTI, G. e ROSSI, L. (a cura di) *Op. cit.* - p. 73-92.

42. In this we observe a certain parallel with the Italian case, see ALIBERTI, G. 'Élites e modello nobiliare nel secolo XIX', in: ALIBERTI, G. e ROSSI, L. (a cura di) *Op. cit.* - p. 9-28.

43. CRUZ, Jesús. *Los notables de Madrid. Las bases sociales de la revolución liberal española.* - Madrid: Alianza, 2000, p. 171-209.

Fifth, the political elite of Alava was to participate in construction of the new liberal conservative state of the reign of Isabel II. But it understood that its support for the various governments was to be compensated by maintenance of the *foral* exceptions that had survived from the Old Regime.⁴⁴ This situation was to vary in 1868, when the new democratic state was perceived as a threat by the Basque elites because of its democratic character and its implicit threat to the survival of exceptionality. From this time on, consensus was broken with deep divisions appearing between liberals and Carlists.

Sixth, together with this elite we find a group of bureaucrats who were to provide the basis for its management and control of institutions. This also occurred throughout Europe, where the development of the administration called for this public bureaucracy headed by 'mandarins'.⁴⁵ The confidence of the political elite in these bureaucrats led them to entrust them with the parliamentary representation of the provinces on certain occasions, as in the case of the consultants Blas López and Mateo B. Moraza.

Seventh, the relationship of the elite with the non-elite was based on its role as a mediator and on its social legitimacy. The local notables controlled the mechanisms of economic and political power, yet, at the same time, they enjoyed solid social legitimacy. In the Basque case in general, and in the case of Alava in particular, the fiscal and military exceptionality led to a broad degree of popular consensus.⁴⁶ In addition, the provincial notables, either through the Deputation and its agents at Court or through the parliamentary members, mediated before the Government in defence of provincial interests. That is to say that the networks of relationships that they established legitimised the role of the notables in the eyes of the community as J. Cruz indicates for Madrid⁴⁷ and A. M Banti for Italy.⁴⁸

In short, the elite of Alavese society in the nineteenth century reflected a gradual social change, without rupture, within the framework of creation of the new liberal state.

44. This support for the new liberal state, while maintaining Basque exceptionality, contrasts with liberal uniformity, see ALVAREZ JUNCO, José. *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX*, Madrid: Taurus, 2001, especially p. 75 and ff.

45. Concerning this idea see HOWORTH, J. & CERNY, P.G. (ed.) *Elites in France: Origins, Reproduction and Power*, London, Frances Pinter Publishers, 1981, p. 1-4.

46. A more detailed explanation of this social consensus and exceptionality can be found in URQUIJO, M. 'El fuero y lo que se deriva del fuero', in *Símbols i mites a l'Espanya contemporània*, Reus, Ed. del Centre de Lectura, 2001, p. 63-85, especially p.70 and ff.

47. CRUZ, Jesús. *Op. cit.*, p. 261-287, especially 279 and ff.

48. BANTI, A.M. *Storia della borghesia italiana. L'età liberale*, Roma, Donzelli, 1996, p. 193 and ff.