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EDITORS  
**Peter Pastor**  
**Ivan Sanders**



*András Gerő* **EMPEROR FRANCIS JOSEPH,  
KING OF THE HUNGARIANS**

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Center for Hungarian Studies and Publications, Inc.  
47 Cecilia Drive, Wayne, New Jersey 07470-4649  
E-mail: [pastorp@mail.montclair.edu](mailto:pastorp@mail.montclair.edu)

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*To my mother, who was born five years  
after the death of Francis Joseph*

## PREFACE

Readers looking for a romantic life of Francis Joseph will be disappointed by this book, for two reasons: first, the life of Francis Joseph was not romantic, and secondly, this book does not seek to tell the king's life story. It is concerned with something quite different, namely, how relations between the Hungarian people and Francis Joseph developed, and why they turned out the way they did. Needless to say, this cannot be said to be unrelated to the personal life of Francis Joseph, and in this sense, therefore, this book is a biography. However, it is much more a book about Hungarian history: how could it be otherwise, given that the lives of Francis Joseph and the Hungarian people were intertwined for more than sixty years? Their liaison did not begin as a love match, but it was consummated in 1867 by a legal act. Subsequently, however, it proved impossible to obtain a divorce. The only way out was death, whether in bed or in battle, each to his own, on the way to the Hungarian royal throne....