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Croats in the city of Pécs at the end of the 17th century

The most detailed report on the various groupings of the inhabitants of the City of Pécs has been provided by the tax census carried out on imperial-royal regulations on the 28th December 1698. It consists of the data of 637 heads of households. The original written in Latin is in the Archive of Vienna. Mihály Földvári (Feiler), writer and journalist, the vice archivist of Baranya County (from the 1890s to 1904) prepared a Hungarian translation of it, that has been preserved in the Archive of Baranya County No. IV. 1003.d., with the title of 'Register of the inhabitants of the City of Pécs 1698'. The data of the 637 heads of households are the first giving account of the nationality of the persons registered and thus could serve as a starting point to the research of the history of the nationalities in Pécs.

Hungary has been present on the map of Europe as a multiethnic country during its history and although it lost this feature after Trianon, different nationalities – as different censuses prove – still exist within its boundaries. The distribution of nationalities and the number of people within each ethnic group was measured on the occasions of censuses of the population. The first census which also provided data on ethnographical distribution was held in 1850-'51 and from 1870 censuses on an official scale took place in every ten years. The question related to one's mother tongue, which is one of the most adequate in relation to national identity, has been a part of the questionnaires only since 1880. The direct question of one's national identity has become a part of the questionnaire even later in 1941 but since then with the exception of the year 1970 it is regularly amongst the questions to be answered.

The fact that in 1997 one of the discourses of Kisebbségkutató Műhelybeszélgetés (Workshop on Minority Studies) with the title of *Nemzetiségeink és a statisztika (Our Nationalities and Statistics)* also

took it into its topics signs the question's relevance. The since then many times quoted fact was also passed on that discourse, namely that in the past three hundred years several nationalities existed simultaneously in Hungary 'generally in peace or sometimes quarrelling, but the conflicts between different nationalities with tragic consequences - for which there can be found plenty examples in other regions of Europe - have left Hungary intact. One of the most important corner-stones of mutual respect is to know each-other, to know and recognize our own and the members of other nationalities' feelings, values, culture, interests and concerns. The state has to play a leading role in this process. The precondition of participation is the knowledge of the ethnic composition of Hungarian society, the registration of capitation of ethnic minorities and exploration of their major demographical features.'⁶⁷

Croats in Hungary constitute the third largest minority group amongst the thirteen national or ethnic minorities in the country today. Their estimated number is between eighty and ninety thousand which diverges significantly from the officially registered data. The divergence can have many causes.⁶⁸ One of the most apparent explanations is that many persons hid their real identity as a consequence of the forced usage of the terms 'Southern Slavs' or 'Yugoslavs' etc. in the past one-hundred years. Examining the concept of national minority, Nicola Girasoli emphasizes: 'A national minority is a group within a state which is less in number than the rest of the population and not in a dominant position, and whose members had detached from their homeland due to historical events but preserved their religious, linguistic and cultural features and strive to maintain themselves and to reach equal rights as the majority of the society both literally and by the law, and they respect the sovereignty of the state they belong to.'⁶⁹

Similar thoughts were articulated by the LXXVII / 1993 law on the rights of national and ethnic minorities: '...national and ethnic minority is every group of people that have been living in the terri-

⁶⁷ Zoltán Czibulka, 1997. *Nemzetiségeink és a statisztika. Kisebbségkutatás* 1. sz. Budapest.

⁶⁸ Zoltán Czibulka, 1997. *Nemzetiségeink és a statisztika. Kisebbségkutatás* 1. sz. Budapest.

⁶⁹ Nicola Girasoli, 1995. *A nemzeti kisebbségek fogalmáról*. Akadémia Kiadó, Budapest.

tory of Hungary at least for hundred years and numerically exist in minority compared to the whole population, whose members are Hungarian citizens and the group is distinguished by the rest of the population by their mother tongue, culture and traditions and bears evidence of such ethnical or national consciousness of inheritance which tends towards the preservation of these features and the articulation and protection of the interests of their communities’.

The city of Pécs is one of the most important intellectual and cultural centres of Croats in Hungary. The ancestors of Croats living in Pécs today arrived to the territory of Baranya County in the third phase of the immigration of Croats between the years of 1686 and 1690. ‘Their immigration to Baranya after the expulsion of the Turks was also urged by the feudal lords in order to acquire proper workforce for their reoccupied territories.’⁷⁰

Roman Catholic Croats fleeing in most desperate times from the Turks moving out mainly from the eastern and central regions of Bosnia were warmly welcomed by the inhabitants of the area and in return they stayed faithful to religion, Church, country and their fellow citizens. The newly immigrated Croats accomplished significant achievements on religious, economic and cultural fields, too.⁷¹ Their immigration and resettling, the new composition of population still bears a significant effect on the everyday life of the city and its surroundings.

When the Turks after the lost battle of Nagyharsány had left Baranya for good, the first assignee of the Chamber of Pécs District, Christian Vincens considered the assessment of population and property relations as his prime task. The first censuses were unsuccessful as many fled from the questioners. The fact that Vincens spoke nor Hungarian neither Croatian just aggravated the resultlessness and thus many data were recorded improperly.

‘In the restoration of County administration the nomination of count János (Iván) Draskovich to the position of Under-sheriff on the 31th December 1688 meant the first step’.⁷² After his death in 1692

⁷⁰ György Sárosz, 1990. *A Pécs környéki bosnyákok története, gazdasági és társadalmi életük*. Dodola, Baranya Megyei Tanács Nemzetiségi Bizottsága, Pécs

⁷¹ Stjepan Sršan, 1993. *Baranja*,. Matica hrvatska, Osijek.

⁷² Imre Ódor (szerk.), 1996. *Baranya megye évszázadai [1000-1918], A magyar honfoglalás 1100. évfordulója tiszteletére. Tanulmányok és források Baranya megye történetéből 3*. Baranya Megyei Levéltár, Pécs.

the title of Under-sheriff further remained with a Croatian nobleman as it was conferred on his son Péter Draskovich.

The most detailed data on the composition of the population of Pécs is contained by a tax census carried out on the orders of a decree issued by the Imperial Royal Committee on the 28th of December 1698. The report contains the particulars of 637 householders in Pécs and its original copy written in Latin can be found in the Archives of Vienna. The Hungarian translation of the report was carried out at the turn of the century by Mihály Földvári (Feiler) teacher and journalist, the vice-archivist of Baranya County from 1890 to 1904 and is kept in the Archives of Baranya County with the title of *Pécs város népösszeírása (Census of the Population of Pécs)* No.1003.d / IV/ 1698. The particulars of the aforementioned 637 householders are the first records which give the opportunity to conclude on the nationality of the persons registered, thus the document can be seen as the foundation and starting point of a research on nationalities in Pécs.

This census shed light on the demographic features of the population, the presence and economic role of the Croats. The presence of the Croats is well proved by their oath on the exclusiveness of Roman Catholic faith 'which oath was accepted by all the three tongued folks (the Hungarians, the Germans and the Rascians) of the city of Pécs'.⁷³ In case we can accept Sršan's definition that under the name Rascian (a *name generally used for people with Serb origin – trans.*) we are to understand the immigrant Croats, then it becomes obvious that that these 'Rascians' were Roman Catholics. After Sršan: 'These Roman Catholics who immigrated to Hungary under various names such as Slavs, Illyrs, Bosnians, Šokci, Bunjevci, even Rascian were all Croats by their nationality which is best supported by their religious persuasion contrary to the Serbs who in the mass belong to the Orthodox Church.'⁷⁴

From a different approach: "In the 16th century, the influx of Slavic population from the Balkans had begun particularly with the

⁷³ Ferenc Váradi (szerk.), 1896-1897. *Baranya múltja és jelenje I. II.*, Pécs.

⁷⁴ Stjepan Sršan, 1999. Doseljenja Hrvata u Podunavlje pod vodstvom franjevaca do sredine 18. stoljeća. *Glasnik*, Arhiva Slavonije i Baranje 5., Osijek.

Serbs who belong to the Greek Church, Muslims and Roman Catholic Bosnians (on their joint name at that time the: Rascians)”⁷⁵

According to a survey on the knowledge of the office-bearers of the Council carried out between 1780 and 1790, out of 26 officials 8 spoke Croatian and an additional 6 ‘the four languages prevailing here’ i.e. also the Croatian language. Although some of the officials did not name the language they spoke, but their surnames refer to their possible command of the Croatian language: György *Mestrovics*, András *Ranics*, József *Kovacsics*.⁷⁶

It is not without reason to ask how it is possible to determine the ethnical composition of the population based on the data of different censuses. Since nationality is not always indicated separately on the sheets, the analyses of surnames remains the only way to determine it as the mixing of different ethnic groups was almost unprecedented in that time. The era in question was more characterized by the antagonism of nationalities so the former mentioned method presumably brings reliable results.⁷⁷

The tax census in 1698 contains the particulars of 637 householders. Only the names of taxable, adult, males were recorded, or in case of the householder’s death, the name of his widow. The recorded data give us a detailed picture about the agriculture of the families: about their livestock, the size of their lands, their tax paying but concerning their religion, origin or nationality, the census is incomplete for a contemporary eye. Such data is indicated only in 166 cases according to which: 81 + 4 persons were German, 51 persons were Hungarian, 29 persons were Croat, 1 person was Serb. Religion, origin and the name could refer to the missing data on national identity of the inhabitants. The least complicated task is to identify the Serbs, as their religion is indicated next to their names almost with no exception and this seems appropriate to define their national identity.

⁷⁵ János Varga J., 1998. *A 17. század demográfiai viszonyai, A Kárpát-medence etnikai és demográfiai viszonyai a honfoglalástól a török kiűzéséig*. Janus Pannonius Tudományegyetem, Pécs 1998.

⁷⁶ Mária Anna Móró – Imre Ódor, 1996. *A felszabadult város 1686-1867. Pécs ezer éve. Szemelvények és források a város történetéből*. Pécs.

⁷⁷ István Taba, 1941. *Baranya megye népessége a XVII. sz. végén*. Baranya Vármegye Közönsége, Pécs.

There is not enough room here to enumerate all those who can be judged as Croats after their names one by one so the following summarizing chart contains the demographical data of Pécs reflective to the 1698 census:

Time of immigration	Origin of Population					
	Bosnia	Croat-Slavonian	Hungary	Other	Un-known	Total
unknown	3	8	2	-	7	20
under Ottoman rule	6	10	2	-	27	46
Born here	-	2	-	-	22	24
Since youth	1	1	1	-	-	3
1668.	-	-	1	-	-	1
1675.	1	-	-	-	-	1
1678.	-	-	-	-	2	2
1683.	1	2	1	-	1	5
1684.	-	-	-	-	4	4
1685.	3	11	10	-	13	37
1686.	-	2	-	-	-	2
1687.	-	2	-	-	-	2
1688.	2	1	1	1	3	8
1689.	3	-	-	-	2	5
1690.	18	6	3	-	16	43
1691.	6	5	-	-	10	21
1692.	7	2	-	-	5	14
1693.	4	7	-	1	7	19
1694.	7	7	-	2	7	23
1695.	5	3	-	-	1	9
1696.	7	1	-	1	4	13
1697.	-	2	-	-	1	3
1698.	-	-	1	-	-	1
total:	74	72	22	5	135	308

According to the chart it is obvious that 43.83% of the population's origin is unknown and also that the majority of these inhabitants arrived to Pécs during the Ottoman rule or were born here. Taking into consideration the time of immigration it can be stated that the arrival of Croats can be divided into two major waves: before the liberation of the city (1685) and the early 1690s when massive

crowds of immigrants arrived from Bosnia and Syrmia which were still waging war.

The 1698 tax census gives a detailed picture on the economic circumstances of Croats in Pécs. One of the common features of their settling down is the ownership of house and land about which there are questions in the census. If we compare the economic circumstances of the 308 Croat householders with the economic circumstances of inhabitants with different nationalities (Hungarian, German, Serb, Greek) it can be said that the Croats owned small amount of land while their livestock was commensurate to the livestock of other nationalities and their main field of activities was viniculture.

Livestock of Croat population in comparison to the livestock of overall population		
	Croats (308 pers.)	Overall population (637 pers.)
horse	94	207
ox	203	823
cow	240	490
calf	213	367
sheep	162	354
pig	79	159
donkey	70	108
beehive	69	282

Owned land of Croat population in comparison to owned land of overall population		
	Croats (308 person)	Overall population (637 person)
vineyards	831 hoers	1577 hoers
plough-land	262,75 morgen	610 morgen
pasture-land	199,5 scythe-man	430 scythe-man

The amount of taxes paid also show that the majority of immigrant Croats that time were craftsmen or merchants, as the transcripts of guild charters in Croatian indicate.⁷⁸

Finally, we also have to mention that different summaries have been made about the 1698 census in consideration of the national identity of inhabitants. While, according to István Taba, 171 Hungarian,

⁷⁸ Árpád Somogyi, 1966. *Pécsi szláv ötvösök a XVII-XIX. században és céhlevelük.* Janus Pannonius Múzeum Évkönyve 1965, Pécs.

349 Slavic and 79 German householders lived in Pécs at that time, György Sárosácz puts the Slavs into different groups and talks about 325 Croat, 139 Hunagrian, 92 German, 53 Vlach and 28 Serb householders. Irrespective of either categorisation, the data on the agriculture and tax-paying of the population show that both the Croats and other nationalities contributed to the construction of their new homeland to a large extent. And it is also unquestionable that after the Turkish times the city gained its multiethnic character which it has proudly preserved until today.

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