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URBAN MORTALITY IN HUNGARY DURING THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

The mortality patterns of the Hungarian cities are under the influence of different factors. The majority of them are on halfway between the West European cities and the Hungarian villages according to their size, architectural structure, housing conditions and population density and this situation has a strong impact also on the demographic indices and behavior. The general urban mortality level is much worse than the rural one during the preindustrial times through to the twentieth century however it is not high enough to counterbalance the fertility. It comes from the above that there is no basis for the emergence of the „urban graveyard” model in early modern Hungary. Moreover there is not possible to analyze the urban mortality with one simple model. In the course of the investigation the author describes three city types and three mortality models. The „old city” model did not follow the traditional European „urban graveyard” pattern. The mortality level of these cities never became high enough to smash the natural increase before the starting of the demographic transition period. The „peasant cities” were in different situation – at the beginning they followed the traditional rural mortality patterns, later they turned directly to the modern urban one stepping over the stage of the traditional urban mortality. Budapest is the only one which seems to reproduce the trend of the traditional European urban mortality development and remind us on the „urban graveyard” model. But the history of the Budapest mortality is still not worked out completely. It would be necessary to make a detailed analysis about the early mortality decline of the capital and it could be also worthwhile to compare the mortality patterns of the permanent residents and the temporary migrants i. e. to test the Sharlin hypothesis as well as to investigate the question of the sex balance and its influence on marriage and fertility (the van der Woude hypothesis) in the cities of preindustrial Hungary.

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