

1848 Obuda: A Social Portrait from a Forgotten Census



The Power of **AND**

University of Wisconsin
Eau Claire

Trace Osborn, Sarah Mcklveen, Eric Hagstrom, Emily Herkert, and Prof. Jim Oberly | Department of History and International Fellows Program

INTRODUCTION

The European Historical Population Samples Network is Europe's leader in collecting census data in the continent's long history. The shorthand for this organization's project is MOSAIC, and it has its focus on Central and Eastern Europe. For this project, the researchers were in Budapest, Hungary, which is undoubtedly in Central Europe. MOSAIC collects microdata from censuses past and present.



Max Planck Institute for Demographic Research
Konrad-Zuse-Str. 1, 18057 Rostock - Germany
+49 381 2081-190 (secretary's office)
<http://www.censusmosaic.org>

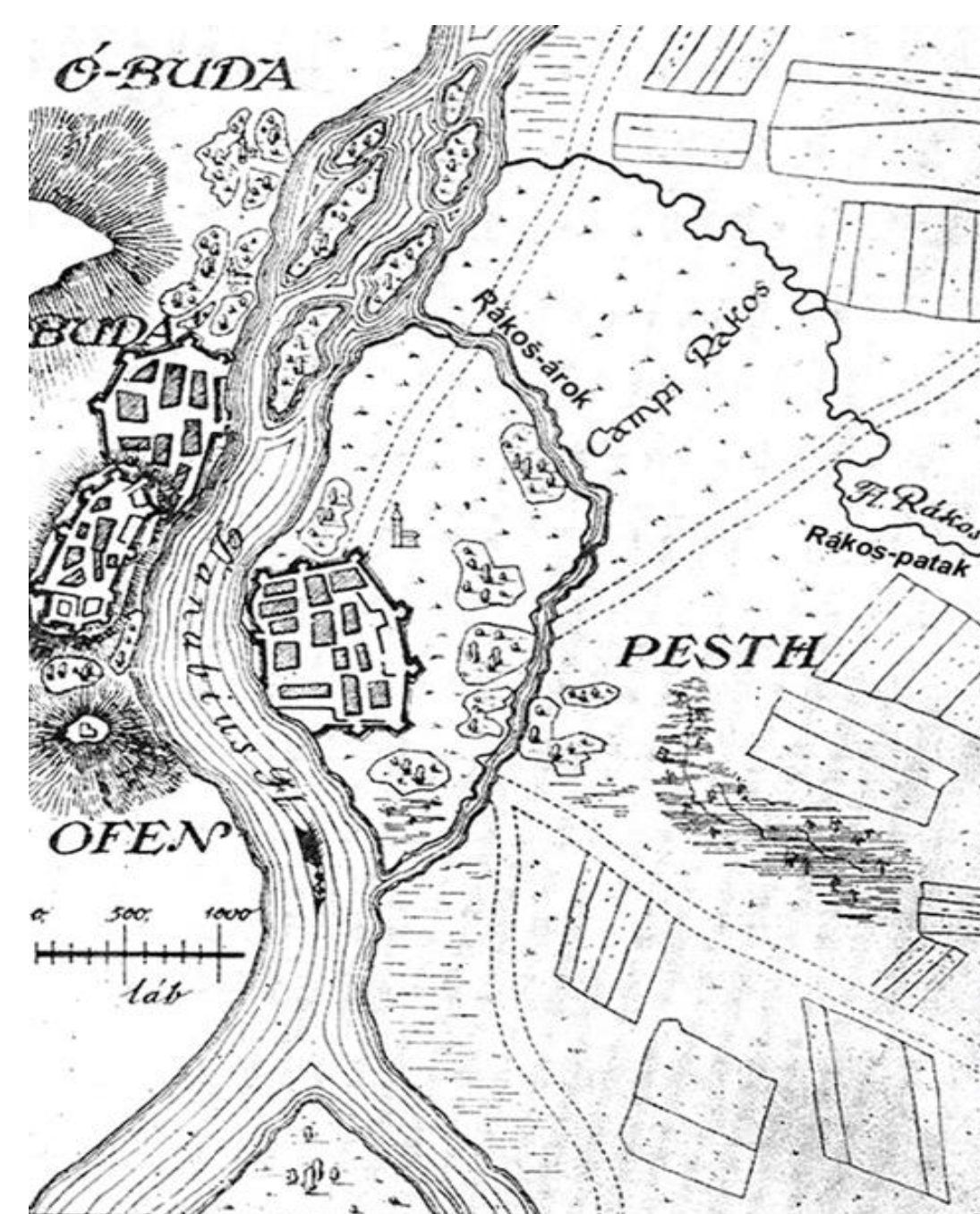
"What is microdata? Microdata are the individual records that contain information collected about each person and housing unit. They are computerized versions of the questionnaires collected from households, as coded and edited during census processing." [Columbia University Libraries, 2015]

PROJECT OVERVIEW

For this project the faculty leader and the student researchers were working in the *Budapest Főváros Levéltára* (the Budapest City Archives, or BFL). The research team photographed and digitized into a machine-readable dataset the entire 1848 census that was taken in Budapest. In our collection of this data, the researchers discovered that *the material that we were working with had never been analyzed, totaled, or studied in any way*. When the census was over the records were merely stowed away. We are the first researchers to study this data.

This census was taken by local officials of the Hapsburg (Austrian) Empire, that was in control of much of Central Europe at the time. The records are in German because German was the official language of the Hapsburg Empire. It was taken in May 1848, just at the time that Hungarians revolted against the Empire; one of the demands of the revolutionaries was the use of Hungarian as the official language of Hungary.

[Map of Buda, Pest, Obuda, ca 1848]



The 1848 Budapest census data that has survived consists of seven villages that later became the City of Buda, and also the City of Obuda, together totaling about 48,000 people. The manuscript census for Pest has not survived. This poster focuses on the neighborhood of Obuda, the northernmost neighborhood of Budapest. Obuda is also the most ancient part of the city, and it contains Roman ruins left behind from the time of the Emperor Trajan.

This sampling of the broader census gives a striking look into the demographics of 1848 Budapest, and more specifically, into the lives of the citizens of Obuda at the time. The census gave the street address, the family name, the names and ages of the people living there, the relation of each person to the head of house, and the religion of all of the people. That data left us with the following findings.

FINDINGS

A) Population and Family Characteristics

Naturally, one of the first parts of the data to analyze is the total population. Our research found that the neighborhood of Obuda had 10,413 residents at the time the census was taken. The 10,413 residents were spread across 2,395 households, which is an average of 4.35 people per household. Further analysis of these statistics led us to the fact that the average male head of house was, on average, 5 years older than his spouse.

Statistics				
		Head of Household Age		Wife's Age
N	Valid	2031		1791
	Missing	364		604
Mean		41.14		36.43
Median		38.00		34.00

B) What the Census says about Religion

Analyzing the religious data showed that the vast majority of Obuda claimed to be Roman Catholic (72%). The religious data also shows that Obuda had a large Jewish population. Additionally, the data shows an incredibly limited number of households that claimed to have a mixed or divided household on religious grounds. Most interestingly, no entire household claimed Protestantism on this census.

Confession					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	RomanKatholikus	1724	72.0	72.0	72.0
	Izraelitis	659	27.5	27.5	99.5
	mixed RK-Izr	7	.3	.3	99.8
	mixed RK-Prot	3	.1	.1	99.9
	mixed Prot-Izr	2	.1	.1	100.0
	Total	2395	100.0	100.0	

C) Family Size by Religious Denomination

The data in the census also allowed the researchers to compare the family size of Roman Catholics and Jews in Obuda. Those findings show that the Jewish population of Obuda had nearly one more child more per household than Roman Catholics did.

Report				
Family Size/ Confession	Mean	Total Number	Std. Deviation	
RomanKatholikus	4.16	1724	2.144	
Izraelitis	4.85	658	2.319	
mixed RK-Izr	4.00	7	1.414	
mixed RK-Prot	2.67	3	.577	
mixed Prot-Izr	4.00	2	.000	
Total	4.35	2394	2.211	

D) Other

While there are countless aspects of this data that are incredibly interesting, one part stands out. Of the 2,395 households in Obuda, 225 had a brother or sister of the head of house living with the family: That is nearly 10% of households in this neighborhood.

INTERPRETATION

The data we analyzed here is important because it is the first time that any of the information was compiled. The discovery of the Obuda population, the analysis of the ages, religion, family sizes, and the rest of the information we have compiled has never been done for the Budapest area in 1848.

The religious data we uncovered was surprising, given the religious diversity of Hungary today in comparison with the numbers in 1848. Everyone in the census claimed a religion, yet today, nearly 50% of Hungarians do not claim a religion. While Communism played a significant role in that development, there are other variances as well. Only 5 households had a member claim Protestantism in 1848. Today, nearly 14% of Hungarians claim to be Protestant. This increase is even more significant in light of how many Hungarians do not claim a religion today. This discovery leads to further questions about the role of the Catholic Hapsburgs dominance over Hungary and more broadly, the connection between empire and religion.

The discovery that Jewish families were larger than Catholic families at this time is surprising when considering Catholicism today. The official stance of the Catholic church is against the use of conception, which generally leads to larger family sizes. This data shows how that has changed over time. Another interesting aspect of the religious data is how large the Jewish population was in Obuda. Until World War II, Budapest had always had a large Jewish population, but in Obuda, the Jewish population was a higher percentage of the population than the average.

Of the 225 households that had the head of house's brother living with them; in 172 of those households (76.4%) the brother was 30 years old or younger. This shows a paternal instinct in older brothers, helping their brothers to get ready for whatever life had planned. The fact that nearly 25% of the brothers were above 30 shows the value that families in that time place in looking after each other.

SIGNIFICANCE



The year 1848 holds significance to a number of ethnicities in Europe, because that year saw numerous political revolutions that would mark the beginning of the end of empires in Europe. Hungary was no different. In 1848, a revolution began in Budapest that sought to increase Hungarian power within the Hapsburg Empire, to revitalize the national identity that they felt was being lost in the Hapsburgs attempt to Germanize the country, and to allow Hungarians greater individual freedoms. The analysis of this census will allow Hungarians a view into the history of that revolution that was impossible before: a breakdown of the individuals that were there; people that lived, breathed, and fought for that revolution. This research also leaves open the possibility of working with more censuses from across Hungarian and, more broadly, European history, which could shed a new light on old pages of European history.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank ORSP, the International Fellows Research Program, the MOSAIC Project, the Budapest Főváros Levéltára, and the UW-Eau Claire Center of Excellence for Faculty and Undergraduate Student Research Collaboration for their support.

REFERENCES

Photos: Various faculty, Karoli Gaspar Reform University, Budapest, Hungary
Quote about microdata: http://library.columbia.edu/locations/dss/data/census_microdata.html
Information/Statistics on language and religion of Hungarians today: https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/docs/html/Charts_and_Statistics_Regarding_1848_Census_Data: Research done and compiled by Eric Hagstrom, Emily Herkert, Sarah Mcklveen, Trace Osborn, and Dr. James Oberly