

In most cases, the book adds to existing scholarship by offering alternative interpretations of the rich source material and by refining firmly entrenched conclusions. Sometimes, the author contends with the conclusions of previous scholarship, providing a detailed critique of various trends tainted by either nationalism and/or confessionalism. Finally, the author astutely highlights gaps to be filled in existing literature pointing out opportunities for future research.

It is almost superfluous to say that this book is based on an impressive array of primary sources, many of them formerly unknown, produced in Rome by the Holy See and the Congregation of the Propaganda Fide, or locally, by missionaries and envoys or by Ottoman authorities. These have been subjected to detailed analysis and criticism. The text is accompanied by twelve maps, useful in orienting the reader in the religious/confessional complexity of the region.

Reading through the book, one may have wished that the content of these studies had been melted into a structure better able to highlight the book's major contribution to the study of confessionalization. As things stand, the reader has to sift through the, sometimes overwhelming, details in order to put together the new confessionalization model. This does not, however, diminish the book's contribution to the field, securing its place on the shelves of university libraries all over the world.

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**Judit Pál – Vlad Popovici – Andrea Fehér – Ovidiu Emil Iudean (ed.)**, *Parliamentary elections in Eastern Hungary and Transylvania (1865–1918)*, Berlin, International Verlag der Wissenschaften, 2018.

As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, many archives and libraries have closed down, “starving” researchers of their working material. In such cases, we start to truly appreciate digitalized databases, as well as books that can compile sizeable amounts of data, based on a large number of sources, with a good critical apparatus. One such book is entitled *Parliamentary Elections in Eastern Hungary and Transylvania (1865–1918)*, and was edited by Judit Pál, Vlad Popovici, Andrea Fehér and Ovidiu Emil Iudean, the latter three being members of the teaching staff of the Faculty of History and Philosophy of Babeş-Bolyai University, and the former being a researcher at the same university. The volume describes Hungarian parliamentarism, and features a wide variety of information about the elected deputies from

Transylvania and Eastern Hungary, including important information about the electoral constituencies, while also offering a critical account of the sources used to create the tables of information.

The book has four parts. The first one can be broken down into three sections. The first section starts with the introductory study of Judit Pál, which offers a description of Hungarian parliamentarism, the electoral system of the period and the elected deputies. It provides the historical background information that is needed to interpret the data presented in the following chapters. After the Austro-Hungarian Compromise of 1867, the Parliament became the undisputed centre of political life in Hungary, even though it had to share a significant amount of its power with the ruler. The Hungarian parliament was bicameral, made up of the Chamber of Deputies and the House of Magnates. The latter had the real political power, the former – composed of aristocrats, high dignitaries of state and church – was a passive player of Hungarian politics for most of the time. The groups that took part in the activity of the Parliament were parliamentary parties and not political parties, their elected deputies organized themselves in clubs, which were the informal places of political decision-making. Local branches of the parties formed only before the elections, with the exception of the socialist party and the parties of the nationalities. The main dividing line between the parties was their attitude towards the dualist structure created in 1867; however, the dividing lines among social issues and other political issues became stronger and stronger at the turn of the century, giving rise to modern mass parties such as the Hungarian Socialist Party.

Ruling parties were – with only one exception – the ones that wanted to preserve the dualist structure, because the electoral system was built around preserving it, but Hungarian national supremacy as well. This was made possible by keeping the voting base of the general population low, granting voting rights mostly to those who had an interest in preserving the Compromise of 1867 – while also in accordance with the liberal principle of the time. The uneven distribution of the electoral constituencies, widespread electoral corruption and the increasing power of the Lord-Lieutenant – the main hand of the government in the county administration – all favoured the ruling parties. The ones elected to the Chamber of Deputies were mostly aristocrats (10–16%) and nobles (40–57%), which was especially true of the parties that were in favour of the dualist structure. There was a high continuity, as PMs of the ruling parties stayed on average for 3 cycles, opposition parties for 2,5 cycles. 90% of them had higher education studies and most of them were lawyers.

The second section of the first part focuses mainly on the sources used for the data collection. A large number of Hungarian, Romanian and

German newspapers of local, regional and national interest were used to collect data about voter turnout, election results and biographical information on the candidates running for office. While rich in details, the press has to be treated carefully, because of the erroneous name translation, typos, uncertain or contradictory information and data collection mistakes made by the journalists of that time. The information gathered in the press was checked against, and completed by sources published by parliament or with the approval of parliament, such as minutes of the Chamber of Deputies (*Képviseletőházi Napló 1866–1918*), parliaments almanacs, parliamentary schematisms, lists of elected deputies, overviews of the number of voters between 1878 and 1914, or booklets containing the names and addresses of elected MPs as well as electoral maps drawn in the era or during the Paris peace talks following World War I.

The third section of the first part contains a table and a scheme that portrays the evolution of the party system in the dualist period. The table is made out of three columns. The first column describes the political orientation of the party, assigning each party a capital letter and a number. The capital letter shows the political orientation. The numbers are used to distinguish between political groups which have the same orientation (ex. B stands for the parties that supported the Compromise of 1867, B2 stands for the Liberal party). The second column is meant to show the political factions or dissidences within a certain party, adding to the already used capital letter and number a small letter (ex. B2a signifies the The Independent Liberals, a faction of the Liberal Party). The third column tells the brief history of the parties or factions/dissidences of the first two columns, mentioning the founding and dissolution dates, and where appropriate, naming the parties/factions that merged to form said party, or the mergers and dissidences that happened during the lifespan of the party. Together with the scheme that shows the evolution of the party system, this chapter offers a detailed visual representation of the party structure of the dualist period.

The second part of the book is probably the most important one, as it presents a table about the elections and the participating candidates. The first column presents the county in which the elections were held, the second one the constituency of the election, the third the start of the parliamentary cycle that followed the election, the fourth the name of the elected MP, the fifth the party to which he belonged, the sixth the number of votes he received, the seventh the name of his opponent/opponents, the eighth the political affiliation of the opponent/opponents and finally, the ninth the number of votes that the opponent/opponents received. The table also illustrates when

a candidate was voted by general acclamation<sup>5</sup>, when there was a tie between two runners, or when an opponent stepped down before or during the election. The cases in which the elected MP started his mandate after the beginning of the parliamentary cycle, or ended it before the end of the cycle are also shown. In some cases, even the date of birth and/or date of death are shown. Because of the large amount of compressed information, this part can prove to be helpful to those who wish to research the shifting balance of power between political groups on the county level. It can also be used as an auxiliary for biographies or prosopographies concerning MP, and their counter-candidates.

The third part of the book reconstructs the electoral constituencies by compiling together the parts of the districts – which were the administrative units that did not, or only partially overlapped the electoral constituencies – out of which they were composed in the year 1900. The districts are broken down into the settlements that make them up. This part of the book could be a useful starting point to those interested in the degree of influence that the county administration had over the elections. The fourth part of the book presents the number of people who had the right to vote in each electoral constituency in 1869 and between 1878–1914, providing data to those interested in the effect of the increase or decrease suffered by the number of voters on the outcome of the elections.

As we have seen, the book is able to condense large amounts of information about voting districts, as well as the candidates that run in them. This was made possible by the system of signs and abbreviations developed by the authors. The representation of the elected MPs who won their mandates after the start of the parliamentary cycle, or before the end of it, is a good example in this sense. In such cases, in the bracket showing the year of election there is a date, and, if it is followed by an arrow, it means that the MP started his mandate after the start of the cycle, while if it is preceded by an arrow, it means that his mandate ended it before the end of the cycle.

The way in which the historical region names, the names of settlements and those of candidates are presented is also praiseworthy. The authors chose to use the historical region names. The term Transylvania refers to the territory of the principality. Other regions that are part of the administrative unit which we call Transylvania today, are treated separately – such as The Banat, or Partium, which is included in the term Eastern Hungary –, giving a more accurate depiction of that time. The names of the localities which make up the administrative districts are written in the Hungarian version of that time, but also in the version in which they are

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<sup>5</sup> These were cases when there was only a single candidate.

known today. The names of the candidates who were not Hungarian are written in the language of the nationality to which he belonged, while also displaying next to it the “hungarianized” version of the name. The authors did not mean to ascribe a primary national identity to these candidates by doing this, it was simply a technical choice.

To summarize, I recommend this book primarily to researchers who are interested in prosopography, or the development of Hungarian parliamentarism and the dualist electoral system, because of the large amount of data that the book is able to condensate, made possible by the notable system of signs and abbreviations, but also because of the good critical apparatus, with which the sources are treated. Those interested in learning about Hungarian parliamentarism will also find parts of this book a good read, because of the thorough introductory study, and the tables and schemes that present the evolution of the political parties.

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