

Postdoctoral position in the History of East Central European Parish Politics: Diocese of Transylvania

Organisation/Company: ELTE Research Centre for the Humanities (Budapest)

Research Field: History

Research profile: R2 or R3

Application Deadline: 7 August 2026

Job-status: full- or part-time

Type of Contract: temporary

The Institute of History of the Research Centre for the Humanities, Eötvös Loránd University is inviting applications for a

position of Postdoctoral Research Fellow (all genders)

to collaborate on an ERC project, *Parish Politics in Early Modern East Central Europe, 1650–1800: The Role of Popular Politics in Late Catholic Confessionalization and Early Modern State Building*, led by Dr. Béla Vilmos Mihalik. The project PARISH is the first comparative investigation of how popular politics shaped the late phase of Catholic confessionalisation and early modern state building in the Habsburg Monarchy and in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth between 1650 and 1800. The project uses one of the most widespread local institutions in East Central Europe — the Roman Catholic parish — as its comparative framework. It explores patterns of communal supervision over parishes, the political instruments employed, and both the internal and external networks of communities across six Catholic dioceses of differing historical backgrounds in the region. The project examines the history of the conflicts and negotiations about communal participation in parish affairs, especially in the administration and management of parish property and assets, in the supervision of the parish priest's pastoral work and adherence to norms, and in the organisation of local religious life. Through this analytical framework, the project aims to identify a distinct East Central European model of parish politics, in which local communities were able to influence manorial, governmental, and ecclesiastical decisions through mutual interactions and negotiations. By uncovering this largely unexplored dimension of popular politics in East Central Europe, the research provides a “bottom-up” perspective on late Catholic confessionalisation and early modern state building. The inquiry extends not only to local Catholic congregations but also to ethnic, confessional, and social groups that have so far received limited scholarly attention — such as Roma communities, Muslim and Jewish minorities, and non-noble women.

Job description

We seek applicants with strong interest in the research field, and familiarity with the historical context of East Central Europe. The project particularly welcomes applicants interested in comparative, transregional, and interdisciplinary approaches. The postdoctoral researcher will be expected to take into consideration the cultural history of parish politics, the development of

the communal church, and communal influence on early modern Catholic confessionalization and state-building in the following specific area:

Diocese of Transylvania

The researcher will be required to focus particularly on the legal frameworks of village self-governments and their contribution to the development of the communal church in a multi-ethnic and multi-confessional environment, the special role of Transylvanian Status Catholicorum in the reorganisation of the diocese, and the connection between parish politics and Transylvanian territorial government. The researcher is expected to analyse the practices of parish politics, the phenomenon of communal church, and patterns and limits of communal influence over late Catholic confessionalization and early modern state-building in Transylvania.

Researchers are not requested to be based in Budapest, but they can stay in the examined region to foster on site work in libraries and archives. Collective work and continuous communication among the members of the research group will be ensured through regular online consultations as well as by workshops held twice a year.

Eligibility Criteria

- A passion for history, strong academic qualities and a PhD degree in History, or in related discipline with demonstrated historical research capacity and excellent results.
- Ability to work independently and collaboratively in research teams.
- Knowledge of – or affinity with – the history of the Catholic Church and East Central European social history especially during the 17th and 18th centuries.
- Experience in archival research in various geographic locations.
- Experience in working with research questions that relate to the rationale of the project.
- Excellent language skills in Romanian, and knowledge of Hungarian, Latin, and German is considered an advantage.
- Excellent English communication skills.
- Peer-reviewed publications (or submitted/accepted manuscripts).

Duties and responsibilities

- Postdoctoral research within the ERC Consolidator Grant PARISH.
- Conduct a thorough literature study and in-depth archival research.
- Prepare academic publications, peer-reviewed journal articles in particular.
- Contribute to the collective monograph synthesizing the findings of the project.
- Contribute to project aims such as academic event organisation, public dissemination of research results, and publications.

Compensation

- The position will be filled for a fixed-term period of max. four and a half years (54 months) until the planned end of the project (31 March 2031). The planned (earliest) starting date is October 1, 2026, or as mutually agreed. A trial period of the first six months applies to all our new employees.
- The salary will be based on both the job requirements and the employee's personal performance in accordance with the internal regulations of Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest. The expected gross monthly salary is approximately 2500 EUR, depending on experience and the applicable contractual arrangement.

- The posts include a generous annual research and travel allowance for further research trips and workshops/conferences.

How to apply?

Applicants need to submit:

- an up-to-date CV and list of publications
- Short letters of reference from three scholars
- Preliminary research proposal (max. 4 pages) consisting of
 - o a description of previous research experience (such as PhD thesis);
 - o a research idea/vision where you tell why the project's themes or approach interest you and how you would like to focus your own research in this context; please also specify the type of sources you would like to base your research on;
 - o motivation for the task with a statement on working as part of a research team.
- relevant certificates (e.g. copy of the doctorate certificate)
- one recent English-language paper, chapter, or manuscript that best represents your research

Please send your complete application package as one single pdf file to: mihalik.bela.vilmos@abtk.hu and kustar.lidia@abtk.hu

The applications will be processed starting 7 August 2026. Applications will be accepted until the position is filled. After pre-selection based on the application file, possible candidates will be invited for an online interview. Interviews are planned from 17 August 2026 onwards.

For further information on the position please contact the research assistant Lídia Kustár at kustar.lidia@abtk.hu

Privacy

The privacy of your personal information is very important to us. We collect, use, and store your personal information in accordance with the requirements of the applicable data privacy rules, including specifically the General Data Protection Regulation. To learn more about how we manage your personal data during the recruitment process, please see our Privacy Notice at: <https://www.abtk.hu/en/privacy-policy>