

I.
ESTUDIOS

**ON THE BICENTENARY OF THE
FIRST CHARTIST PARLIAMENTARY
ELECTIONS IN PORTUGAL (1826)**

JOSÉ DOMINGUES Y VITAL MOREIRA

SUMARIO

I. INTRODUCTION. II. ELECTORAL SYSTEM. II. 1. From the Constitutional Charter to the electoral law. II. 2. Indirect elections. III. VOTERS. III. 1. Restricted suffrage. III. 2. Voter registration. IV. VOTING SYSTEM. IV. 1. Single multi-member vote. IV. 2. Electoral procedure. V. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT. V. 1. Eligibility requirements. V. 2. Elimination of the territorial connection. V. 3. Electoral formula. VI. HOLDING OF THE 1826 ELECTIONS. VI. 1. Electoral map. VI. 2. Electoral calendar. VI.3. Composition of the Câmara dos Deputados (lower house). VII. CONCLUSION. BIBLIOGRAPHY.

Fecha recepción: 17.09.2025
Fecha aceptación: 13.01.2026

ON THE BICENTENARY OF THE FIRST CHARTIST PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PORTUGAL (1826)

JOSÉ DOMINGUES¹
VITAL MOREIRA²

I. INTRODUCTION³.

The year 2026 will mark the bicentenary of two important political and constitutional events in Portugal:

- a) the *first event* – the granting of the 1826 Constitutional Charter (*Carta Constitucional*), which restored constitutional monarchy three years after the end of the 1822 Constitution; and
- b) the *second event* – the holding of the first parliamentary elections, under the aegis of the Constitutional Charter, which were the second Portuguese parliamentary elections⁴.

¹ Law Faculty, Lusíada University, Rua de Moçambique, 21 a 71 (Aldoar), 4100-348 – Porto. Email: jdomingues@por.ulusiada.pt. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7072-3680>.

² Law Faculty, Lusíada University, Rua de Moçambique, 21 a 71 (Aldoar), 4100-348 – Porto. Email: vital.moreira@fd.uc.pt. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0454-2638>.

³ Abbreviations used in this article: PHA = Parliamentary Historical Archive; OHC = Overseas Historical Archive; MRA = Madeira Regional Archive; CC = Constitutional Charter of 1826 (*Carta Constitucional da monarchia portuguesa decretada e dada aos 29 de abril de 1826 pelo rei D. Pedro, imperador do Brasil*, Lisboa, Impressão Régia, 1826 [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <https://purl.pt/1358>); EI = Electoral Instructions of 1826 (Lisboa, AHM – Chancelaria da Cidade, Coleção de editais da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 1823-1840, Doc. 149; *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 186, 10 de agosto de 1826, pp. 745-749).

⁴ Regarding the first Portuguese parliamentary elections, held in 1822, see MOREIRA, Vital e DOMINGUES, José. (2022). *Para a História da Representação Política em Portugal: As primeiras eleições parlamentares | 1822 (Círculo eleitoral de Arcos de Valdevez)*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições.

This article addresses only the second event, which constitutes a decisive milestone in the history of representative government and parliamentary elections in Portugal.

Two hundred years ago, Portugal and Europe were shaken by a political and constitutional development that came from across the Atlantic: after the death of his father (D. João VI) in Lisbon, the Emperor of Brazil (D. Pedro I), who had been recognised by the former as the legitimate successor to the throne of Portugal, unexpectedly and without the major powers of Europe being able to foresee it, accepted the throne and immediately granted a new Constitution to the Kingdom of Portugal⁵. The Constitutional Charter of 1826 was written in less than a week, being copied with minor adaptations from the text of the Constitution of the Empire of Brazil, which the same monarch had enacted in 1824⁶. Despite its unusual origins and initially troubled existence, the Charter became the longest-lasting constitutional text in modern Portuguese constitutional history, remaining in force for 72 years spread over three distinct periods (1826-1828, 1834-1836, and 1842-1910)⁷.

In 1826, after the constitutional interregnum caused by the counterrevolution of *Vila-Francada* (1823-1826), Portugal became a constitutional monarchy for the second time, but very different from the previous constitutional regime of the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823), mainly because of the pronounced monarchical character of the Charter, which was particularly reflected, for example, in a hereditary and life-long legislative house appointed by the king, the *Câmara dos Pares* (House of Peers, the upper house of parliament), and in the intense new “moderating power” of the king (which included the power to dissolve the *Cortes* and the royal assent to

⁵ In a letter dated the 15th of July 1826, sent from the Portuguese embassy in London, D. Pedro de Sousa Holstein (Marquis of Palmela) informed the Minister of Foreign Affairs in Portugal, Count of Porto Santo, of the widespread astonishment that the unilateral and *motu proprio* granting of the new constitutional text had caused among European governments, including the British: “There is no doubt that continental cabinets consider the granting of the Constitutional Charter a fatal blow and are prepared to adopt, at least, all indirect means at their disposal to hinder its promulgation”. – *Despachos e correspondência do duque de Palmela*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, 1851, Tomo II, p. 396 –. Regarding the impact that the granting of the Portuguese Charter had in Europe, see in particular the work of MAGALHÃES, Félix Pereira de. (1871). *Apointamentos para a historia diplomatica de Portugal desde 1826 em que faleceu o imperador e rei D. João VI até 1834 em que se completou a restauração da coroa da rainha D. Maria II usurpada em 1828 por seu tio o infante D. Miguel*, Lisboa, Imprensa de J. G. de Sousa Neves.

⁶ About the process of preparing the Portuguese Charter of 1826, *vide* especially FRANCO, Afonso Arinos de Melo. [1994 (1972)]. “Introdução”, in *O Constitucionalismo de D. Pedro I no Brasil e em Portugal*, Brasília, Ministério da Justiça, pp. 7-34; MENCK, José Theodoro Mascarenhas. (2024). *A Constituição de 1824 e a ordem constitucional no Império do Brasil*, Brasília, Câmara dos Deputados, pp. 197-207.

⁷ About the Constitutional Charter of 1826, *vide* CAMPINOS, Jorge. (1975). *A Carta Constitucional de 1826*, Lisboa; HESPANHA, António Manuel. (2004). *Guiando a Mão Invisível. Direitos, Estado e Lei no Liberalismo Monárquico Português*, Coimbra, Almedina, pp. 161-350; SARDICA, José Miguel. (2012). “A Carta Constitucional portuguesa de 1826”, *Historia Constitucional*, n.º 13, pp. 527-561; FERNANDES, Paulo Jorge e ALMEIDA, Pedro Tavares de. (2023). “A Carta Constitucional outorgada em 1826”, in *O Parlamento Português: Vol. I: Antigo Regime e Monarquia Constitucional*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições, pp. 72-85.

legislation) which he accumulated with being head of the executive power (which included the free appointment and dismissal of members of the Government).

As it is impossible to compare the two constitutional regimes here, it is important to note for the purposes of this study that, although it espoused the *monarchical principle* regarding the origin of power, the 1826 Constitution restored the liberal-representative system of government established in 1820, based on the separation of powers and an elected legislative house, the *Câmara dos Deputados* (House of Representatives, the lower house of the Chartist *Cortes*), albeit in a bicameral context and with contours totally different from the 1820 electoral regime, as we shall see in this article.

Although the first Chartist parliamentary elections are an essential milestone in the study of the country's political and electoral history, very little is known about them. As far as we can ascertain, apart from scattered references in various works, only one monography has been published on this subject, limited to the electoral constituency of the Azores⁸, which was another incentive to write this paper. To compensate for the lack of current bibliographical sources, we consulted several publications of the time and various handwritten documents, almost all of them unpublished, held by the Parliamentary Historical Archive and the national *Torre do Tombo* Archive, both located in Lisbon.

II. ELECTORAL SYSTEM

II.1. *From the Constitutional Charter to the electoral law*

Unlike the 1822 Constitution, which fully incorporated the electoral law of the *Cortes*, the Constitutional Charter (henceforth CC) was much more restrained, limiting itself to the fundamental principles and rules of the *electoral constitution* relating to the election of the *Câmara dos Deputados* and referring to a *regulatory law* to be adopted to setup both the number of members of parliament (henceforth MPs) and “the practical manner of elections” (Art. 70 CC). Therefore, Article 63 of the Charter established two crucial features: indirect election of MPs, with two rounds of voting (at parish and provincial levels), and restricted suffrage, limited to *active citizens* who could demonstrate that they had a certain level of income.

The first Chartist elections were immediately called by a decree issued by King Pedro IV himself on 30 April 1826 in Rio de Janeiro (Brazil), ordering that elections for MPs be held immediately, as provided for in the Constitutional Charter, and instructing the regency of the kingdom in Lisbon (Portugal) to issue the necessary

⁸ LEITE, José Guilherme Reis. (1999). “As primeiras eleições cartistas nos Açores em 1826”, *Arquipélago-História*, n.º 3, pp. 325-380.

*electoral instructions*⁹. About two and a half months later, by a decree dated 13 July 1826, the Regent *Infanta*, D. Isabel Maria, appointed a committee to present her with the *electoral instructions* (henceforth EI), composed by Marino Miguel Franzine, José António Faria de Carvalho, and Francisco Manuel Trigoso de Aragão Morato, who would be assisted by the royal attorneys of the Crown (Lucas da Silva de Azevedo Coutinho) and the Treasury (António José Guião). The committee had the power to appoint the secretary and “any other persons who may be necessary for its work”¹⁰.

The *ad hoc* committee met in the Military Archives room at the Rossio Palace (which was the seat of government), beginning its work on 17 July 1826¹¹. Just twelve days later, on 29 July, it submitted the draft *electoral instructions* to the Regent *Infanta*¹², who gave her assent to it by decree on 7 August 1826¹³. Once the first Chartist electoral law had been approved, by means of another decree of the same date the Infanta Regent dissolved the committee, praising the zeal and diligence with which it had performed the duties it had been entrusted with¹⁴.

II.2. Indirect elections

Reversing the direct election system of 1822, the Constitutional Charter of 1826 opted for an indirect election system for MPs, to be carried out in two electoral phases (Art. 63 CC): in first place, the *parish elections* – registered voters or *primary voters*, gathered in parish electoral assemblies, elected the provincial voters; in second place, the *provincial elections* – provincial electors or *secondary electors*, bearing their respective certificates of appointment issued by the parish electoral assemblies, gathered in provincial electoral assemblies in the capitals of each province to elect the members of the *Cortes*¹⁵.

According to electoral law, in the first round of voting, at parish level, one provincial representative was elected for every thousand households, i.e.: parishes or groups of parishes with between one thousand and two thousand households elected one provincial elector; those with between two thousand and three thousand households elected two electors; those with between three thousand and four thousand households elected three electors; and so on (Art. 26 EI).

⁹ *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 164, 14 de julho de 1826, p. 653.

¹⁰ *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 166, 18 de julho de 1826, p. 665.

¹¹ PHA – Secção I/II, cx. 118, mç. 81, doc. 88, n.º 1.

¹² PHA – Secção I/II, cx. 118, mç. 81, doc. 88, n.º 4.

¹³ *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 186, 10 de agosto de 1826, pp. 745-749.

¹⁴ *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 184, 8 de agosto de 1826, p. 737.

¹⁵ Indirect Chartist elections remained in place until the Revolution of September 1836, which put the Charter aside and restored the direct election system of the 1822 Constitution, which remained in force during the *Setembrismo* period (1836-1842). With the re-entry into force of the Constitutional Charter in 1842, the country returned to the system of indirect elections, which was only definitively abandoned in 1852, with the first constitutional amendments of the Charter.

In the second vote, at the provincial level, proportionality was set at one MP for every 25,000 people, which resulted in the following representation in the different provinces of the kingdom: Minho – 30 MPs; Trás-os-Montes – 11 MPs; Beira – 36 MPs; Estremadura – 26 MPs; Alentejo – 12 MPs; Algarve – 5 MPs; the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo – 4 MPs; the islands of the Azores – 7 MPs (Art. 34 EI).

Although not mentioned in the Charter, overseas representation introduced by the 1822 Constitution was maintained. However, in the absence of a population census for the overseas territories, all of which were expected to have a small number of voters, the following distribution was provisionally determined: the islands of Cape Verde, with the settlements of Bissau and Cacheu – 2 MPs; the kingdom of Angola, with Benguela – 1 MP; the islands of São Tomé and Príncipe – 1 MP; Mozambique, with its dependencies – 1 MP; the states of Goa (India) – 1 MP; the settlements of Macau, Timor and Solor – 1 MP (Art. 51 EI)¹⁶.

III. VOTERS

III.1. *Restricted suffrage*

The right to vote was considered “one of the most precious rights of freedom granted to us by the Charter”¹⁷. However, the new Constitution greatly restricted this right, compared to what was previously provided for in the 1822 Constitution and practised in the parliamentary elections of same year. In effect, in contrast to the almost universal male suffrage of 1822, the Constitutional Charter explicitly limited the right to vote to *active citizens* (Art. 63) and imposed census limits on the right to vote, preventing citizens who did not have “a net annual income of one hundred thousand *réis*, from real estate, industry, commerce or employment” (Art. 65, § 5 CC), raising the census limit to two hundred thousand *réis* for voters in provincial assemblies (Art. 67 CC).

In summary, in addition to the exclusion of women from the outset, which did not require any reference in the law, the following citizens were not allowed to vote in the parish assemblies of 1826: (i) people living with their parents, unless they held public office; (ii) servants, whose class did not include bookkeepers in commercial establishments, senior clerks in commercial establishments, servants of the Royal Household who were not a white-livery footman, administrators of rural estates and factory managers; (iii) members of religious orders or any others living in monastic communities, which did not include those who had left, i.e. those who had lost that status by papal bull or brief, and friars of the three military orders; (iv) those who did not have a net annual income of one hundred thousand *réis* from real

¹⁶ The total was 138 members of the lower house of parliament.

¹⁷ *Borboleta*, n.º 63, 3 de outubro de 1826, pp. 289-292.

estate, capital, trade, employment, public office, liberal arts, and mechanical arts (Art. 4 EI). The following were also not allowed to vote: *(v)* those who had become Brazilian citizens; *(vi)* Portuguese citizens naturalised in a foreign country; *(vii)* those which had accepted foreign employment, pensions, or decorations without the king's permission; *(viii)* those who had been banished, degraded or imprisoned by sentence for as long as such sentence remained in effect; and *(ix)* those who were physically or morally incapacitated (Art. 3 EI).

Provided they met the legal requirements set out above, the following were free to vote: *(i)* heads of households over the age of 25; *(ii)* sons of households over the age of 25 who had no father, lived away from their father, were emancipated by provision or served in public office; *(iii)* persons over 21 years of age, provided they were married, military officers, university graduates, or clergy of sacred orders; *(iv)* naturalised foreigners (Art. 4 EI), although the latter could not be elected as MPs (Art. 8 EI). Although they could not be voted for as provincial electors or MPs, the following were allowed to vote in parish assemblies: *(i)* freedmen; and *(ii)* criminals convicted in a lawsuit or trial (Art. 7 EI).

As for provincial electoral assemblies, in addition to freedmen and convicted criminals, those who did not have an annual income of two hundred thousand *réis* (Art. 6 EI) were also unable to vote in the election of MPs, as mentioned above, which excluded a large part of the parish electorate and restricted the membership of the *Câmara dos Deputados* to the economic and social elite of the Kingdom.

III.2. Electoral census

Portugal was the second country, after France¹⁸, to adopt electoral registration, which was first constitutionalised in the Constitution of 1822¹⁹ and implemented in the parliamentary elections of 1822²⁰.

In 1826, the Chartist electoral system maintained the electoral census. However, in addition to the *active electoral census* or registry of voters, it added the *passive electoral census*, or registry of those eligible as provincial voters and as MPs, meaning that the census commissions began to prepare three separate lists: one for those who could vote in the parish assemblies, another for those who could be provincial voters, and another for those who could be MPs (Art. 14 and Art. 15 EI). In effect, the imposition of passive suffrage census determined the need to register not only voters but also those who were eligible, since it was essential to verify in advance the identity

¹⁸ France was the first country in the world to adopt a population census for electoral purposes, in the Constitution of 1791 (Title III, Chapter 1, Section IV, Article 4).

¹⁹ MOREIRA, Vital e DOMINGUES, José. (2023). *História Constitucional Portuguesa II: Constituição de 1822*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições, p. 222.

²⁰ MOREIRA, Vital e DOMINGUES, José. (2022). *Para a História da Representação Política em Portugal: As primeiras eleições parlamentares | 1822 (Círculo eleitoral de Arcos de Valdevez)*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições, pp. 89-92.

of both those who could vote in parish electoral assemblies and those who could be voted for as provincial voters and MPs (Art. 10 EI).

On parish election day (1st electoral stage), the lists containing the census of the parish or parishes that made up the electoral assembly had to be on the polling station table, thus allowing the identification and control of voters who turned up to vote and of those who were voted for as provincial voters, during the vote counting procedure (Art. 22 EI)²¹.

At provincial electoral assemblies (second electoral phase), these electoral lists had to be available, especially those eligible for MPs, from all parishes and municipalities in the respective province (Art. 30 EI). However, as we shall see, people residing outside the province or even outside the kingdom could be voted for, even if they were not included in the available electoral lists, if they met the legal requirements to be elected as MPs. In this regard, it was even proposed that, for each provincial assembly, the lists of those eligible for election as MPs from other provinces should also be sent²².

IV. VOTING SYSTEM

IV.1. *Single plurinominal vote*

The *single multi-member vote* established by the electoral legislation of 1822, whereby voters cast only one vote, writing the names of the citizens they wished to vote for on a piece of paper or ballot paper, was carried over to the electoral law of 1826 (Art. 24 EI). In these early days of parliamentary elections, the main characteristics of the voting list were as follows:

a) *Written ballot*

Voting intentions had to be written on a piece of paper, meaning that voters did not verbally indicate the names they intended to vote for at the polling station, as had been the usual practice in the election of municipal representatives to the ancient *Cortes* (13th-17th centuries). Together with the prohibition of signatures, this was the first constitutional solution in favour of secret suffrage, in order to ensure

²¹ For more effective identification of voters, it was envisaged that the parish priest or priests would be part of the parish electoral board to “provide information on the identity of their respective parishioners who are eligible to vote” (Art. 22 EI).

²² *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 195, 21 de agosto de 1826, pp. 784-786.

that only the voter himself could know who they were voting for and thus avoid coercion and reprisals²³.

b) Advance ballot

It was the voter himself who brought the pre-filled voting list from outside the polling station on election day and handed it to the president of the electoral board. This was the solution found to allow the illiterate voters to participate in the choice of their national representatives. However, the fact that voters brought the written list from outside called into question the secrecy of the vote, especially in the case of illiterate people, who had to ask someone else to fill in the list for them. Therefore, this form of voting should preferably be considered as semi-secret suffrage. In order to ensure the secrecy of the vote, the electoral law also required that voters hand in their voting lists folded, so that they could be placed in the ballot box without being read or opened (Art. 24 EI); and at the end of the electoral process, all voting lists would be immediately burned (Art. 40 EI)²⁴.

c) Complete list

The voting list included as many names as there were seats to be elected by the respective constituency. However, in parish assemblies that elected a single provincial elector and in single-member overseas constituencies, which elected a single representative, the list obviously contained only one name, so the suffrage was single-member. In the event that lists with more names than the seats allocated to the respective constituency were submitted, the first names were considered voted for and the excess names were eliminated (Art. 26 EI).

In Portugal, for more than a century and a half, it was maintained the single multi-member or single-member vote through a prior list (complete or incomplete) presented by voters. This voting procedure did not change even with the beginning of party candidacies with the First Republic, starting with the elections of the Constituent Assembly of 1911. It was the democratic revolution of 1974 that profoundly changed the way people voted, by revoking the electoral practice that had been

²³ The first constitutions to provide for written voting were those of the American confederate states of Georgia (Art. 13), New York (Art. 6), and Vermont (Art. 29), all dating from 1777. However, the French Republican Constitution of 1795 was the first to refer to secret suffrage in its provisions (Art. 31), followed by the Portuguese Constitution of 1822, which was the second modern political constitution to establish secret suffrage (Art. 42).

²⁴ In this regard, a newspaper in the city of Porto reported that, "in a secret ballot, once the ballot has been opened and the lists that were there have been counted, no other lists can be accepted, because the voting process must be continuous and, therefore, anyone who wishes to vote must arrive on time. If no one else appears to vote, the polling station must open the ballot box and immediately declare the voting closed" – *Paquete Estrangeiro*, n.º 23, 23 de agosto de 1826, pp. 93-96 –.

established in 1822, with voters now voting using ballot papers handed out at the polling station, which are filled in a private booth at the polling station itself.

IV.2. Electoral procedure

On parish election day, the exercise of the right to vote followed these procedures: *(i)* one voter at a time approached the polling table; *(ii)* handed the folded ballot paper to the presiding officer; *(iii)* the scrutineers checked whether the voter was on the electoral roll and recorded their participation; *(iv)* the president put the ballot paper in the ballot box without reading or opening it (Art. 24 EI).

The same voting method was adopted in provincial electoral assemblies. In the case of the province of Minho, for example, it was decided that voters would be called according to a general list, and one voter at a time would approach the table, hand the voting list to the presiding officer, and exit through the side door, returning to take their place through the main door of the room²⁵.

The counting of votes was also similar in both electoral phases. Once voting had ended, the ballot box was opened and one of the scrutineers read each ballot paper aloud in public, while the secretary noted down in the minutes the names of those voted for and the respective number of votes obtained (Articles 27 and 40 EI).

The counting process could be very time-consuming in provinces with more provincial voters and more MPs to be elected, namely Beira (36 MPs) and Minho (30 MPs). In order to speed up the counting of votes in provincial electoral assemblies, a pamphlet was printed with an innovative counting method, which proposed replacing the counting of votes list by list with the individualised counting of each name voted for on all lists, with the collaboration of voters. According to this method, once voting was completed, the counting of votes was conducted in two stages:

1st phase – distribution of lists to voters: *(i)* the president of the polling station mixed the lists in the ballot box so that they could be distributed randomly to voters; *(ii)* the presiding officer of the polling station took one list at a time and handed it to the 1st secretary, who numbered it and passed it on to the 1st scrutineer; *(iii)* the latter initialled it and passed it on to the 2nd scrutineer; *(iv)* the 3rd scrutineer called one voter at a time to the polling station to receive the numbered and initialled lists.

2nd phase – counting of votes: *(i)* the scrutineer began by reading aloud the first name voted for on the first list that had been sorted out (list no. 1); *(ii)* the other voters checked whether that name appeared on the voting list they had received; *(iii)* voters who found it on their lists went to the table and presented it to the scrutineer, who confirmed it with an initial in the paper margin; *(iv)* the secretary recorded the total number of votes obtained by the name in question; *(v)* the same operation was carried out for the remaining names on list no. 1; *(vi)* once the reading of list no. 1 was completed, the voter with list no. 2 was called to the table to read only the names

²⁵ *Borboleta*, n.º 63, 3 de outubro de 1826, pp. 289-292.

that had not been initialled for which the votes had not yet been counted. And so on, until the last uninitialed name on the last list was read, thus concluding the counting and electing of the MPs who achieved the majority required by law²⁶.

We are not aware of this method having been adopted in any electoral assembly, not least because it did not comply with the method provided for in the law, which required the counting of votes list by list and did not provide for the participation of voters in the counting process.

V. MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT

V.1. *Eligibility requirements*

In the election of MPs, the Chartist electoral system imposed even more restrictions on passive electoral capacity (of those eligible) than those established for active electoral capacity (of provincial voters). As we saw above, in relation to MPs, in addition to explicitly excluding naturalised foreigners, the Charter imposed a higher census limit of four hundred thousand *réis* of annual income (Art. 68 CC and Art. 8 EI). It should be noted, however, that as in the previous *vintismo* elections (1822), neither judges nor military personnel were ineligible.

In principle, all parish voters could be elected as provincial voters (Art. 6 EI), just as the latter could be elected as MPs (Art. 8 EI), except for the substantial difference in economic restrictions, which doubled from parish voters (100\$000) to provincial voters (200\$000) and from these to those eligible as MPs (400\$000), which severely reduced the social universe of those eligible.

V.2. *Elimination of the territoriality connection*

The Constitutional Charter eliminated the need for any link of territoriality – place of birth, residence, or domicile – for Portuguese citizens to be voted for and elected as members of parliament in any constituency (Art. 69 CC and Art. 9 EI). Thus, the election of MPs became a national choice, with those eligible being able to be elected by any constituency.

This change meant that, at the end of the elections, there were seven MPs elected by more than one constituency: José Vitorino Barreto and José António Guerreiro were elected in three provinces; Carlos Honório Gouveia Durão, Francisco António de Campos, Francisco Xavier de Sousa Queiroga, Luís Manuel de Moura and Silvestre Pinheiro Ferreira in two provinces. As a result, national representation was

²⁶ FEIO, J. C. (1826). *Difficuldade de apurar os votos na eleição dos deputados das províncias da Beira, Estremadura e Minho e methodo de a vencer*, Lisboa, Impressão Régia.

reduced by nine members of parliament and, instead of the 120 members of parliament provided for by law in metropolitan Portugal, only 111 MPs were elected²⁷.

One question that arose was whether citizens residing abroad could be elected. In the fourth round of voting in the province of Minho, voter José de Azevedo Gouveia Mendanha claimed that Custódio Pereira de Carvalho could not be elected as an MP because: (i) he was residing in London; and (ii) he had not been registered to vote in his parish of birth, nor in any other parish in the kingdom. He therefore suggested that “the votes cast for him should be invalidated and those on the lists yet to be counted should be crossed out”. After debating the issue, the board decided that the candidate was eligible, mainly because the lack of residence in the country was expressly waived by the Charter, which considered “Portuguese citizens, wherever they may be” to be eligible (Art. 69 CC)²⁸.

Subsequently, an unidentified provincial voter published a pamphlet challenging the electoral board’s decision, arguing that Custódio Pereira de Carvalho, living in a foreign country, was no longer an “active citizen” and therefore could not enjoy the political rights of a Portuguese citizen. In summary, the anonymous provincial voter put forward two key arguments:

1st Argument – “Since Carvalho is not subject to the laws of this kingdom and does not contribute his assets (and it matters little to us whether they are many) to the security and defence of the State as we who are here subject to the laws are obliged to contribute (Constitutional Charter Art. 145, § 14); and being, as he indeed is, subject to foreign laws, it is clear that he does not enjoy the political rights of an active Portuguese citizen and that, consequently, lacking this necessary quality, he was not eligible to be judged as a member of the *Cortes*”.

2nd Argument – “No citizen, by virtue of this [electoral] law, may vote or be voted for without being registered, that is, without being qualified by the persons whom the same law has entrusted with verifying the existence of the established qualifications; and it seems, in view of this, that the doctrine that a Portuguese citizen, by virtue of living outside the kingdom, is not required to prove that he is duly qualified is absurd”²⁹.

In our opinion, even if the citizen in question met all the eligibility requirements, it appears that the aforementioned constitutional provision should be interpreted restrictively, so as to exclude residents abroad, as they were not voters and therefore did not satisfy the implicit rule under Article 68 of the Constitution, that only voters could be elected.

²⁷ *Paquete Estrangeiro*, n.º 66, 16 de outubro de 1826, p. 188.

²⁸ *Borboleta*, n.º 65, 5 de outubro de 1826, pp. 300-302.

²⁹ *O Imparcial: suplemento avulso de 9 de outubro de 1826*, Porto, Tipografia da Viúva Álvares Ribeiro e Filhos, n.º 25, 10 de outubro de 1826.

V.3. Electoral formula

In the first elections, at parish level, the citizens with the most votes were elected to the provincial assemblies, *i.e.*, a relative majority of votes was sufficient, and in the event of a tie the older candidate was preferred (Art. 29 EI). In the case of parish assemblies that elected more than one provincial elector, those with the most votes were elected, in order of votes.

However, the law was more demanding in provincial elections, considering that only those who had received “half plus one of the votes of the voters present” (Article 40 EI) – that is, an absolute majority of the votes – could be elected as MPs, which required successive votes as long as there were seats to be filled. However, given the high number of MPs elected in the constituencies of the European continent, the elections could go on indefinitely, a maximum of four votes was legally established, giving rise to a *sui generis* electoral formula of four successive votes, the first three with MPs elected by absolute majority and a final vote with the remaining MPs elected by relative majority.

In summary, voting in the provincial electoral college (2nd electoral level) proceeded as follows: (i) the first three rounds were completely free, meaning that provincial voters could vote for whomever they wanted; (ii) however, only those candidates who achieved an absolute majority in any of the votes were elected; (iii) for the last ballot, the board drew up a list of the names of those who had received the most votes in the third ballot, containing twice the number of MPs still to be elected (*double list*); (iv) in the fourth and final ballot, voters could only vote for the names on that list; and (v) those who obtained the most votes were elected as MPs, *i.e.* a relative majority was sufficient; (vi) in the event of a tie, older candidates were preferred over younger candidates (Art. 41 EI). This means that, in 1826 there were MPs elected by absolute majority and MPs elected by relative majority.

In the Minho constituency, in the fourth and final ballot, the last two MPs to be counted, João José da Silveira Aguiar and João Elias da Costa Faria, were tied. in votes (70 votes each). The electoral assembly raised the question of who was older and ended up assuming that, based on appearance, Silveira Aguiar was the older of the two. However, for the sake of fairness, the assembly declared in the election certificate that both MPs were tied and referred the matter to the *Câmara dos Deputados*³⁰. At the second session (November 2nd, 1826), in view of the age certificate presented by Costa Faria and the letter sent by Silveira Aguiar, in which he admitted to being younger than his counterpart, the *Câmara dos Deputados* settled the matter and decided that João Elias da Costa Faria was the MP elected by the Minho constituency³¹.

³⁰ *Borboleta*, n.º 66, 6 de outubro de 1826, p. 307.

³¹ *Diário da Câmara dos Deputados*, n.º 2, 2 de novembro de 1826, p. 14.

Even so, to remove any doubt, the House requested proof of age from Silveira Aguiar, which was received during the session of November 13th, 1826³².

VI. HOLDING OF THE 1826 ELECTIONS

VI.1. *Electoral map*

As we saw above, according to the *electoral instructions*, MPs were elected in a second vote by the electoral assemblies corresponding to the mainland provinces of the country, the adjacent islands of Madeira and the Azores (Art. 34 EI) and the overseas territories (Art. 51 EI), but the first vote was at parish level, where representatives were elected to the provincial electoral college at the rate of one provincial voter per one thousand households (Art. 26 EI).

Among the preparatory measures for the elections, the geographical delimitation and definition of the meeting place for parish electoral assemblies was particularly complex, given the need to aggregate the smaller parishes in terms of population. In fact, a parish could only form an electoral assembly if it met the legal population requirement; otherwise, it would have to be merged with one or more neighbouring parishes until the limit of households was reached (Art. 16 EI). For the same reason, due to the enormous territorial fragmentation of municipalities at that time, it was necessary to aggregate not only parishes, but also municipalities with fewer than 1,000 households, which, on their own, could not form an electoral assembly either (Art. 17 EI)³³. Before election day, municipal councils were required to publish the final map of electoral assemblies, so that each voter knew exactly where they could exercise their right to vote (Art. 16 EI).

To facilitate this task, maps showing the number of households in all parishes in the country were attached to the *electoral instructions*, indicating the respective municipality and province to which they belonged. By way of example, a map showing the formation of parish electoral assemblies for the city and municipality of Lisbon was also attached, thus demonstrating how to bring together parishes with fewer than a thousand households³⁴. For the *comarca* [district] of Porto, the press contributed to the process by publishing the respective map and clarifying any doubts that might arise in the formation of electoral assemblies³⁵.

³² *Diário da Câmara dos Deputados*, n.º 10, 13 de novembro de 1826, p. 71.

³³ The task of bringing together the small municipalities was entrusted to the *provedores de comarca* (territorial government officials) who had to share the results with all their respective mayors.

³⁴ Lisboa, AHM – Chancelaria da Cidade, Coleção de editais da Câmara Municipal de Lisboa, 1823-1840, Doc. 149; SANTOS, Clemente José. (1884). *Documentos para a historia das Cortes Geraes da nação portuguesa*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional, Vol. II, p. 165.

³⁵ *Paquete Estrangeiro*, n.º 24, 25 de agosto de 1826, pp. 97-100.

Each municipal council drew up its own map of polling stations. Today, putting all the pieces of the puzzle together to draw the national map of parish electoral districts (1st phase of the elections) requires a colossal investigation of the 785 municipalities, 4,086 parishes and 765,210 dwellings in the kingdom at the time, not counting the adjacent islands and overseas territories. For this reason, this map remains completely unpublished and unknown, except for that of the city and district of Lisbon, which was annexed to the *electoral instructions*³⁶.

VI.2. *Electoral calendar*

The schedule of operations for the first election of MPs was set out in the *electoral instructions* themselves (Article 50 EI), which left some room for adaptation for overseas constituencies (Article 51 EI). The electoral law and accompanying maps were immediately sent to all mayors, who were required to forward a copy to each of the parish priests in their municipality (Art. 11 EI), so that, upon receipt of the electoral law and its annexes, the preparatory steps for the electoral acts could begin, at the local level and simultaneously throughout the country, on 1 September 1826.

The electoral census was the most complex activity: on the 1st and 2nd of September, a registration commission was appointed for each parish – composed of the parish priest and three other people (Articles 12 and 14 EI) – which took office on 4th of September, with the requirement that the registration lists be completed by the 9th of September. On the 10th of September, the lists were posted on the door of the parish church, and the originals were sent to the municipal councils, which had the power to resolve, by the 16th of September, any complaints that might arise regarding the electoral census of the parishes in the municipality (Art. 15 EI).

Meanwhile, the municipal councils prepared the necessary map with the parish electoral assemblies and their respective headquarters (Art. 16 EI); the *provedores de comarca* (territorial government magistrates) decided on possible merging of the municipalities, which, on their own, did not have enough population to form an electoral assembly (Art. 17 EI); and the superintendents of the *décimas* (tax administration) drew up lists with the names of the thirteen largest taxpayers in each parish (Art. 18 EI), who formed the electoral commission responsible for appointing the parish electoral board, composed of a president, a secretary and two scrutineers (Art. 20 EI)³⁷. The final electoral maps, which allowed voters to know exactly where they would vote, as well as the written notification to the thirteen largest taxpayers in each parish to be present at the opening of the parish electoral assembly, had to be completed by the 16th of September.

³⁶ *Paquete Estrangeiro*, n.º 24, 25 de agosto de 1826, pp. 97-100.

³⁷ The aim of the commission of the thirteen largest taxpayers was to prevent civil or ecclesiastical authorities from dominating the selection of polling station officials in parishes – cf. *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 195, 21 de agosto de 1826, pp. 784-786 –.

On the 17th of September at 8 a.m.³⁸, the parish elections (1st electoral level) began, which had to be completed by the 19th of September at the latest; on the 30th of September, all provincial voters had to be in the capital of their respective province; the provincial elections for MPs (2nd electoral level) began on the 1st of October and had to be completed by the 8th of October 1826 at the latest (Art. 50 EI)³⁹.

In the constituencies of metropolitan Portugal, all members of parliament were elected within the time limit established by law, with the elections being concluded in the following order: on the 3rd of October, in the provinces of Alentejo and Algarve; on the 4th of October, in the province of Trás-os-Montes; on the 5th of October, in the provinces of Minho and Estremadura; on the 7th of October, in the province of Beira, which had the most voters and elected the most MPs. However, given the distance, it was impossible to comply with such a tight schedule in the constituencies of the adjacent islands (Azores and Madeira) and overseas territories.

With regard to the adjacent islands, the respective captains-general were empowered to set an electoral calendar that was compatible “with the means of communication, sparing no effort so that the elections could be held as soon as possible” (Art. 33 EI). In the islands of Madeira and Porto Santo, the elections were held almost simultaneously with those on the mainland. By a letter dated the 1st of September 1826, Governor D. Manuel de Portugal e Castro determined that parish elections would begin on the 18th of September and provincial elections on the 5th of October 1826⁴⁰. Despite travelling by sea, the MPs from Madeira and Porto Santo were the first to arrive in the capital of the kingdom. They were admitted to the *Câmara dos Deputados*, took the oath of office and took their seats on the 16th of November 1826⁴¹. The election of MPs in the Azores took considerably longer, not only because of the difficulties of communication between the islands, but also because of a series of incidents and local conflicts that made it impossible to hold the elections on time. They had to be rescheduled by the *Câmara dos Deputados*, beginning in December 1826 and only concluded on the 3rd of February 1827⁴².

About the electoral districts in Africa, the *electoral instructions* only reached Cape Verde on the 20th of September 1826, when the first votes had already been cast in the parishes in mainland Portugal. The governor of the province, Colonel João da

³⁸ As the electoral law was silent on this matter, the opening time of parish electoral assemblies was defined by decree on the 14th of September 1826 – *Gazeta de Lisboa*, n.º 218, 16 de setembro de 1826, p. 885 –. At first only the opening of the provincial electoral assemblies was scheduled, at 8 o'clock in the morning (Art. 36 e Art. 38 EI).

³⁹ For a detailed explanation of the preparatory measures for the elections, specifying those that belonged to the *provedor de comarca* (Government territorial official), the *ministro de bairro* (city quarter manager), the *superintendente da décima* (tax superintendent), the mayor, the city council, the parish priest and the census commission, *vide Paquete Estrangeiro*, n.º 22, 21 de agosto de 1826, pp. 89-92.

⁴⁰ MRA – Registo geral de documentos da Câmara, Tomo 16, fl. 3v.

⁴¹ *Diário da Câmara dos Deputados*, n.º 12, p. 81.

⁴² LEITE, José Guilherme Reis. (1999). “As primeiras eleições cartistas nos Açores em 1826”, *Arquipélago-História*, n.º 3, pp. 325-380.

Mata Chapuzet, reported that he had the necessary orders and instructions ready to be sent to all the islands, but citing shipping difficulties due to the ports being scarcely visited at that time of year, he established that the parish elections would be held on the 29th of October and the provincial elections on the 26th of November 1826⁴³. The certification issued to the MPs elected by the Cape Verde constituency (which included Guínea) was passed on the 7th of December when the Cortes had already been in session for over a month⁴⁴. These MPs arrived in Lisbon on the 29th of January 1827, aboard the corvette *Princesa Real*⁴⁵. In São Tomé and Príncipe, the elections were only completed in April 1827⁴⁶. The elections in the Angola constituency must also have been held around this time, since in a letter dated the 29th of March of that year, the governor reported that he was busy with the election of the representative to the Cortes⁴⁷. The documents relating to the election of MPs for these two constituencies were only presented to the *Câmara dos Deputados* on the 3rd of January 1828⁴⁸.

In Portuguese Asia, in the electoral district of Goa (India), the second phase of the elections only began more than a year later, on the 17th of December 1827⁴⁹. Bernardo Peres da Silva was elected as representative for this electoral district, but by the time he arrived in Lisbon, the *Câmara dos Deputados* had already been dissolved, and the throne had been usurped by Prince Miguel⁵⁰. As for the Macau constituency, which covered the islands of Timor and Solor, the respective government only acknowledged receipt of the *electoral instructions* on the 7th of February 1828⁵¹. Therefore, even if elected, the MP for these territories did not join the first Chartist Cortes, whose term had already been interrupted (1826-1828).

VI.3. *Composition of the Câmara dos Deputados*

In line with the deliberate purpose of both the Constitutional Charter and the electoral law, the political and social representation of the first Chartist *Câmara dos Deputados*, as representatives of the third estate – alongside the implicit representation of the clergy and nobility in the *Câmara dos Pares* (upper house) –, was highly selective.

⁴³ OHC – Cabo Verde, Cx. 77, D. 6015.

⁴⁴ PHA – AEM, Cx. 1, 32 (21).

⁴⁵ OHC – Cabo Verde, Cx. 78, D. 6124.

⁴⁶ OHC – São Tomé e Príncipe, Cx. 56, D. 3774.

⁴⁷ OHC – Angola, Cx. 159, D. 11664.

⁴⁸ *Diário da Câmara dos Deputados*, n.º 1, p. 6.

⁴⁹ MIRANDA, Jacinto Caetano Barreto. (1865). *Quadros históricos de Goa: Tentativa histórica*, Vol. 3, Margão, Tipografia do Ultramar, p. 102.

⁵⁰ ARAÚJO, Francisco Duarte de Almeida. (1857). *Chronica da rainha, a Senhora Dona Maria Segunda*, Lisboa, Tipografia, de A. J. F. Lopes, Vol. I, p. 401.

⁵¹ OHC – Macau, Cx. 58, D. 19.

Indirect election, in two stages, and the triple census filter of increasing value – parish voters, provincial voters and those eligible to be MPs – greatly reduced the social basis of parliamentary representation, which was practically limited to landowners, merchants, liberal professionals, university professors, judicial and administrative magistrates, and military officers, excluding the majority of citizens. The list of MPs elected in 1826, and their professions fully confirms this characterisation⁵².

The Constitutional Charter restored the principle of representative government, inherent to constitutional monarchy but, drawing on the well-known Aristotelian categories, political power was much more *monarchical* and *aristocratic* than *democratic*. Therefore, it was only metaphorically that the *Câmara dos Deputados*, together with the *Câmara dos Pares* (who were appointed by the king), could contribute to the political representation of the kingdom as a “political association of all Portuguese citizens”, as established in Article 2 of the Charter.

VII. CONCLUSION

After the constitutional interregnum caused by the *Vila-Francada* counterrevolution (1823-1826), with no Constitution and no elections, the Chartist elections of 1826 restored the representative system and parliamentary elections that had been institutionalised by the Liberal Triennium (1820-1823), with a few continuities – such as the electoral census, the voting method and the electoral formula – but also with profound differences regarding the method of election (direct *versus* indirect election), the scope of suffrage (almost universal male suffrage *versus* census-based male suffrage), and electoral districts (*ad hoc* and relatively homogeneous electoral constituencies *versus* traditional provinces). Of note is the novelty that eliminated the need of territoriality connection (place of birth, residence, or domicile) for those eligible to get elected as members of parliament in each constituency, which has remained in place to this day.

The parliamentary elections of 1826 were the first in a long series of elections for the Chartist Chamber of Representatives. However, in the more than seven decades that followed the enactment of the Constitutional Charter, profound reforms were introduced into the electoral system, beginning with the indirect election method, which would be abolished in the first constitutional amendment of the Charter (Additional Act of 1852), and with census suffrage, which, although never abandoned, would be mitigated in terms of its requirements and would benefit from several derogations in successive revisions of the electoral law. Thanks to these two changes, there was a significant reduction in the profound deficit of democratic representation originating from the Chartist parliamentary model.

⁵² “Lista geral dos deputados às Cortes”, *Borboleta*, n.º 71, 13 de outubro de 1826, Porto, Imprensa do Gandra [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <https://purl.pt/14340>.

The parliamentary elections of 1826, held under the aegis of the Constitutional Charter, are undoubtedly a milestone in Portugal's political and electoral history, and the study of them is essential to understanding subsequent political and electoral developments. This brief survey, in addition to marking the 200th anniversary of these elections, which restored parliamentary representation, leaves the door open for further research that may fill the historiographical gap regarding the first Chartist parliamentary elections.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- ARAÚJO, Francisco Duarte de Almeida. (1857). *Chronica da rainha, a Senhora Dona Maria Segunda: compreendendo os documentos do seu reinado de direito e de facto desde 2 de maio de 1826 até 15 de novembro de 1853*, Lisboa, Tipografia de A. J. F. Lopes.
- CAMPINOS, Jorge. (1975). *A Carta Constitucional de 1826*, Lisboa.
- FERNANDES, Paulo Jorge e ALMEIDA, Pedro Tavares de. (2023). “A Carta Constitucional outorgada em 1826”, in *O Parlamento Português: Vol. I: Antigo Regime e Monarquia Constitucional*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições, pp. 72-85.
- FEIO, J. C. (1826). *Difficuldade de apurar os votos na eleição dos deputados das províncias da Beira, Estremadura e Minho e methodo de a vencer*, Lisboa, Impressão Régia.
- FRANCO, Afonso Arinos de Melo. [1994 (1972)]. “Introdução”, in *O Constitucionalismo de D. Pedro I no Brasil e em Portugal*, Brasília, Ministério da Justiça, pp. 7-34 [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <https://dspace.mj.gov.br/handle/1/10444>.
- HESPANHA, António Manuel. (2004). *Guiando a Mão Invisível. Direitos, Estado e Lei no Liberalismo Monárquico Português*, Coimbra, Almedina.
- LEITE, José Guilherme Reis. (1999). “As primeiras eleições cartistas nos Açores em 1826”, *Arquipélago-História*, n.º 3, pp. 325-380 [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <http://hdl.handle.net/10400.3/287>.
- MAGALHÃES, Félix Pereira de. (1871). *Apontamentos para a historia diplomatica de Portugal desde 1826 em que faleceu o imperador e rei D. João VI até 1834 em que se completou a restauração da coroa da rainha D. Maria II usurpada em 1828 por seu tio o infante D. Miguel*, Lisboa, Imprensa de J. G. de Sousa Neves.
- MENCK, José Theodoro Mascarenhas. (2024). *A Constituição de 1824 e a ordem constitucional no Império do Brasil*, Brasília, Câmara dos Deputados [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <https://bd.camara.leg.br/bd/handle/bdcamara/42006>.
- MIRANDA, Jacinto Caetano Barreto. (1865). *Quadros historicos de Goa: Tentativa historica*, Volume 3, Margão, Tipografia do Ultramar.
- MOREIRA, Vital e DOMINGUES, José. (2022). *Para a História da Representação Política em Portugal: As primeiras eleições parlamentares | 1822 (Círculo eleitoral de Arcos de Valdevez)*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições.

- MOREIRA, Vital e DOMINGUES, José. (2023). *História Constitucional Portuguesa II: Constituição de 1822*, Lisboa, Assembleia da República: Divisão de Edições.
- SANTOS, Clemente José. (1884). *Documentos para a historia das Cortes Geraes da nação portugueza*, Lisboa, Imprensa Nacional [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <http://purl.pt/12101>.
- SARDICA, José Miguel. (2012). "A Carta Constitucional portuguesa de 1826", *História Constitucional*, n.º 13, pp. 527-561 [Online]. [Accessed 14-07-2025]. Available at: <https://historiaconstitucional.com/index.php/historiaconstitucional/article/view/342>.

Título

En el bicentenario de las primeras elecciones parlamentarias cartistas en Portugal (1826)

Sumario

I. INTRODUCCIÓN. II. RÉGIMEN ELECTORAL. II. 1. De la Carta Constitucional a la ley electoral. II. 2. Elecciones indirectas. III. LOS ELECTORES. III. 1. Sufragio restringido. III. 2. Censo electoral. IV. MODO DE VOTACIÓN. IV. 1. Voto único plurinominal. IV. 2. Procedimiento electoral. V. LOS DIPUTADOS. V. 1. Condiciones de elección. V. 2. Eliminación del vínculo de territorialidad. V. 3. Fórmula electoral. VI. REALIZACIÓN DE LAS ELECCIONES DE 1826. VI. 1. Mapa electoral. VI. 2. Calendario electoral. VI. 3. Composición de la Cámara de Diputados VII. CONCLUSIÓN. BIBLIOGRAFÍA.

Abstract

In 2026, Portugal will celebrate not only the bicentenary of the 1826 Constitutional Charter, which was granted by King Pedro IV in Brazil, but also the first parliamentary elections held under the aegis of the Charter. This article aims to contribute to this anniversary by analysing the essential aspects of these early parliamentary elections under the new Constitution, from the preparation of *electoral instructions* by an *ad hoc* committee to the electoral formula adopted to elect members of parliament, including the *preparatory measures* for the electoral acts, active electoral capacity (voters) and passive electoral capacity (eligible citizens). The parliamentary elections of 1826, together with the previous elections of 1822, under the aegis of the 1822 Constitution, constitute a foundational milestone for the country's political, electoral and parliamentary history, on which some of

the current political-electoral solutions are based, which is important to study and highlight.

Resumen

En el año 2026 se celebran en Portugal los doscientos años no solo de la Carta Constitucional de 1826, otorgada por D. Pedro IV en Brasil, sino también de las primeras elecciones parlamentarias celebradas bajo los auspicios de la Carta. Este artículo pretende contribuir a esta efeméride, analizando los aspectos esenciales de esas primordiales elecciones parlamentarias cartistas, desde la preparación de las *instrucciones electorales* por una comisión *ad hoc* hasta la fórmula electoral adoptada para elegir a los diputados, pasando por las *medidas preparatorias* de los actos electorales, la capacidad electoral activa (votantes) y la capacidad electoral pasiva (elegibles). Las elecciones parlamentarias de 1826, junto con las elecciones anteriores de 1822, bajo los auspicios de la Constitución de 1822, constituyen un hito fundacional para la historia política y electoral del país, sobre el que se basan muchas de las soluciones político-electorales actuales, que es importante estudiar y señalar.

Key Words

Right to vote; parliamentary elections; voter registration; history of electoral law; Constitutional Charter of 1826.

Palabras clave

Derecho de sufragio; elecciones parlamentarias; censo electoral; historia del derecho electoral; Carta Constitucional de 1826.