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Tržnica (El Bornet) v središču Barcelone; v ozadju obrambni del mesta, anonimna slika iz 18. stoletja. / Mercato (El Bornet) nel centro di Barcellona, con la cittadella militare sullo sfondo, dipinto anonimo del XVIII secolo. / The market (El Bornet) in central Barcelona, with the military citadel in the background, anonymous 18th century painting (Barcelona City History Museum, MHCB 10946; Wikimedia Commons).

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NEWCOMERS IN MARIBOR IN THE FIRST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY IN THE MARRIAGE RECORDS OF THE PARISH OF ST JOHN THE BAPTIST

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the role of newcomers in Maribor during the early eighteenth century through an analysis of 401 marriages recorded between 1700 and 1748 in the Parish of St John the Baptist. At least one spouse in each of these documented marriages originated from outside Maribor (including arrivals from German-speaking Styria, from Carinthia and Carniola, as well as nearby towns and villages). The study shows strong evidence that in-migration via marriage was vital for Maribor's demographic and economic recovery after the late seventeenth-century plague. Newcomers often married into established local families, particularly those of guild masters and artisans, swiftly obtaining burgher status and guild membership. Marriage functioned as a key integration mechanism that transformed 'outsiders' into 'insiders' and helped replenish skilled labour in the town. The findings highlight that Maribor depended on a constant influx of migrants to sustain its population and craft industries, as was typical of many pre-industrial towns where deaths outpaced births. Through quantitative analysis of marriage registers and illustrative case studies, the article contributes new insights into early modern urban mobility, showing how socially sanctioned institutions like marriage facilitated the integration of migrants into urban society.

Keywords: Maribor, Styria, newcomers, migrations, marriage as an integration mechanism, early-modern urban demography

I NUOVI ARRIVATI A MARIBOR NELLA PRIMA METÀ DEL DICIOTTESIMO SECOLO NEI REGISTRI MATRIMONIALI DELLA PARROCCHIA DI SAN GIOVANNI BATTISTA

SINTESI

L'articolo esamina il ruolo dei nuovi arrivati a Maribor durante l'inizio del diciottesimo secolo, attraverso l'analisi di 401 matrimoni registrati tra il 1700 e il 1748 nella parrocchia di San Giovanni Battista. In ciascuno dei matrimoni documentati, almeno uno degli sposi non proveniva di Maribor. Lo studio rileva che l'immigrazione tramite matrimonio fu fondamentale per la ripresa demografica ed economica di Maribor dopo la peste della fine del diciassettesimo secolo. I nuovi arrivati spesso si sposavano con membri di famiglie locali già affermate, in particolare quelle dei maestri artigiani e dei membri delle corporazioni, ottenendo rapidamente lo status di borghesi e l'iscrizione alle corporazioni. Il matrimonio funzionava come un meccanismo chiave di integrazione che trasformava gli 'outsiders' in 'insiders' e contribuiva a rifornire la città di manodopera qualificata. I risultati evidenziano come Maribor dipendesse da un flusso costante di immigrati per mantenere la propria popolazione e le attività artigianali, come avveniva in molte città preindustriali in cui i decessi superavano le nascite. Attraverso l'analisi quantitativa dei registri matrimoniali e di casi studio esemplificativi, l'articolo offre nuove prospettive sulla mobilità urbana nell'età moderna, mostrando come istituzioni socialmente riconosciute come il matrimonio favorissero l'integrazione dei migranti nella società urbana.

Parole chiave: Maribor, Stiria, nuovi arrivati, migrazioni, matrimonio come meccanismo d'integrazione, demografia urbana in età moderna

INTRODUCTION¹

On 21 September 1728, two siblings, originally from Leibnitz, stepped before the altar of the Church of St John the Baptist in Maribor. Joseph (Josephus) Künsperger, a belt-maker, married Maria Katharina (Catharina)

¹ This article was produced as part of the basic research project *FACING FOREIGNERS Between the Medieval and Early Modern Period in the North Adriatic Towns* (grant number J6-4603) and the programme group *The past of North-eastern Slovenia among Slovenian historical lands and in interaction with the European neighbourhood* (grant number P6-0138), both funded by the Slovenian Research and Innovation Agency (ARIS). This article is also based upon work from the COST Action CA22149 *Research Network for Interdisciplinary Studies of Transhistorical Deliberative Democracy (CHANGECODE)*, supported by COST (European Cooperation in Science and Technology).

Korper, the daughter of a local foundry master, while his sister Maria Rosalia immediately wed Graz jeweller Franz Xaver Eisner. With that single inscription in the parish marriage register, Joseph passed from newcomer to prospective burgher, acquiring the first rights and obligations that tied incomers to Maribor's civic community. Scenes of outsiders becoming insiders, recorded more than four hundred times in the registers between 1700 and 1748, at least to some degree helped a town during the first years of this period still recovering from the plague of 1680–82 to repopulate its workshops and tighten its links to the broader Inner Austrian economy.

This introductory study attempts to reconstruct select aspects of newcomer integration's scale, social profile and institutional pathways in the first half of the eighteenth century. The focus lies on 236 marriages in which at least one spouse was recorded with an external parish of origin from more distant areas. We know this criterion is arbitrary since newcomers from the surrounding Lower Styrian countryside were also regarded as newcomers, but we found this differentiation valuable and adequate, in particular when it comes to differentiation between non-dwellers from the immediate or close surroundings and all other territories. It should be noted, e.g., that occupation is registered far less often in the large former group than in the later. Our research aims to trace how marriages channelled newcomers from the Lower Styrian towns, like Ptuj, Celje and Slovenska Bistrica, German-speaking parts of Styria, from Carinthia and Carniola, and from more distant lands into Maribor's craft guilds and burgher ranks. By tracing each bridegroom's or bride's recorded place of origin, occupation, and subsequent civic status, we seek to (1) quantify the relative weight of local, regional and supra-regional streams; (2) examine how marriage functioned as an entry ticket to guild membership and burgher status; and (3) very modestly assess the demographic contribution of newcomers to a city or town, at least in first decades of the eighteenth century still recovering from the late-seventeenth-century mortality crises.

We have mainly limited ourselves to the marriage register, as it offers the best starting point for reflecting on the issue. When a marriage was celebrated, priests usually noted the names of the bride and groom, their parents and, usually, their origins. Often, a note was added on the occupation of the groom, sometimes also that of his father. We have also consulted the burial register, but the data recorded is limited in this period (unlike in the last third of the seventeenth century, when registers are already available) (Hozjan, 2024, 13) and does not even provide the ages of the deceased, so that, except for a few comparisons, it has not proved to be very useful. We explicitly acknowledge that the evidential value of marriage registers alone is limited for comprehensive demographic inference. A fuller investigation could integrate baptism and burial registers and triangulate them with serial sources such as household or tax listings and analogous enumerations,

before advancing stronger demographic hypotheses. It should be added that the above-mentioned registers were used in the edition of the late academician Jože Mlinarič, which is part of the collection Materials for the History of Maribor (Mlinarič, 2002; 2003).

We limited ourselves to the part of the mentioned collection covering the years 1700–48 (Mlinarič, 2002; 2003). This period occupies a clear historiographical niche: it bridges Hozjan's treatments of Maribor's demographic up to the mid-eighteenth century (Hozjan, 2002; 2006) and the examinations of the town's demographic and occupational structures after mid-century (Curk, 2002; Hozjan, 2019).

The discussion unfolds in four further sections, which follow the Introduction. Section Theoretical Concepts defines the pre-industrial era's migration regimes (1650–1750) and the eighteenth-century newcomer. The Historical Context section sketches the socioeconomic and institutional setting of Maribor and the Parish of St John the Baptist in the first half of the century. Empirical Analysis then quantifies newcomers, maps their geographic catchment, and examines their occupational spectrum. In the Case Studies section, three examples illustrate the individual strategies behind the aggregate numbers: the sculptor Joseph Straub, the Künsperger siblings, and a rare interfaith marriage. Finally, the Conclusion summarises the findings, comments on the study's limitations, and indicates directions for future research.

THEORETICAL CONCEPTS

Conceptualising Migration Regimes in the Pre-industrial Era (1650–1750) and Newcomers

Early modern urban society was highly dynamic, shaped profoundly by the influx of newcomers – termed *advena*, *forensis*, *extraneus* or simply foreigners in contemporary sources (Ergaver, 2024, 688). Contrary to older assumptions of a static pre-industrial society, recent scholarship since 2000 – but also select researchers of older generations – emphasises that mobility in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was pervasive across Europe (e.g. Weber, 2022; Augel, 1971; Bade, 2000; Bade & Oltmer, 2003; Lucassen & Lucassen, 2014; De Munck & Winter, 2012). Movement was a regular part of rural routines as young people sought work in agriculture, and people moved to marry or acquire land. Even before the advent of railroads and modern passports, 'thousands of newcomers a year poured into the bigger cities' of early modern Europe (Clark, 2012, 1193). In Habsburg Inner Austria – particularly the duchies of Styria, Carinthia, and Carniola – cities like Maribor (*Marburg*), Ljubljana (*Laibach*), and Graz depended on a steady stream of migrants to sustain growth and recovery. The urban natural increase alone was insufficient, as the four horsemen of the apocalypse – war, strife, famine, and death – took their toll (Friedrichs, 1979, 43). As Leslie

Moch observes, cities ‘could not maintain their numbers without the intrepid newcomers who streamed through their gates’ (Moch, 2011).

Historians describe an ‘early-modern migration regime’ to characterise the legal and institutional filters that structured this mobility. Unlike modern nation-states, early modern polities enforced mobility through estate-based and local regulations rather than national citizenship (Fahrmeir, 2007, 9–26). Town charters, guild statutes, seigneurial laws, and provincial decrees collectively formed a migration regime that simultaneously needed and restricted newcomers. On the one hand, labour demand after wars and plagues pulled migrants into cities; on the other, exclusionary mechanisms limited who could settle and under what conditions. For example, residence and business in a walled town often required formal burgher rights (citizenship) or incorporation into a guild (Wallis *et al.*, 2015, 3). Those without such status – labelled *habitatores* (inhabitants without full rights) or simply outsiders – faced higher taxes, residency permits, or even expulsion in times of crisis (Ergaver, 2024, 688). Overall, however, recent research suggests these barriers, while significant, were permeable. Migrants and the sons of ‘outsiders’ comprised a large share of many urban populations, indicating that towns ultimately incorporated many incomers despite formal hurdles. The tension between the economic necessity of newcomers and the legal impulse to control them is a recurring theme in the literature.

Marriage emerged as a key strategy by which outsiders navigated the urban migration regime in this period. Social historians have documented how marrying into an established local family could fast-track an immigrant’s integration, effectively making marriage a ‘gateway’ to guild membership and burgher rights (Ergaver, 2024, 688).

Citizenship (*bürgerrecht*) itself served as prized social capital. Many cities in the 1700s relaxed ancestry rules and sold burgher status to industrious immigrants. New citizens could trade, join guilds, and hold office, but poor newcomers or non-Catholics often remained lifelong *habitatores*. Women and the poor, though taxed, stayed politically marginal. Together, marriage and citizenship formed interlocking and highly selective mechanisms that structured migrant mobility and stratification in the early modern period (Walker, 1971; Boone & Prak, 1996; Van Zanden & Prak, 2006; Epstein, 1998).

A few words should also be devoted to how we defined the concept of a newcomer in the framework of this article. We understood it quite broadly, yet still somehow selective, as we included in the category all individuals who came to Maribor from any area. Yet we decided to emphasize newcomers from the areas outside the immediate surroundings of Maribor, i.e. its neighbouring parishes like Jarenina or Hoče. For the study, we also included individuals already residing in Maribor but whose external origin was explicitly mentioned in the marriage register. At the same time, we briefly note immigrants from the mentioned immediate surroundings based on data in the marriage register, only to illustrate their general contribution to the changing townscape of early eighteenth-century Maribor.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

Maribor in the First Half of the Eighteenth Century

Maribor at the turn of the eighteenth century was still recovering from severe demographic losses caused by the plague of 1680–82, considered by contemporary parish sources as the most devastating epidemic of the early modern period (Oman, 2023, 274). In the area that composed the Parish of St John the Baptist, up to 483 deaths were attributed to the epidemic, representing about one-seventh of all communicants (Hozjan, 2002, 33; 2006, 311–312).²

The baptismal register for 1682 notably recorded that illegitimate births accounted for an unusual twenty per cent, indicating a crisis in the social fabric. Jože Mlinarič even wrote of characteristic shifts in the linguistic composition of the town's population in connection with the population change resulting from the plague. However, recovery was swift: tax records and the town-wide tax census of 1711 already revealed household numbers approaching pre-plague levels, and by 1739, the Easter roll counted 2,489 communicants with twenty-three absentees (Mlinarič, 1991a, 186). Strategic geography supported this resurgence. Maribor's location, with the only permanent bridge over the Drava river between Dravograd and Ptuj, situated it firmly on the longstanding Vienna–Graz–Ljubljana route. Thanks to the construction of the Vienna–Trieste trade road under Emperor Charles VI, which passed through the town, Maribor experienced at least a moderate economic boom in the eighteenth century and finally overtook its Lower Styrian rival Ptuj (Mlinarič, 1991a, 186). The 1754 Habsburg census enumerated at least eight licensed innkeepers and two wine-tavern owners within the town walls, reflecting the economic vitality sustained by significant traffic (Hozjan, 2019, 589; Curk, 2002, 76–77). River transport also expanded significantly. The timber bridge was eventually replaced in 1775 with a more robust structure suitable for military and heavy commercial traffic (Zgonik, 1991, 21). The town maintained its distinct medieval urban texture throughout the early eighteenth century. A 1712 panorama by Werner depicted Maribor dominated by the landmarks of the parish church and the castle amidst a cramped grid of roughly four hundred plots (Hozjan, 2006, 315).

Administratively, Maribor's status remained unchanged until significant reform by Maria Theresa, who in 1752 established Maribor as the permanent seat of the District (*Kreis*) between the Mura and the Drava, firmly positioning it as a regional centre overseeing military accounts, road inspections, and land taxation (Semlič Rajh, Oman & Mlinarič, 2012, 25). Despite administrative stability, municipal finances were unstable, burdened notably by the 1619 mortgage of the lucrative provincial-court jurisdiction to Johann Jakob Khisl due to war levies – a financial liability persisting into the 1730s (Koropec, 1991, 117). Maribor, already a centre of crafts and guilds in the Middle Ages, remained so in the early modern period. The town's life was dictated by the two main groups of townspeople, the merchants and the craftsmen or artisans, which is

2 Cf. Grahornik (2025, 172–173), who besides this number also cites some lower figures.



Fig. 1: View of Maribor from 1678 published by cartographer Georg Matthäus Vischer (Vischer, 1681, 199).

also evident from the material under discussion. The craftsmen were the overwhelming majority in numbers, while the merchants usually represented the town's elite. It was the pursuit of a craft activity or the acquisition of a craft workshop that were important incentives for newcomers to come to Maribor, as will be seen from the presentation of the data. As this present study shows, bakers, leatherworkers, shoemakers, butchers, barrel makers, blacksmiths and tailors were present in Maribor as the strongest in numbers from the mid-eighteenth century onwards (Mlinarič, 1991a, 181–185). By that time, according to Slovenian historian Andrej Hozjan, the specialisation of the craft and service professions and the new needs of the burghers had become so diverse that there was even a watchmaker for small clocks and a watchmaker for large clocks in the town (Hozjan, 2006, 319). Maribor was also home to some nobles, the clergy and, of course, many servants. One of the defining features of Maribor has always been its rich diversity, encompassing social, ethnic, and cultural differences. Among the

languages spoken, German held the primary role, serving as the standard means of communication between different social groups. However, its dominance was mainly due to functional bilingualism or even trilingualism rather than monolingual usage. Most Slovene-speaking newcomers started assimilating linguistically as soon as they entered the town gates, gradually adopting German as their everyday language. According to Slovenian historian Boris Golec, the town thus acquired a distinctly German cultural character. By the late eighteenth century, Slovene had largely disappeared from public and religious spheres within the town, persisting only in the sermons delivered at the suburban Church of St Ulrich (Golec, 2003, 31–32). Not all challenges Maribor faced were demographic or cultural. Visitors complained about fetid gutters and slaughter offal in the lanes; even the 1600 Counter-Reformation Commission had commanded the council in its fourteenth article to remove every uncleanness that corrupts the air and breeds contagion. However, sustained investment in fortifications and a new bridge left precious little for drains, so epidemic scares continued well into the late eighteenth century (Hozjan, 2006, 316).

In summary, Maribor in the first half of the eighteenth century was a modest yet resilient town of crafts, strategically positioned, administratively reinforced, culturally pluralistic, and constantly negotiating a delicate balance between defence and economic growth.

The Parish of St John the Baptist Until the Eighteenth Century

As Maribor's oldest continual religious institution – and today the cathedral seat of the Archdiocese of Maribor – the Parish of St John the Baptist provides a unique thread through which Maribor's political, social and demographic history can be followed from its medieval beginnings to the modern era.

The first firm proof of the parish's existence is a charter dated 1185–92 and another from 1189, both naming its parish priest Conradus (Mlinarič, 2006, 299); this fixes the latest possible date for its foundation, although most historians place its origins in the early to mid-twelfth century, when a freestanding baptistery closer to the Drava probably served the nascent settlement (Mlinarič, 1991b, 451; in greater detail in 1978, 120–193; for the beginnings of the Maribor parish with some new insights, cf. Ravnikar, 2024, 28–32). Although walled, Maribor was still a fledgling market centre (Ravnikar, 2023, 612–619), its parish reached west to the Črmenica brook and east to the Vurberk stream, while ecclesiastically it belonged to the Archdiocese of Salzburg and, until the reforms of Emperor Joseph II, to its archdeaconry 'Lower March'. Over time the vast territory fragmented. However, even after these excisions, the parish remained a mixed urban-rural entity whose income, stemming from vineyards above Melje, arable strips, more than twenty serf holdings and tithes in kind, enabled it to attract well-educated incumbents. Within and around the walls, three filial churches complemented the mother-church: St Ulrich in the Graz Suburb, Our Lady in the Carinthian Suburb, and the Holy Spirit chapel in the burgher hospital; the former synagogue, re-consecrated as All Saints after 1496, likewise remained active (Mlinarič, 2006, 302). Linguistic dual-

ity was apparent by 1600: a Slovene co-operator preached in St Ulrich's, while German dominated inside the walls; by 1739, Slovene catechesis met twice weekly during Lent, German every Sunday from Low Sunday to First Advent Sunday. The mentioned Easter roll lists 2,489 communicants against twenty-three abstainers (Mlinarič, 1991b, 471). Architecturally the Romanesque core received a Gothic presbytery (fifteenth century), a raised nave (1520), a belltower built 1623–24, and Baroque fittings such as the altar of St Florian and St Francis Xavier (Vidmar, 2009, 248, 251). These embellishments coincided with the steady arrival of craftsmen and journeymen whose marriages, recorded between 1700 and 1748, form the empirical heart of the present study. Thus, when the Künsperger siblings stood before the high altar in 1728, they entered a parish church nearly six centuries old, strategically sited at today's Slomškov trg, Baroque in dress and, after the plague losses of the 1680s, once again the demographic and spiritual core of Maribor.

NEWCOMERS IN MARIBOR (1700–1748): EMPIRICAL ANALYSIS

Newcomers in Numbers

During 1700–48, at least 401 newcomers from both immediate surroundings and more distant areas, forming core of our analysis, entered marriages in the Parish of St John the Baptist in Maribor. Altogether, 1,773 marriages are recorded during the same period, which means that newcomers were part of more than twenty-two per cent of them. However, at least 132 or almost a third of all recorded non-dwellers were from neighbouring parishes like Jarenina or Limbuš. These marriages involved individuals labelled as *advena* (newcomers or foreigners) or, as explained above, recorded with an external (non-Maribor) parish of origin.

Chart 1: Share of newcomer marriages versus other marriages in the Parish of St John the Baptist, Maribor, 1700–48 (own elaboration; newcomers = 401, others = 1,372; 22.6% vs 77.4%; n = 1,773).

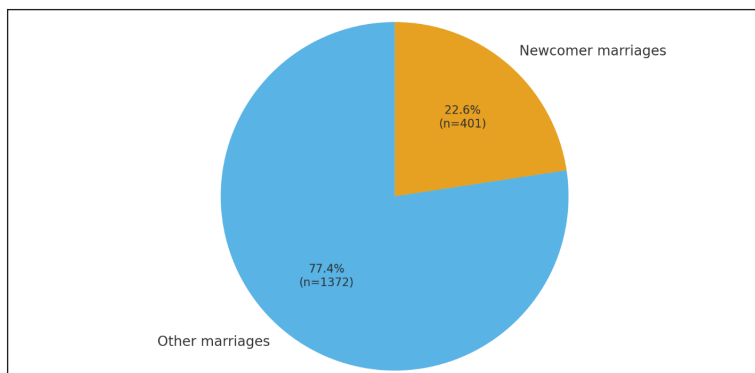
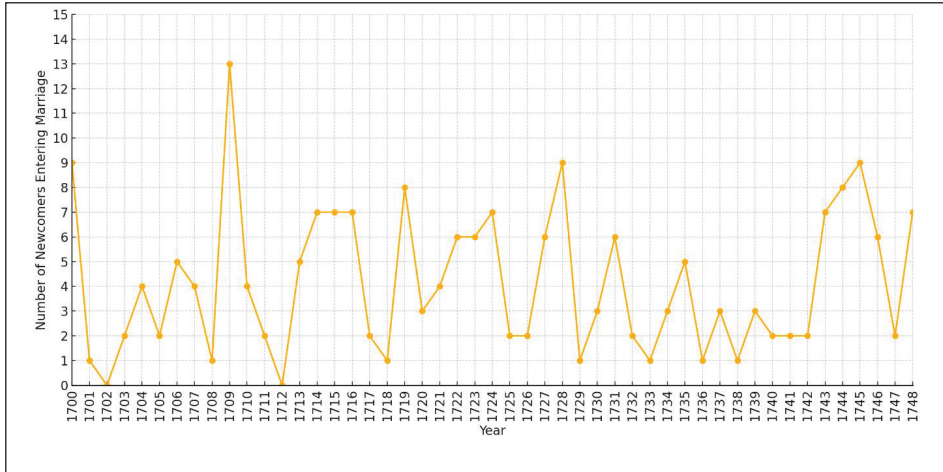


Chart 2: Number of recorded newcomers entering marriage in Maribor between 1700 and 1748 (own elaboration; data from Mlinarič, 2002).



The overwhelming majority of these newcomers were men; only 29 were women, reflecting the male-skewed long-distance migration typical of early modern urban influxes (Erickson & Schmidt, 2023, 164–199). Of note is the presence of nobles among the newcomers: although a small subset, eight of the recorded newcomers belonged to the nobility. The presence of nobility indicates that migration to Maribor was not limited to peasants or townsfolk of modest means; members of the noble or gentry class also appear, albeit infrequently, seeking marital alliances in the town. Additionally, 148 non-Maribor men and women from the predominantly Slovene-speaking parts of Lower Styria entered marriages during this period.

On average, roughly eight to nine newcomers, including about five from outside the immediate neighbourhood, married into the community yearly, but the annual numbers fluctuated considerably, revealing interesting trends. In some years, few newcomers were recorded (e.g., 1702 saw zero such marriages), whereas other years witnessed pronounced spikes. The years 1700, 1709, and 1745 stand out with sixteen newcomer marriages – the high points of the period. These surges and dips suggest that broader external factors, such as wars, economic conditions, or epidemics, may have influenced migration to Maribor. For instance, the immediate decades after the devastating plague of 1680–82 were a time of population recovery for the town, and the data imply that when opportunities arose (such as vacancies left by deceased artisans or periods of post-crisis rebuilding), outsiders could arrive to fill those gaps. Conversely, during times of turmoil or uncertainty (e.g., the War of the Spanish Succession in the early 1700s or renewed plague scares), the flow of newcomers

could temporarily slow or halt. Thus, while a baseline trickle of newcomers per year sustained Maribor's demographic and occupational needs, periodic surges likely corresponded to post-crisis rebounds or specific economic pulls.

An important entry point for newcomers into the town society was to fill the gaps caused by the deaths of husbands or wives of burghers, as evidenced by our data. In approximately a quarter of all cases the bride was a widow, frequently of a deceased master artisan or craftsman. In contrast, only the cases where the groom was a widower reached less than half of this proportion. There were also a few cases where both the bride and the groom were already widowed. This further corroborates the aforementioned circumstance that it was easier for a male newcomer to establish himself in an early modern town or city.

Geographic Origins of Newcomers

The marriage registers provide sufficiently rich information about the geographic origins of these newcomers, painting a picture of Maribor's catchment area for migrants. The data show that the individuals who married into Maribor's community between 1700 and 1748 came from a vast array of places, spanning local, regional, and even supra-regional origins. This diversity of origins gave the town a modest cosmopolitan character by eighteenth-century standards, even as most migrants came from relatively nearby regions.

By far the most significant number of newcomers originated in the Habsburg hereditary duchies of Inner Austria – particularly Styria (Štajerska) itself, more specifically Lower Styria, or the so-called Slovene Styria, as well as the neighbouring Carinthia (Koroška) and Carniola (Kranjska). The parishes from the immediate surroundings accounted for 132 newcomers, by far (and expectedly) the greatest single contingent, with Jarenina and Limbuš topping the list. Other towns of the present-day Slovenian part of Styria contributed further thirty-three persons, with Ptuj the most common place of origin of them. Among the towns of the predominantly German-speaking parts of Styria (the northern and western parts of Styria, in present-day Austria), the most important were (Bad) Radkersburg, Graz, and Leibnitz. Radkersburg – a border town south of Graz – contributed fifteen newcomers, the largest from outside the predominantly Slovene-speaking areas of Styria. Graz, the ducal capital of Styria, accounted for ten newcomers, and Leibnitz (a town just over the modern Austrian border, not far from Maribor) contributed seven. Maribor's role as a smaller urban centre under the orbit of larger towns like Graz is evident in this exchange: while some Styrians from the capital or other Styrian towns moved to Maribor (perhaps for specific jobs, guild positions or marriages), Maribor itself remained part of an urban hierarchy within Styria, generally receiving more migrants from rural hinterlands than from larger towns, as shown in Table 1. Several individuals from Carinthian towns and villages also turned up in Maribor's marriage register. For example, newcomers from Villach/Beljak or Klagenfurt/Celovec and others from smaller Carinthian locales are recorded. Carniola – the duchy to the

south (represented by its capital Ljubljana) – also appears in the data, though less prominently, indicating some southward ties.

In addition, Croatia and the Croatian Military Frontier supplied a share of Maribor's newcomers. The nearby Croatian towns of Varaždin and Zagreb stand out: Varaždin (an important military and administrative centre in the early eighteenth century) contributed eight newcomers, while Zagreb (the present-day capital of Croatia) contributed two. Several soldiers and officers from the Military Frontier – the border zone to the south staffed by a militarised population – appear as grooms in Maribor as well, presumably when their regiments or careers brought them north or when they retired and settled down with local brides. This military connection points to Maribor's strategic location on a corridor between the interior of the Habsburg Monarchy and its borderlands.

Turning to other Habsburg lands, there were several newcomers from Tyrol in the west, as well as from Upper Austria and Lower Austria (the Habsburg crownlands centred around Linz and Vienna, respectively). The imperial capital itself is explicitly listed as the origin for four newcomers. There was also a sprinkling of newcomers from the German-speaking lands beyond the Habsburg monarchy. The records mention places in Bavaria and Swabia (in what is now southern Germany). In addition, the data include individuals from Bohemia and Moravia (crownlands of the Habsburgs in present-day Czechia) and Hungary. These were in smaller numbers but demonstrate that Maribor was not entirely off the map for people



Fig. 2: A map of Central Europe between 1783 and 1792 highlighting the territorial extent of the Holy Roman Empire, with particular focus on the Habsburg lands in the southeast and beyond imperial borders (denoted by the red line) (Wikimedia Commons).

outside the Inner Austrian territory. Interestingly, no Italians are recorded among the newcomer brides or grooms in this period, even though Italian artisans and traders were present in Austrian lands even before the Baroque era – it seems Maribor did not attract any migrants directly from Italian states during these decades, at least not in large numbers. There is one newcomer from Savoy (the Savoy region, now France/Italy) and a few from Switzerland, showing the occasional reach of migration trajectories from more distant parts of Europe.

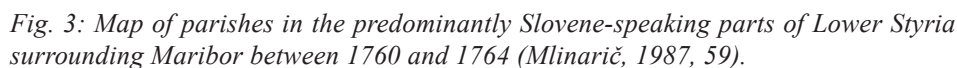
Migrants From the Close Neighbourhood

As mentioned above, we also compiled data on migrants to Maribor from immediate surroundings. According to the data, some 160 immigrants came from other parts of this portion of the duchy outside Maribor. In other words, most migrants were ‘neighbours’ in a regional sense, hailing from towns and parishes of Lower Styria. This underscores that migration in this period was often a short-distance or intra-regional phenomenon: Maribor drew heavily on the surrounding predominantly Slovene-inhabited Styrian countryside and nearby market towns for the new workforce. Table 1 (compiled from the data) lists the most frequent places of origin for these migrants within Lower Styria.

Table 1: The most common places of origin of migrants from close surroundings to Maribor (own elaboration; data from Mlinarič, 2002).

Parish or Town	Number of Newcomers
Jarenina	44
Limbuš	36
Hoče	27
Ptuj	20
Slovenska Bistrica	8
Slivnica	8
Ruše	7
Svečina	7
Selnica	6
Sv. Lenart	5
Konjice	4

3 Borl, Brežice, Destrnik, Hrastovec, Muta, Ribnica na Pohorju, Rogatec, Ruše, Spodnja Poljskava, Središče ob Dravi, Sv. Jakob v Slovenskih goricah, Sv. Ožbolt, Velika Nedelja, Vitanje, Voličina, Vurberk, and Zgornja Poljskava.



The presence of these far-flung or tiny locales in the data hints at individual stories: perhaps a miller's son from a distant village apprenticed in Maribor and married there, or a woman from a far parish went into domestic service in Maribor and found a husband. In aggregate, however, the dominance of nearby and larger communities (e.g., Jarenina, Ptuj) in the statistics highlights that migration was easier and more common from locations that were either geographically close or connected by trade routes and social networks. In contrast, migration from more distant parts of Lower Styria was rarer.

Newcomers' Occupations and Social Roles

Beyond sheer numbers and origins, the social profile of newcomers, particularly their occupations, provides insight into how these outsiders integrated into Maribor's urban economy. The marriage records allow us to identify many newcomer grooms' professions or social roles (and a few brides). We have occupational information for 140 of the 203 newcomers from more distant areas (outside the Slovene-speaking Styria) and for only thirty-five of the 198 other newcomers from the closer surroundings. In the remaining cases, the individual's occupation was not recorded, which is often true for women – most brides did not have a listed status – and for some men of unclear status.

Analysis of these 175 newcomers (43.6% of all) with known occupations reveals that the majority were craftsmen and artisans, underscoring that Maribor's attractiveness lay in its economic opportunities in skilled trades. Dozens of the male newcomers were entering Maribor's guilds through marriage, effectively using wedlock as a pathway to establish themselves as master craftsmen in the town. The most common occupation among the newcomers was tailor – including master tailors and journeymen – with twenty-three individuals engaged in the tailoring trade. This indicates a strong demand for clothing and textiles in Maribor or perhaps a high turnover in that guild that required continual replenishment from outside. Tailoring was a ubiquitous urban craft in this era, and Maribor appears to have drawn many of its tailors from elsewhere (likely because the town could not produce enough trained tailors internally, or sons of local tailors might have died or moved away, opening slots for outsiders).

Merchants formed another significant category, twelve among the newcomers. While not as numerous as tailors, the presence of a dozen merchants (around seven per cent of those with known occupations) is quite notable – these would be individuals identified as *mercator* or *Handelsmann*, some of whom have been relatively prosperous since merchants belonged to the highest echelon of the urban strata during the early modern period. Unlike craftsmen, merchants did not need guild admission via marriage, but marrying into a local family could provide commercial connections or rights of domicile. The merchants among the newcomers underscore Maribor's role as a trading centre on the Drava river: it sat on trade routes between interior Styria and Hungary and Croatia and was a

market for regional agricultural produce and wine (Mlinarič, 1991a, 183–184). The fact that non-local merchants came and married in Maribor suggests that the town offered attractive commercial prospects and that its mercantile class was at least partly open to newcomers (perhaps to bring capital or links to other trade networks).

Among crafts, several other trades stand out. Leatherworking trades were well represented: for instance, tanners numbered nine (making tanning one of the larger occupational groups for newcomers) and related leather trades like saddlers and belt-makers counted four individuals each. If combined, the leather-related artisans would rival the tailors in number. This is not surprising, as leather goods (from harnesses to boots and belts) were in steady demand, and tanning was often an occupation passed through families – a newcomer tanner marrying a master's widow or daughter would be a typical mode of entry, as e.g., illustrated by many cases of changes in ownership of Maribor houses during the later part of the eighteenth century (for individual cases cf., e.g., Semlič Rajh, Oman & Mlinarič, 2012, 184, 187, 190). The data indeed strongly hint that vacancies left by the death of a master tanner or saddler were often filled by outsiders who married into the family business.

The baking trade was another common occupation: seven newcomers were bakers or baker's apprentices. Bread is a staple of urban life, and the bakery guilds likewise need a steady influx of workforce.

Similarly, the construction trades are represented: six individuals were either bricklayers or bricklayer's assistants, reflecting the ongoing need for building and maintenance in a growing town recovering from plague. Carpenters and related woodworkers (four carpenters and two turners) also appear, pointing to the building trades as a modest pull factor.

Various other artisan roles are present, usually with only two or three individuals per occupation, but together they illustrate the broad spectrum of skills newcomers brought. These include blacksmiths, surgeons, butchers, coopers, weavers, candlemakers, soap-makers, bookbinders, goldsmiths, and pharmacists. While just two to three newcomers represented each of these occupations, they collectively strongly imply that Maribor's economy in the first half of the eighteenth century was multifaceted, requiring various specialised services. In many cases, if a master craftsman in one of these trades had no local heir, the typical solution was to recruit a journeyman from another town to marry the widowed mistress or a daughter and inherit the workshop – thereby turning an 'outsider' into a new burgher of Maribor. Our findings support this pattern: For virtually every guild present in Maribor, one can find at least one example of an incoming marriage in these decades that most likely supplied a needed craftsman. On the other hand, there were at least four millers among the newcomers from the immediate surroundings of Maribor.

Beyond craftsmen and merchants, a distinct group of newcomers had military or administrative roles. Several soldiers, non-commissioned officers, and

military officials appear in the marriage register. These men likely came to Maribor via postings or after campaigns on the Hungarian or Balkan frontiers. Marrying a local woman might have been a way to retire into civilian life. The presence of military personnel among the newcomers reflects broader Habsburg patterns, where provincial towns often housed ex-soldiers who took up trades or jobs (sometimes as guards, clerks, or minor officials) and settled down.

Additionally, administrative and professional newcomers are noted. For example, there was a court glazier (an artisan attached to a noble or ecclesiastical court, indicating a high level of skill in glassmaking and art), a regimental juror (suggesting someone who had a legal or bureaucratic role with a military regiment), and a secretary of the Inner Austrian Government. The latter implies that at least one newcomer was a well-educated bureaucrat associated with the government (which sat in Graz) who, for whatever reason, ended up marrying in Maribor – perhaps he was assigned to a post in Maribor or married a local woman of status. These high-status or highly skilled individuals show that not all newcomers were modest craftsmen; a few were persons of considerable social standing or specialised expertise.

CASE STUDIES

To humanise the above statistics and illustrate the newcomers' integration strategies, we turn now to three case studies of individual newcomers in Maribor. Each of these cases has been selected for its illustrative value and uniqueness: one highlights the mobility of skilled artisans and how migrant craftsmen could establish themselves in a new town, another exemplifies family-based migration chains, and the third sheds light on the challenges of interfaith marriage in a Catholic town. By examining the personal stories of Joseph Straub, the Künsperger siblings, and David Mayer and Margarita Krauss, we can see in microcosm how 'outsiders' became 'insiders'.

Joseph Straub: An Artisan's Trajectory

One of the most remarkable newcomer stories of the period under consideration is that of Joseph Straub, a talented Baroque sculptor whose journey reflects the movement of artisanal skills across regions. Straub married into the Maribor community in 1746, and his life and work left a lasting imprint on the town. On June 27, 1746, Joseph Straub wed Maria Josepha Cowalter, the daughter of a Maribor merchant, at St John's parish church (Mlinarič, 2002, 235–236). This marriage tied Straub to a local family of status and likely provided him the civic rights of a burgher and the patronage network needed to thrive in Maribor.

Joseph Straub's origins and career before Maribor exemplify the wider geographic orbit of skilled craftsmen in the eighteenth century. He was born in year 1712 into a renowned family of sculptors in Wiesensteig in the Duchy



Fig. 4 and 5: The Plague Memorial in Maribor (photos: David Hazemali, 2025).

of Württemberg, in today's Baden-Württemberg, Germany. The Straub family produced several notable artists: Joseph's eldest brother, Johann Baptist Straub, became a famous sculptor in Munich (München) and elsewhere in Bavaria, and another brother, Philipp Jakob Straub, achieved prominence in Graz and elsewhere in Styria. Although little is known about Joseph's early life, it is assumed he first honed his skills in his father's workshop before training with Philipp Jakob in Graz. By the mid-1730s, we find Joseph in Ljubljana, working as an assistant to the eminent Carniolan Baroque sculptor Heinrich Michael Löhr. His presence in Ljubljana indicates that Straub was already moving within the Habsburg hereditary lands in search of opportunities.

Straub's path to Maribor was paved, so we assume, by a professional conflict. While in Ljubljana, the young sculptor attempted to take on independent commissions, which led to a guild dispute – as a newcomer and non-master, he

was encroaching on the local guild's privileges. This dispute apparently made further work in Ljubljana difficult for him. Consequently, Joseph left Ljubljana and, indeed, dwelt in Vipava during the years 1737 and 1738. In 1741, he signed two statues in Štanjel, according to Blaž Resman (Resman, 1998, 56). Joseph's first recorded activity in Maribor is in 1743, where he is noted as a participant in the creation of the town's monumental plague column. This Baroque pillar, erected as a votive monument of thanks for deliverance from an outbreak of plague, is one of Maribor's most famous landmarks. Straub worked on it alongside his brother Philipp Jakob Straub (who was a well-established Graz sculptor by then) and another artist, Joseph Hoffer (Curk, 1986, 296–297). Although art historians debate the attribution – some recent scholarship tends to credit Philipp Jakob as the primary author of the Maribor plague column – Joseph Straub's involvement is documented, and his artistic influence is evident in the intricate sculptural details (Kostanjšek Brglez & Roškar, 2019, 11).

Joseph Straub enriched the region's artistic heritage during his time in Maribor (he lived on for only ten years after marriage, passing away in 1756) (Vrišer, 1957, 85). Aside from the plague column, he is credited with crafting the large high altar of St Joseph's Church (whose surviving saint figures now grace the Regional Museum of Maribor) in Studenci, a suburb of Maribor, and the once-high altar of the Minorite church in Ptuj, destroyed during the Second World War but known from period engravings (Kostanjšek Brglez & Roškar, 2019, 4–5). Joseph adorned civic staircases and façades with stone reliefs, producing smaller sculptural details for numerous church interiors and exteriors. He also received commissions from beyond Maribor – for other churches in Styria, Croatia, and Hungary – underscoring that he was a trans-regional artisan whose reputation extended across borders (Jurič, 2020).

Joseph Straub's story encapsulates the journey of a highly skilled newcomer: he arrived with valuable human capital (artistic skill and experience from abroad), integrated through what seems a strategic marriage, and in turn left a legacy that blended external influences with local culture. His case also highlights the artisan network concept – Joseph was part of a network of craftsmen and apprentices moving through Central Europe. Cities like Maribor benefited from this network by absorbing talent cultivated in larger artistic centres. In theoretical terms, Straub's integration demonstrates how migrant artisans could leverage guild connections and family alliances to establish themselves, thereby reinforcing the town's economic and cultural vibrancy.

The Künsperger Siblings

Migration often ran in families. A striking example from the Maribor marriage records is the story of the Künsperger siblings, a brother and sister who married on the same day. On 21 September 1728, the Parish of St John the Baptist witnessed this unusual double wedding that underscores how kinship

ties could facilitate newcomers' social insertion (Mlinarič, 2002, 135).

Joseph (Josephus) Künsperger, a belt-maker by trade, came from Leibnitz, a town in the Styrian region just over today's Austrian-Slovene border. In a single ceremony (recorded sequentially in the marriage register), Joseph married Maria Katharina (Catharina) Korper, the daughter of a Maribor foundry-master, and Maria Rosalia Künsperger, Joseph's sister, married Franz Xaver Eisner, a jeweller from Graz. We do not know whether Maria Rosalia still lived with her father in Slovenske Konjice until that point and whether Franz Xaver was already stationed in Maribor. This apparently coordinated marriage event is remarkable on several levels. First, it highlights a family-based migration strategy: the brother and sister likely came to Maribor together, perhaps with one sibling's opportunity paving the way for the other.

The Künsperger double marriage underscores the social importance of family ties in migration. Siblings or other relatives often migrated in groups or chains, providing mutual support in an unfamiliar town. For Joseph and Maria Rosalia, having each other in Maribor could ease the transition – they each had a trusted family member close by as they entered new marriages and households. Their story also shows how newcomers could quickly become 'insiders': with that single entry in the register, Joseph went from being a foreign belt-maker (*advena*) to a Maribor son-in-law and prospective guild member (as marrying a master's daughter likely enabled him to join the local guild of leatherworkers). Likewise, Maria Rosalia instantly became the wife of a local (though her husband Franz Xaver Eisner was himself an outsider from Graz, he presumably settled in Maribor as a jeweller). The Künspergers thereby planted new roots in Maribor's burgher class through a synchronised family endeavour.

Tragically, these promising new beginnings were not without hardship. We know that Joseph's wife, Maria Katharina, died by 1734, a few years into the marriage – a reminder of the high mortality and personal challenges that often punctuated these lives. Joseph Künsperger was thus widowed relatively young. He remarried to Maria Rosina Haller on 25 January 1735 (Mlinarič, 2002, 171).

From a broader perspective, the Künsperger siblings illustrate chain migration and the role of kin networks: their case is an example of how one family's migration could multiply the impact on the host community (two marriages instead of one) and how newcomers could rely on each other as they assimilated.

A Rare Interfaith Marriage: Confessional Negotiation

In the late sixteenth century, the Protestant Reformation gained traction in Inner Austria, particularly in Graz and Ljubljana, but also in Maribor, although it was soon countered by the Habsburg Counter-Reformation. Ferdinand II, who succeeded Archduke Charles II in 1595, over the following five years abolished Protestant institutions, expelled Protestant clergy, and forced citizens to either convert or leave, leading to significant emigration from Styria in the

early 1600s, although most Maribor Protestants seem to have converted rather than left (Pörtner, 2001; Oman, 2018; 33; 2020, 332). Early eighteenth-century Maribor was consequently a staunchly Catholic environment. In this context, marriages across confessional lines were exceedingly rare and required special dispensation. One of the most intriguing newcomer cases in the marriage register is precisely such an instance: an interfaith (mixed-denomination) marriage that took place in 1723.

On 7 May 1723, David Mayer, a Lutheran from Stuttgart in Württemberg, married Margaritha Elisabetha Krauss, a Roman Catholic widow from Cologne (Köln). Both bride and groom were newcomers to Maribor – one from a German Protestant state, the other from a Rhineland Catholic city – making their union in Maribor all the more extraordinary. At the time, a marriage between a Lutheran and a Catholic in Habsburg territories required explicit permission and was governed by strict conditions to ensure Catholic dominance was not threatened (Leeb *et al.*, 2003). Maribor's church and civil authorities allowed this marriage, but not without clear stipulations. David Mayer, the groom, had to agree to specific terms before the marriage could proceed formally. Specifically, he was required to raise all future children of the marriage in the Catholic faith and promise not to 'corrupt' his wife in religious matters (Mlinarič, 2002, 108).

These conditions were standard for mixed marriages in post-Counter-Reformation Inner Austria: The Catholic Church insisted that children be brought up Catholic to prevent the loss of souls (and demographic strength) to Protestantism. The promise not to 'corrupt' the wife directly reflects Catholic authorities' fears during this era – essentially, Mayer had to vow not to attempt to convert Margarita Elisabeth to Lutheranism or undermine her Catholic practice. The phrasing of 'not corrupting' could also be interpreted more generally as a pledge to treat her well and not lead her into sin, but given the context, the primary concern was most likely religious.

It is worth noting that David Mayer's own faith had limited scope for expression in Styria at the time. In 1723, Protestant (Lutheran or Calvinist) worship was still officially forbidden for commoners in Inner Austria, as the Edict of Tolerance that granted limited rights to non-Catholics would only come much later, in 1781 under Joseph II) (Leeb *et al.*, 2003, 278). Thus, David Mayer could not legally practice Lutheranism openly in Maribor. The requirement that the children be Catholic and the implicit expectation that David himself would not openly act as a Lutheran meant that, for the authorities, the mixed marriage would result in no net gain for Protestantism – on the contrary, it would absorb a Protestant individual into the Catholic fold (at least socially, if not through formal conversion) (Leeb *et al.*, 2003, 290).

This marriage between Mayer and Krauss is one of only a few such cases recorded, highlighting its unusual nature. It demonstrates that while Maribor's populace was overwhelmingly Catholic, the town was not entirely closed to

Protestants. Under certain circumstances, a Lutheran could be tolerated, especially if he was willing to comply with the existing rules regarding public expressions of faith. Perhaps Mayer's skills or status made him a desirable addition to the community (unfortunately, the records do not specify his occupation; if he was a merchant or artisan of talent, that might have helped). Margarita Elisabeth's situation as a widow might have also played a role: as a Catholic widow, she would have needed permission to marry a non-Catholic, and the fact that it was granted suggests that the church hierarchy assessed the situation and found it manageable with the given conditions.

CONCLUSION

The evidence assembled in this study paints a vivid picture of Maribor as a town importantly marked by newcomers in the early 1700s. In the wake of the devastating late seventeenth-century plague, which had gravely reduced the local population, Maribor's recovery was neither solely natural nor accidental – it was fuelled in considerable measure by in-migration. Our analysis of the marriage registers shows newcomers were in many cases not peripheral actors; they were crucial to repopulating workshops, filling market niches, and forging new social ties in the community. Year after year, a baseline trickle of newcomer brides and grooms (punctuated by surges after crises) became new burghers of Maribor. Between 1700 and 1748, at least 401 of the 1,773 recorded marriages (22.6%) involved at least one newcomer. This finding reinforces a key theme in pre-industrial urban history: towns could not maintain themselves without migrants since deaths often outnumbered births in towns. Maribor's case exemplifies this dynamic on a smaller scale – the town actively absorbed 'outsiders' to sustain its demographic and economic vitality.

A significant conclusion of this research is the critical role of marriage as an integration mechanism. Marriage provided a structured, socially sanctioned pathway for 'outsiders' to become 'insiders'. By marrying into (often established) local families – frequently the households of guild masters or merchants – newcomers could gain immediate access to privileges that might otherwise take years to earn (or be impossible to attain). The data strongly suggest that many guilds in Maribor effectively welcomed new masters through marital ties. For example, widows of craftsmen found new husbands from outside who could continue the family trade, and guilds accepted these outsiders by their new kinship. This reflects a broader pattern observed in European towns: marrying a master's daughter or widow was a well-trodden avenue to guild membership (Prak *et al.*, 2018). Our findings align with studies elsewhere, showing that affinal ties (sons-in-law, second husbands of widows) often made up a substantial share of new guild members (Kaufhold, 1980, 254). In Maribor, virtually every craft, from tailoring and tanning to baking and smithing, shows likely evidence of this refresh mechanism, whereby an infusion of external talent via

matrimony kept the guild workforce and urban economy going. Thus, marriage in early modern Maribor was not merely a private affair; it was a key institution for urban renewal, ensuring continuity in the face of labour shortages and transmitting skills across generations and geographies. The three case studies help humanise and, at the same time, corroborate these findings.

It must be acknowledged that the evidentiary scope of this article is intentionally bounded. Owing to time constraints and source coherence, we rely primarily on the marriage register. A systematic comparison with additional parish and civic registers and related sources (cf. Curk, 1985) could corroborate or qualify our findings and enable a deeper reconstruction of newcomers' life courses. Such triangulation would also clarify how many individuals recorded as newcomers or foreigners in our primary source settled permanently in Maribor and contributed to its eighteenth-century economic and social life. Extending the corpus, ideally to baptismal and burial registers in home parishes, would further enrich the analysis, although surviving materials for this period are often fragmentary. These extensions lie beyond the present study's design. Within the parameters defined here, the evidence – although provisional and in need of further corroboration – still supports our central claims; future work may broaden the source base to refine them.

PRISLEKI V MARIBORU V PRVI POLOVICI 18. STOLETJA V POROČNIH KNJIGAH ŽUPNIJE SV. JANEZA KRSTNIKA

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POVZETEK

Prispevek obravnava vlogo priselkov v Mariboru v prvi polovici 18. stoletja na osnovi analize poročnih vpisov v matične knjige župnije sv. Janeza Krstnika. Raziskana je 401 poroka, sklenjena v letih 1700–1748, pri katerih je imel vsaj eden od zakoncev – prislesek, dokumentiran izvor zunaj Maribora. Poudarek je na župnijah izven neposredne mariborske okolice. Po tej logiki smo še posebej natančno obravnavali tiste, ki so se rodili v nemško govorečih delih Štajerske. V raziskavo smo zajeli tudi posameznike, ki so že živeli v Mariboru, a je bilo njihovo zunanje poreklo posebej omenjeno v poročni matični knjigi. Obenem smo evidentirali tudi priseljence v mesto Maribor iz neposredne soseščine. Raziskava, ki temelji na kvantitativni obdelavi poročnih registrov in izbranih študijah primerov, ponuja precej možnosti za sklepanje o obsegu, socialnem profilu ter poteh oziroma strategijah integracije teh priselkov v mariborsko družbo. Ugotovitve kažejo, da je bil dotok novih prebivalcev prek porok v prvih letih osemnajstega stoletja vejetno še pomemben za demografsko obnovo Maribora po opustošenju zaradi kuge v letih 1680–1682. Številni priseljenci so se v Maribor očitno vključili tako, da so se poročili s hčerami ali vdovami domačih mojstrov in obrtnikov. Poroka se je torej marsikdaj izkazala kot osrednji integracijski mehanizem – družbeno priznana pot, po kateri so se »tujci« spremenili v »notranje« člane mestne skupnosti. Tako so bili prisleki pogosto ključni pri zapolnjevanju delavnih mest v obrtnih delavnicah in pri gospodarskem oživljanju mesta. Sklepne ugotovitve poudarjajo, da je bilo vključevanje priseljencev v mariborsko mestno družbo v prvi polovici 18. stoletja v veliko primerih zavestno in učinkovito – mestne oblasti in skupnost so »tujce« prek porok uspešno pretvarjale v trajne člane, kar je mestu omogočalo obnovo in razvoj. Študija tako osvetljuje pomen migracij in mobilnosti za urbano demografijo v zgodnjem novem veku ter dopolnjuje razumevanje integracijskih procesov v srednjeevropskih mestih.

Ključne besede: Maribor, Štajerska, prisleki, migracije, poroka kot integracijski mehanizem, zgodnjenovoveška urbana demografija

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