

Statistical Enlightenment in Eastern Europe: The 1838 Wallachian Census, Kiseleff's Reform Agenda, and the Paradox of Romani Integration Through Slavery

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Abstract. The 1838 Census of Population, Houses and Agriculture (“Catagrafia din 1838”) stands as a landmark achievement in Romanian demographic history and nineteenth-century European statistical science. Pavel Dimitrievich Kiseleff initiated this census during the Russian administrative protectorate (1829-1834) as part of an ambitious modernization program for the Romanian Principalities. This article explores the origins of the 1838 Census within the broader context of European demographic science, particularly French statistical developments, and examines its relationship to earlier Romanian demographic efforts. It introduces previously unpublished information from an underutilized statistical source on land use, population income, structure of economy, from 1832. The article also demonstrates how the MapRom project (2017-2022) transformed this archival source into a digital database, revealing new insights into the socio-economic conditions of the Romani population in pre-abolition Wallachia. Based on extensive archival materials and modern digital humanities methodologies, this study argues that the 1838 Census did not primarily serve as a fiscal instrument but rather as a comprehensive tool to measure the success of wide-ranging agricultural, housing, and social reforms.

Keywords: Historical demography, 1838 Census, 1832 Economic Statistics of Wallachia, Pavel Kiseleff, Romani population, MapRom database, nineteenth-century statistics

1. Introduction

“When Wallachia will know the science of agronomy [...] then this place will surely be a Heaven and another Egypt in Europe.” (ANIC, fond Obișnuita Obștească Adunare a țărilor Românești, dos. 34/1832, f.12v). With these determined words, the Russian Military Governor Pavel Dmitrievich Kiseliiov (hereafter Kiseleff, using the French transcription of his name) articulated his vision for transforming the Romanian Principalities. Our thesis is that the 1838 Census of Population, Houses and Agriculture was designed not as a fiscal instrument but rather as a comprehensive tool to measure progress toward this utopian vision, representing a remarkable convergence of Enlightenment ideals and administrative innovation at a critical juncture in Romanian history.

While pertinent research on this document¹ exists, it has been acknowledged that the true scientific value of this archival source has not yet been sufficiently appreciated (Donat and Retegan 1956: 926). Donat and Retegan correctly identified why the document was created: this was not due to a prior theoretical training, but rather to the absolute necessity of the modern organization of the Romanian society: “they knew what to do, rather than how it should be done” (1956: 926). The authors base their conclusion on a note from the Wallachian Government to the departmental administrations: “The statistics of the Romanian Principalities are a task of greatest importance and a most indispensable necessity [...] and will form the basis of all administrative transformations [...], and it will be necessary for trade issues [...] and for ensuring the happiness of the nation” (Donat and Retegan 1956: 926).

This article addresses three interconnected questions: First, what were the actual purposes and genesis of the 1838 Census? Second, how did this Romanian statistical effort compare to contemporary European, particularly French, demographic practices? Third, what can modern digital methodologies reveal about the information contained in this census, especially regarding marginalized populations such as the Romani communities?

¹ Donat and Retegan (1956) and Retegan (1969) were the first critical assessments of the work in question. Several volumes of the manuscript were published as monographies of the respective cities: Dedu (2006); Cârstocea (2011 and 2012). There are several studies dedicated to one specific locality (Cruceanu and Duțescu 1969; Mateescu 2013b, and the list remains open); to an entire county (Mateescu 2014; Bounegru, Stanca et al. (eds.) 2015); or quarters of Bucharest, the biggest urban settlement of the time (Filitti 2003); and a list of the whole villages of Walachia (Ciucă 2013). There is a manuscript by the officer Chiriță, Mihai. “Obșteasca Catagrafie de la 1838”, donated to the Institute of History, Romanian Academy. All the localities of Wallachia are therein listed in tabular form, with the following information: name of the locality, number of households (broken down in few ethnicities: Hungarians, Romanians, Serbians, Greeks, Tigans), cultivated land, type of estate. See the annex at the end of this study.

Among the 12,282 Romani households recorded in 1838, only 105 (or 0.85%) were free, distributed among taxpayers (79), self-emancipated (16), emancipated by their village (6), and tax-exempt without further mention (4) (Gaunt and Rotaru 2021: 45), the rest belonged to one of the three categories of owners: boyar nobility (6,103), monasteries (4,469), prince or state (1,595) as *rob*-slave. This paradox of integration through slavery meant that enslaved Roma were formally enumerated, economically integrated into the agrarian system, yet socially excluded and legally unfree, revealing how slavery's institutional structure could simultaneously bind people to society while severing the bonds of genuine social inclusion. Slavery definitions vary across disciplines, with scholars unable to agree on a single framework. Recently, the Bonn Center for Dependency and Slavery Studies (established in 2019) uses “asymmetrical Dependencies” to encompass diverse forms of slavery and bondage². Two main concepts predominate: first, the right of ownership exercised over slaves, codified in the first article, (1), Geneva Slavery Convention signed on 25th September 1926 by the League of Nations, as “the status or condition of a person over whom any or all of the powers attaching to the right of ownership are exercised.” The Geneva Convention builds upon the Slavery Convention of Saint-Germain-en-Laye (1919): “[...] to secure the complete suppression of slavery in all its forms and of the slave trade by land and sea.” The phrase “in all its forms” encompasses already at that time, forced labor, pseudo adoption, forced concubinage, and debt slavery too (Simon 1930). The second definition of slavery focuses on dishonor and social death, where ownership becomes secondary to the systematic destruction of dignity, personality, and memory through state-sanctioned power structures (Ismard 2021: 13). This study adopts the Geneva Convention definition: the deprivation of individual freedom through another’s ownership rights.

2. Historical framework

During the 18th and 19th centuries, Eastern Europe witnessed the Russian-Turkish wars as well as the national liberation movements in the Balkans. Nowadays Romania would have comprised three politically separated provinces, namely Transylvania, Wallachia and Moldova, each with the specificity imposed by the suzerain empires: Austrian, Turkish and Russian, respectively. Transylvania was integrated in the Austrian Empire after the Treaty of Karlowitz (1699) and was subject, together with the Banat of Temeshwar (another historical Romanian region), since 1718, to its legislative and administrative systems; The Romanian Principalities of Wallachia and

² See the Center’s webpage: <https://www.dependency.uni-bonn.de/en>.

Moldova, located in extra Carpathian regions, were simultaneously under the suzerainty of the Ottoman Empire and the Russian Protectorate, as a result of the Kuchuk Kainargi Treaty of Peace (1774).

2.1. The Enlightenment context: reform in Eastern Europe

Pavel Kiseleff served as Governor-President of the Romanian Principalities from 1829 to 1834, a period that fundamentally transformed administrative structures. The reforms he initiated differed fundamentally in character and scope from the recent administrative measures implemented by Joseph II in the Habsburg territories (Austria, Hungary, Transylvania, and northern Bukovina, occupied in 1774). While Joseph II's policies toward Romani populations exemplified the Prussian-style *Ordnungspolitik*, focused primarily on establishing administrative order, strengthening fiscal extraction, and imposing cultural assimilation through coercive means (as codified in the 1783 *Hauptregulatio*), Kiseleff's program embodied a distinctly Enlightenment vision of rational improvement and social amelioration. This first Romanian Constitution-like act, rendered in Romanian and French, and entitled "Organic Regulation", was modeled by the Romanian and Russian law-makers from Kiseleff's staff on the French Constitution, *La charte constitutionnelle du 4 Juin 1814*, issued by King Louis XVIII (Negulescu and Alexianu 1914: XXXIII). But the peculiarity of the Romanian "Constitution" compared to other European Constitutions lies in the existence of a special chapter dedicated to the Gypsies called "Improvement of the status of the Gypsies", drafted at the personal initiative of the Russian Military Governor (Rotaru 2018a: 504). In this way, it becomes the only constitutional act in early nineteenth century Europe to include a chapter on affirmative actions for the Gypsies, and describes for the first time the different ethno-socio-professional Romani categories (Ro. *tagmă* < Greek *τάγμα* 'socio-professional category', guild): 1. the *Lingurari* (shoveler) guild, 2. the *Aurari* (goldsmith) guild, 3. the *Ursari* (bear-

tamers) guild, 4. the Zavrăgi³ guild, 5. the Lăeți guild 6. the Netoți guild (Negulescu and Alexianu 1914, vol. I: 109-112: *Organic Regulation*, art. 94).

2.2. Kiseleff's reform program (1829-1834) and affirmative actions for the Gypsies

Thus, the article 94 of the Organic Regulation (1832) mandated specific affirmative measures: landlords were legally obligated to provide Romani families with land for ploughing, grassland for cattle pasture, and plots for dwelling construction and gardens; the appointment of *vătaf* (caretakers) was required to organize families, prevent nomadism, and enforce settlement in stable houses; Romani people gained the right to access wood for their crafts through contracts with forest owners and firewood according to regulations for other inhabitants; groups unfamiliar with agriculture (especially *Ursari*) were to receive guidance and monitoring in farming; and the Metropolitan Church was made responsible for their religious integration. I have concluded elsewhere that this represented a differentiated approach recognizing six distinct ethno-socio-professional categories (*Lingurari*, *Aurari*, *Ursari*, *Zavrăgi*, *Lăeți*, and *Netoți*) with tailored measures for each group, a more progressive methodology than the Habsburg Empire's *Hauptregulatio* (1783), which imposed uniform regulations regardless of socio-professional differences (Rotaru 2018b).

In addition to enhancing the status of Romani and Jewish populations, Kiseleff instituted other several significant reforms. These included transitioning from cattle taxation to personal income tax, establishing formal contractual relationships between landowners and peasant cultivators, and, as a tool for these reforms, implementing systematic population censuses on a seven-year cycle (conducted first in 1831 and subsequently in 1838, when he

³ I have shown elsewhere (Rotaru 2018b: 40) that this category was precisely listed in the templates of Barbu Constantinescu's unpublished statistics (1878). This category of Roms was actually not endorsed so far by my research. I have shown the gap in systematic research on Romani ethnonyms in Romania, while pointing to the seminal study of Marushiakova and Popov (2013) arguing that ethnonyms vs. professionyms and their unclear demarcations are specific to Southeastern Europe (versus the clearer Romani endonyms like *Manuš*, *Sinti*, *Kaale* in Western Europe) and providing adequate research methodology. "The insufficient information we currently have about the Romani ethno-socio-professional groups in Rumania is one of the main challenges in Rumanian Romani Studies." My 2018a article represents such systematic investigation of a Romani ethnonym in Romania, featuring the term *Netot*, along with the semantic evolution of the terms *aurar*, *lingurar*, *rudar*, *zlatar* in the chapter "Chapter 4 Different Names in Different Times" (Rotaru and Gaunt 2023: 61–92). Research on other Romanian Romani ethnonyms such as those listed in the 1832 Constitution (*Ursari*, *Zavrăgi*, *Lăeți*, etc.) using this same systematic, archival-based methodology remains to be done.

was no longer in the Principalities). In a letter dated March 1830 and addressed to Count Arseny Andreyevich Zakryevsky, Governor General of the Grand Duchy of Finland (1824-1831) and the Empire's Minister of Interior (1828–1831), Kiseleff discussed a commission's progress on drafting the Constitution prior to its Saint Petersburg ratification (December 1830). He complained that the commission's work is progressing slowly “although with desires to preserve harmful privileges of the boyars, against whom I act as executor of Tsar's will and like a Christian” (*Sbornik Imperatorskogo Russkogo Istoricheskogo Obschestva*, apud Lewis-Krueger 1940: 45).

This constitutional chapter represented not merely administrative registration but a comprehensive project of social integration through economic development, education, and settlement systematization. This contrast reveals an important dynamic in Eastern European modernization: paradoxically, the most ambitious Enlightenment reforms, combining demographic knowledge, agricultural rationalization, and social improvement, found practical implementation not in the western centers where such ideas originated, but in the politically liminal space of the Danubian Principalities. Situated simultaneously under Ottoman suzerainty and Russian protectorate, these territories became a laboratory for reformist experimentation impossible in either Russia (where serfdom remained entrenched until 1861) or post-Revolutionary France (where Enlightenment universalism had turned toward imperial centralization). The *Organic Regulation* thus represents a European initiative of singular importance: a constitution drafted under Russian military occupation by French-influenced advisors (see Rotaru 2018a: 504, 505 and 505, fn.9-12) promulgated for a Romanian-speaking population, and embodying Enlightenment principles that in Western Europe remained largely theoretical.

2.2.1. *The vision of modernization*

Kiseleff's reform program, published in 1831 under the title “Tălmăcirea rezoluției Excelenței Sale Prezident” (Interpretation/Explanation of His Excellency the President's Resolution) (ANIC, fond Obișnuita Obștească Adunare a țării Românești, dos. 34/1832, f.1), articulated an ambitious vision for transforming Wallachia into a model of rational agricultural development. The reform program encompassed several interconnected domains:

Agricultural modernization. Wallachia was primarily an agrarian country, making agricultural modernization imperative. The priority objectives included “the professionalization of farm work” and “the improvement” of grain species, particularly wheat, maize, millet, barley, flax, and hemp, as well as potato, carrot, and sugar beet. For orchards, he recommended planting a

mixture of clover, lucerne, and “another variety that I cannot remember” (ANIC, fond Obișnuita Obștească Adunare a țării Românești, dos. 34/1832, f.14). Following the Dutch model, he advocated introducing crop rotation (*asolament*) and importing selected seeds. He also proposed improving road networks and launching river shipping routes for crop transportation and export. Agrarian education played a crucial role in his reform framework. He suggested establishing a popular agronomy course at the “Saint Sava” National College open to all interested individuals, along with scholarships enabling poor children “to perfectly learn this craft” (ANIC, fond Obișnuita Obștească Adunare a țării Românești, dos. 34/1832, f.16).

Livestock improvement. The same determination extended to livestock breeding. Local breeds needed improvement through imports, acclimatization, and crossbreeding. He believed the local *țigăia* sheep could transform into *merinos* within just a few years. His plan included importing cows and bulls from the Netherlands, France, and Switzerland. Horse breeds also required enhancement through various imports: Normandy stallions for breeding, Hungarian and Bohemian stallions for carriage horses, Hungarian stallions and Russian mares for equitation, as well as Arabian and Russian horses for riding. Additionally, he proposed importing Arabian donkeys and large mares to produce mules comparable to those in Spain.

Village systematization. Perhaps Kiseleff’s most ambitious project was the “frontage of villages” (*sistematizarea satelor*), a measure also known as “Relocating Villagers and Implementing Measures for Dwelling Construction.” This challenge, which Kiseleff personally oversaw, proved the most difficult. He recognized the significant obstacles, largely insurmountable in the early years and initially unforeseen, which explains why only a small portion of the project was completed before his departure in 1834. His vision included designed houses for villagers surrounded by protective fencing, with each household containing a stable and a garden for vegetables, fruit trees, and mulberry trees for silkworm cultivation.

He established a committee in each county to conduct a dwelling census. Each committee included an engineer, two officials (one from the Interior Ministry and one from county administration), a boyar landowner from the county, and all county landowners. Committee members were required to inspect each dwelling, interview the family head, and document the following: the material condition of each house and its boundary fencing; the optimal location for village relocation; the best arrangement of houses along communication roads, including proper road width calculations; appropriate spacing between houses and the positioning of the church and inn in the

relocated village; optimal building materials specific to each region; recommendations for owners of unsuitable dwellings to build new homes, with provision of necessary building materials; a 3–4-year deadline for unwilling owners of poor homes to demolish old structures and build new ones according to the government’s architectural plan in locations designated by local authorities, without additional material support; the establishment of a Commission to monitor reform implementation based on the 1838 Census results.

3. The genesis of the 1838 Census

3.1. Enlightenment reforms and census as reform tool

Thus, the requirements of the Frontage of Villages Reform necessitated a second chapter in the *Census of 1838*, a general census of population and dwellings. Using “household” as the unit of observation, this census collected detailed information about: 1) the settled population by age group and sex; 2) the number of households and their structure; 3) the number of residential buildings and their distribution according to construction materials; 4) population distribution by economic activity; 5) distribution of population by skills and occupations.

The 1838 Census also emerged directly from the agricultural reformist vision, designed not as a fiscal instrument but as a tool for measuring progress toward Kiseleff’s utopian goal of transforming Wallachia into “a Heaven and another Egypt in Europe.”

3.2. French administrative expertise and the statistical work of Michel Fanton de Verrayon

The development of administrative statistics in Wallachia during the 1830s illustrates *satīs superque* the knowledge transfer across European borders. After the statistical work during the short Austrian administration over a part of Wallachia (1718-1739), the process continued in 1832, when Michel Fanton de Verrayon⁴ (1804-1887), a French-Russian military officer, compiled the

⁴ In Russia, Mihail Lvovici Fanthon of Verrayon (b. Smolensk, 1804) graduated from Moscow Military Academy (1821) and served in Chisinau where he learned Romanian while creating maps. He moved to Bucharest in 1829, settling on Kiseleff Boulevard (thus named after the Russian count in 1844), and married one Anastasia, daughter of the Grand Vornic Iordache Filipescu who conducted the 1831 Census (*Obsteasca Catagrafie*, on which I will speak at 3.5.2). He served as General of Major State in Petersburg (1850s) and Orenburg (1854), governed Bessarabia (1857-1862), retired in 1874, and died in 1887 (Bezviconi 1962: 226). His 1851 correspondence is preserved at the Romanian Academy Library (rom. 3834, p. 16; doc. CCCLIII, 104, unpublished).

comprehensive “Statistical Table of the Wallachian Principality for 1832” (ANIC, fond Vornicia Dinlăuntru, dos. 640, f. 349–350) under the personal order of General P.D. Kiseleff (ANIC, fond Diplomatica, dos. 147). Written in Romanian, this groundbreaking work comprised 5 panels documenting land use, population, economy, and monastery income, with the final panel bearing Verrayon’s holograph signature in Russian: “gheneralnovo staba podpolkovnik Fanthon de Verrayon”.

This document, though discovered and briefly described decades ago (Cojocaru 1965: 147-162), remains unpublished and underutilized. Its significance extends beyond its content to what it reveals about the transnational circulation of administrative knowledge in nineteenth-century Europe.

The sophistication of the later 1838 Wallachian Census built directly upon this foundation, drawing on French administrative expertise transmitted through Russian channels. Fanton de Verrayon, a descendant of a French aristocratic family that had emigrated to Russia during the French Revolution, played a crucial role as advisor to Kiseleff for both projects. His experience combined French Enlightenment rationalism with Russian imperial administration, adapted to Romanian conditions. This synthesis produced census and statistical methodologies that, in many respects, exceeded contemporary French practices in scope and ambition.

Since the content of the 1832 Statistical Table remains largely unknown, I will describe it as follows:

Panel No. 1 covers all 18 counties of Wallachia, divided into two main categories: a) upland counties and b) lowland counties, with 83 data columns. For each county, numerical entries include: land areas, towns, fairs, villages, monasteries, churches, houses, and rivers (classified by size into four categories). Also recorded are ponds, pools, windmills, water mills, horse mills, salt mines, oil wells, stone quarries, mineral springs, oak and fir forests (including tree counts and prices), and domestic animals by breed (horses, oxen, cows, sheep, goats, pigs, buffaloes, mules, and donkeys).

Panels No. 2 and 4 contain data about each monastery in Wallachia, noting whether they were dedicated to Eastern Patriarchies, or not, as well as their income.

Panel No. 3 documents both tax-exempt and tax-paying population categories, including their residence (urban or rural), the three classes of owners, and figures for two specific communities, the Romani and Jewish populations. Beyond demographic data, it records agricultural, viticultural, and apicultural activities, alongside handicraft industries producing baize, cloth,

hats, strings, kerchiefs, candles, soap, pottery, glassware, and alcoholic beverages.

Panel No. 5 provides information on commerce, education, hospitals, prisons, printing houses, and civil and military public institutions.

Data on Romani individuals was collected through two institutions: the Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs (*Logofeția Pricinilor Bisericești*) gathered information on Monastery Gypsies, while the Ministry of the Interior (*Vornicia Dinlăuntru*) collected data on Private Gypsies.

“Command to all the County Governments, October 10, 1832. Necessity: the ruler needs to know the number of all the Gypsy families belonging to private persons within this county. As for the Monastery Gypsies, the honorable Ministry of Culture and Religious Affairs was entrusted to request information from the head-monks of the monasteries. For the Gypsies belonging to the boyars, the Governments of the Counties were instructed to, without delay and under strict command, direct the sub-district administrators to ask for such documents from all individuals that have Gypsies of any rank. These notes should be compiled into a record by each sub-district administrator and sent to each County Government, which will then create a register to forward to the Ministry of Interior. This work should be completed within ten days, without delay, and each County Government will take appropriate measures to avoid further delays.” (ANIC, Vornicia Dinlăuntru, dos. 465/1832, f.1)

The partial data were centralized in the final statistical record by combining the two datasets without specifying the category (private or Monastery Gypsy). While the preliminary work on Boyar Gypsies was partially preserved, the data on Monastery Gypsies were completely lost. Various dignitaries referenced much of this statistical information, including the French counsellor in Bucharest, Baron Bois-le-Comte, in a memoir sent to the Comte de Rigny (Paris, 1838), the French Foreign Minister for the Middle East and Southeastern Europe.

The headings for the Boyar Gypsies statistics include: 1) Names of Gypsy owners; 2) Category (based on sedentarization degree, with two types: *vătrași* ‘domestic, sedentary’ and *lăieți* ‘itinerant, semi-nomadic’); 3) Their names, surnames, and nicknames; 4) Place of dwelling; 5) Name of the sub-district; 6) Occupation.

The 1832 statistics record Wallachia’s population at 1,976,809 inhabitants, classified into two large categories: tax-payers and those exempt from taxation. The exempt category comprised 113,217 individuals: 944 boyars, 4,195 descendants of boyars without public office, 3,000 recruited soldiers, 13,000 ill and aged persons, 60,000 young adults, and 14,000 Boyar Gypsies. The tax-payers numbered 296,286 inhabitants, with 91% working in

agriculture, approximately 3,000 free peasants, 6,000 State Gypsies, 4,000 merchants, 400 craftsmen, 5,000 immigrants, and 4,000 inhabitants under foreign jurisdiction. Monastery Gypsies are not specifically mentioned, but their numbers might be identified with some difficulty in other documents, as I will note further.

3.3. Census methodology and European comparison

3.3.1. *The European context: French demographic science and early censuses*

To understand the significance of the 1838 Wallachian Census, we must place it within the broader development of European demographic science. France pioneered systematic population counting in the post-Revolutionary era, establishing methods that influenced statistical practices across Europe.

According to Dupâquier and Le Mée (1988: 15-65), the evolution of French census-taking (1801-1856) was as follows: The first genuine French census took place in 1801, though truly reliable data only emerged with the 1831 count. This established quinquennial censuses that continued until 1946. The methodological development of French censuses shows the gradual advancement of demographic science:

- 1831: Establishment of reliable data collection and quinquennial schedule;
- 1836: Introduction of *domicile de droit* (legal residence) concept;
- 1841: Addition of population counts by *domicile de fait* (actual residence);
- 1846: Implementation of fixed-day census taking for separately counted populations;
- 1851: Recording of age, nationality, religion, disabilities, and occupations;
- 1856: Addition of household composition to existing categories.

This French progression illustrates how demographic variables expanded and methods improved throughout the nineteenth century. Remarkably, the 1838 Wallachian Census already incorporated many features that would not appear in French censuses until the 1850s, including detailed occupational classifications, ethnic identification, household structure analysis, and comprehensive agricultural data.

3.3.2. *The 1838 Census in comparative perspective*

The 1838 Wallachian Census incorporated variables that French censuses would not include until the 1850s:

Table 1. Variables in 1838 Wallachian Census, compared with the French Censuses

Variable	Wallachia 1838	France
Age	Yes	1851
Nationality/Ethnicity	Yes	1851
Religion	No	1851
Disabilities	Yes (selective)	1851
Occupations	Yes (detailed)	1851
Number of children	Yes	1856
Agricultural holdings	Yes (comprehensive)	Later
Livestock	Yes (detailed)	Later
Housing materials	Yes	Later

Source: For Wallachia: ANIC Catagrafia 1838 (reproduced from Gaunt and Rotaru (2021)). For France: Dupaquier and Le Mee (1988: 15-65).

This comparison demonstrates that the Wallachian Census, far from being a backward imitation of Western models, actually surpassed contemporary French practice in scope and detail. The involvement of French expertise through Fanton de Verrayon produced not mere replication but creative synthesis adapted to Romanian conditions and Kiseleff's ambitious reform agenda. This comparison demonstrates that the 1838 Census was not backward or imitative but rather represented cutting-edge demographic science adapted to reformist purposes.

3.4. The Russian occupation and statistical efforts (1828-1834)

The 1838 Census did not emerge in a vacuum but built upon earlier Romanian and Russian attempts at population enumeration and territorial mapping.

3.4.1. "Russian Map" 1 (1832) and "Russian Map" 2 (1853)

Following the Russian armies' arrival in the Principalities (May 1823), they created a cartographic work titled "Map of the theater of war in Europe, in the years 1828 and 1829" (scale 1/420,000). Produced between 1828-1832, this map shows the 1835 borders of Wallachia and Moldavia (Giurescu⁵ 1957:15). It

⁵ The map was republished in 1853 with corrections made by the 5th Infantry Corps. Constantin C. Giurescu analyzed both editions in 1957, following his rehabilitation from

includes population statistics by household count, categorizing hamlets under 20 households into two groups (1-5 and 5-20). Population figures are calculated by multiplying households by 5. These statistics represent the period between the 1821 uprising and the 1828 Russo-Turkish War (Giurescu 1957:182), not the 1831 *Obșteasca Catagrafie* data. The household counts served to assess troop accommodation and supply possibilities (Giurescu 1957:178). Demographic data presents a society excluding *capite censi*, likely including Romani people.

3.4.2. *The Obșteasca Catagrafie of 1831: the first census of the population (not preserved)*
The *Obșteasca Catagrafie* (General Census) of 1831 was the first demographic document⁶ compiled in Wallachia following the implementation of the *Organic Regulation*, which stipulated that a Census was meant to be conducted every 7 years (periods: 1831, 1838, 1845, 1854), organized and guided by the Department of Internal Affairs, section 3.

This first census was ordered by General P.D. Kisseleff and aimed to provide a comprehensive population count for taxation and administrative purposes. According to the *Organic Regulation*, all residents were to be registered except for monastery monks (“*în ele nu au să intre călugării monastirești, iar afară de aceștia toată suflarea să cuvine a să înscrie*”).

The registration unit was the head of family. The count recorded taxpayers subject to capitation, including immigrants from other countries (except Transylvanian shepherds), merchants, craftsmen, former priests, nobles, foreign subjects, elderly, widows, disabled, and Gypsy people owned by the State. A notable aspect of this census was its categorization system, which recorded individuals primarily by fiscal categories rather than strictly by ethnicity⁷. However, the census did include information about the “*neam*”

political prison (according to information from his son, the late academician Dinu C. Giurescu, February 2015).

⁶ This extremely valuable document had the misfortune of being located in the portion of the State Archives that was evacuated during 1944 heavy bombardment and through criminal negligence in the two trains that burned at Chitila station. Ten files from that document concerning Dolj county were in Craiova being processed by C.S. Nicolăescu-Ploșor and were thus saved; they are now kept at ANIC, Bucharest. These files were published between October 15, 1944, and January 1, 1945, with Military Censorship approval. Among Nicolăescu-Ploșor’s collaborators was Ion Șucu, an archivist at the National Archives in Bucharest who had compiled cards based on the original document between 1942-43 (Turcu 2002: 159). These cards were later processed by the medievalist Ion Donat. Their work would only be published in 2000, thanks to Dinică Ciobotea.

⁷ There’s scholarly debate about whether the census actually included Gypsy people owned by the State, with some historians like Venera Achim claiming they were omitted, while others like

(nationality) of family heads, marking an important development in Romanian demographic documentation.

The document also recorded occupations practiced by state-owned Gypsies, including carpenters, goldsmiths, mule breeders, blacksmiths, manual laborers, tinkers, bird hunters, and others. The *Organic Regulation* included specific provisions regarding Gypsy population, with articles focusing on their fiscal obligations and settlement policies, reflecting the administrative interest in transforming nomadic populations into settled taxpayers.

This census constitutes one of the most comprehensive demographic sources for early 19th century Romania, providing critical information about population structure, fiscal categories, and social organization in the period preceding Romania's unification and modernization.

4. Critical assessment: what the 1838 Census was not

To understand the ambitious aspirations of the Census initiators of 1838, to avoid illusions from comparing past efforts with modern capabilities, and to grasp this document's true importance, we must step back from our present perspective. This retreat allows us to transcend contemporary biases and better capture the authentic meanings of life and culture from the first half of nineteenth-century Romania.

4.1. The non-exclusively fiscal purpose: evidence first

Based on the context of Kiseleff's reforms, Donat and Retegan appropriately note: "The general census of 1838 did not have a fiscal purpose, which is also the result of the name given by the initiators, the 'Statistics of the principality'" (Donat and Retegan 1956: 929).

Special investigations were conducted by the French counselor of Kiseleff, Fanton de Verrayon, on Gypsy slaves owned by the boyar nobility in 1832, as already shown. Another count was done in 1844 on those belonging to Orthodox monasteries. Notable differences between the 1838 and the 1832 cum 1844 inventories suggest that some Gypsies from 1838 were not documented in these records (Gaunt and Rotaru 2021: 31). Corroboration of this research with other files, such as those on the "Turkish Gypsy" (1832) (Rotaru 2021), reveals that they were also excluded from the 1838 Census. This

Giurescu believe they were included, based on reports by the French diplomat Bois-le-Comte from 1834. According to his reports from May 1834, the census recorded 4,453 families (22,265 individuals) of state-owned Gypsies ("Bohémiens de l'Etat") and 14,458 families (approximately 72,270 individuals) of privately-owned Gypsies ("Bohémiens, appartenant aux particuliers"). Gypsies were thus recorded not as an ethnic category but in various fiscal categories.

exclusion likely occurred because they held little relevance to the modernization reforms of Romanian villages, probably due to their semi-nomadic lifestyle and improvised settlements on village outskirts. The exclusion of Muslim Gypsies and monastery-owned Gypsies exclusion makes no sense if fiscal purposes were primary, as both groups were taxpayers or represented taxable assets.

According to these findings, the 1838 Census did not primarily focus on establishing a fiscal regime in Wallachia and Moldavia, but rather on the rural settled population relevant to agricultural and housing reforms, as opposed to conducting a comprehensive fiscal registration.

4.2. The origins of the fiscal misconception

Dionisie Pop Marțian, founder of the Central Office of Administrative Statistics in July 1859 and author of Romania's first modern census, praised the 1838 effort but rejected its concrete results as far from reality. Marțian identified three main problems: people's fear of telling the truth; presumed resistance from boyars and abbots who refused to receive census takers; and errors by census takers themselves.

Taxation has always been a major state interest. The National Assembly's discussions about instructions for the *Catagrafia* Commissions appear in the *Organic Regulation* (Chapter III, Section IV). Because these discussions largely addressed tax matters, many researchers mistakenly concluded that the Census had primarily fiscal aims. In 1837, one year before the *Obșteasca Catagrafie* was conducted, the National Assembly debated necessary legislative amendments. Census takers interviewing village residents were required to compile lists of tax-exempt privileged categories and noblemen without public office, based on documents proving their noble origins. A notable innovation was the 1836 law establishing three categories of patents required to purchase the right to practice a profession (obliged to buy the "patent"), which effectively taxed multinational corporations. Foreigners under foreign state protection also had to register in the patent category, a project requiring collaboration with the respective consulates. Beyond these financial matters, the Assembly addressed the settlement of State's Gypsies through land distribution and housing materials. They also discussed the boyars' Gypsies, requiring owners to settle them on their own or other properties through mutual agreements. Additionally, property owners were obligated to facilitate the return of inhabitants who had evacuated or were wandering between villages without following legal procedures (*Analele Parlamentare ale României* 1896: 503-512).

Thus, documentary evidence supports Marțian's assessment. Discussions in the 1837 National Assembly about census instructions in the *Organic Regulation* (Chapter III, Section IV) did address taxation issues, privileged categories exempt from taxes, patent-holders, foreign nationals under foreign protection. However, these fiscal concerns represented only one component of a much broader information-gathering effort.

4.3. The actual purposes of the 1838 Census

The census gathered comprehensive information on:

- Population demographics: sex, age, civil status, ethnicity, profession, social category, and health conditions;
- Agricultural development: arable land, livestock, viticulture, fruit cultivation, beekeeping, and sericulture potential;
- Housing: materials and construction;
- Land ownership: particularly boyars' large properties;
- Village configuration and planning;
- Transportation infrastructure;
- Natural resources: mineral waters, ponds, lakes, forests.

The *Catagrafia* of 1838 served primarily as an information base for Kiseleff's reform agenda, particularly his village systematization project initiated in 1831.

4.4. The reliability question reconsidered

Marțian's claim that people feared telling the truth and that data were therefore unreliable has been difficult to evaluate, as comparison with the 1859 Census is impossible due to the loss of centralized village tables from 1838. However, several considerations suggest greater reliability than Marțian allowed. First, no contemporary documents record resistance from boyars, abbots, or peasants to census-taking. Marțian's assertions appear to be assumptions by a Transylvanian newcomer, such as Marțian, unfamiliar with Wallachian realities rather than documented facts. Second, the direct interrogation methodology, the detailed instructions to census takers, and the specificity of recorded information suggest serious efforts at accuracy. The recording of disabilities and chronic illnesses, relevant for tax exemptions, indicates that census takers engaged genuinely with respondents' circumstances. Third, comparative analysis of 1838 Census data with the 1831 *Obșteasca Catagrafie* and with 1832 boyar Gypsies cum 1844 monastery Gypsy records reveals consistency in demographic patterns, suggesting systematic rather than random recording. Finally, Constantin C. Giurescu's conclusion that between 1821 and 1888, no

important population migrations occurred in Wallachia indicates demographic stability consistent with 1838 Census patterns.

In conclusion, the 1838 Census primarily served as a comprehensive information-gathering tool focused on the rural settled population subject to agricultural and housing reforms, not as a fiscal instrument.

5. The MapRom Database⁸: a digital database for Romani historical demography

The main archival source of MapRom database is the “Census of the population or Statistics of the Principalities (Wallachia and Moldova) of 1838”, ANIC, Fond Catagrafii, part I, Inventory number 501, volumes numbered I/8 to I/107 from the Historical National Archives, Bucharest, mostly unpublished and now digitized and automatized for the first time⁹, in regard to Romani population.

This Census was conducted by the Interior Ministry in February 1838. It is the first preserved Romanian modern census of population and dwellings, which introduced new techniques of reviewing, such as the nominal lists and the great number (24) of demographic variables, including ethnicity. The synthesis of this Census can be found in the Central Historical Archives, Bucharest (ANIC, Dir. General Statistics, dos. 1072/1867) in tabular form. The results of the 1838 Census were published in tabular form in the *State Almanac* in 1842, and in full, in the *Parliamentary Annals* IX, part 1, p. 1162 ff. For Wallachia, 99 files are kept at ANIC, 8-107 / 1838, with the nominal registration lists of the population and agriculture for fourteen counties, while the situation for four counties (Gorj, Ialomița, Mehedinți¹⁰, Vâlcea)¹¹ and the cities Craiova and Târgoviște is missing.

⁸ MapRom Project (2017-2022), funded by the Baltic Sea Foundation and implemented by Södertörn University (Stockholm), led by historical demographer David Gaunt with Julieta Rotaru as principal researcher, the project team included paleographer Florin Rotaru for data collection and transcription, IT specialist Ryan Dias for database architecture, and data analyst Nikoloz Kobakidze.

⁹ A sample of 21,546 persons, which covers the southern part of present-day Romania, representative sample of the rural population based on four regional strata (east, north, south and south-west) has been input since 2015 into the Census Mosaic database (Szoltysek and Gruber 2016).

¹⁰ The file with city of Cerneți is preserved.

¹¹ Mateescu (2013: 9) reports missing material to be found at the local archives, for instance for Ialomița county, etc, which can be further researched.

5.1. Genesis and Scope

The MapRom database represents the first comprehensive digitization and analysis of Romani population data from the 1838 Census. The resulting database encompasses 2,586 localities across fourteen counties of Wallachia, of which 1,304 localities (50.4%) recorded Romani presence and 1,282 recorded no Romani population. The database contains nominative data for 12,282 identifiable Romani-headed households comprising 48,567 individuals, plus several hundred additional Romani individuals recorded as servants in non-Romani households, yielding a total of approximately 47,865 Romani individuals. For comparative context, official aggregate tables published in the 1898 (*Analele parlamentare ale României* IX, I, 1162 ff) reported 13,244 Gypsy households; the discrepancy derives from exclusion of Bucharest (five volumes requiring separate urban analysis) and lost archival materials for four counties plus two municipalities.

5.2. Technical architecture and accessibility

MapRom was constructed exclusively using open-source software (SQL, Python) as a dual-purpose system: a comprehensive research database for scientific analysis and a user-friendly search interface for socio-economic investigation of specific Romani communities. The database architecture enables complex queries across multiple analytical levels while maintaining paleographic accuracy of nineteenth-century orthography.

The complete dataset has been deposited in archivable formats (CSV and Excel) at the Swedish National Data Center (Svensk nationell datatjänst—SND) and is publicly accessible: Rotaru, J., & Gaunt, D. (2023). *MapRom - Kartläggning av den romska befolkningen i det lantliga och semi-urbana Valakiet år 1838* (Version 1) [Dataset]. Södertörns högskola. <https://doi.org/10.5878/tz3b-4v36>. A user-friendly web interface (www.maprom.se) will be released following publication of principal findings by the research team.

5.3. Structure of the Census (transposed into MapRom)

The entries are divided by counties and then by villages or towns (see Figure 1). The settlements are designated as situated either in lowland (*plasă*) or highland (*plai*). Registration then proceeds by household, listing the name of the head of household, spouse, children, and any co-residents. Ages are provided for each person. Next come ethnicity designations: Romanian, Greek, Serb, Albanian, Armenian and Țigan. This is followed by the occupation of the head of household and economic information, such as tax status and labor obligations to estate owners or the state. For Romani households, sub-group

affiliations may be noted, including Rudari, Lăiași, Vătraș, Căldărar, Lăutar, and others. In some cases, disabilities and chronic illnesses are recorded to explain tax exemptions. Finally, the census lists each family's economic resources: field sizes, land dedicated to wheat, maize, and barley cultivation, and counts of livestock (horses, mules, oxen, cows, sheep, goats), bee-hives, and fruit trees including plum trees.

Figure 1. Administrative structure of MapRom

Country: Wallachia

1. Counties: 16
2. Administrative sub-units: many, from 2 to 10 per district
 - 2.1. head town
 - 2.2. sub-district (which can be *plasă* low land or *plai* 'upland')
 - 3.2.1 villages
 - 3.2.2. town(s)
 - 3.2.3. temporary settlements (like markets (*târg*), sheepfolds, settlements near inns, water mills, etc).

Source: ANIC Catagrafia 1838 (reproduced from <https://maprom.se/>)

5.4. Data structure: multi-level analytical framework

MapRom records information at three nested levels, enabling both micro-historical and macro-demographic analysis:

At individual level (n=48,567), there is information on:

- Full names (preserving nineteenth-century orthography and spelling variants)
- Age (in years)
- Sex
- Relationship to household head (spouse, child, parent, sibling, servant, co-resident)
- Marital status
- Ethnicity/sub-ethnicity (*neam*: țigan, Rudar, specific sub-group affiliations)
- Occupation (over 200 distinct occupational designations recorded)
- Disabilities and chronic illnesses (when recorded for tax-exemption purposes)

At the household level (n=12,282), there is information on:

- Household head identification
- Complete household composition and co-resident kin networks

- Household size
- Social status (free, state-owned [*domnești*], monastery-owned [*mănăstirești*], privately-owned [*boierești*])
- Owner identity, reconstructed from complementary archival sources (1832 Statistics of Boyar Gypsy Slaves; 1844 Census of Monastery Gypsy Slaves) for more than 50% of enslaved Roms
- Economic resources: landholdings (size in *pogoane*), cultivated area by crop type (wheat, maize, barley), livestock (horses, mules, oxen, cows, sheep, goats), beehives, fruit trees, plum orchards for *țuică* production
- Housing: construction materials (wood, adobe, stone).

At the village/locality level (n=2,586), there is information on:

- Total population (all ethnicities)
- Total households (all ethnicities)
- Romani population and household count
- Proportion Romani population
- Aggregate cultivated land area
- Aggregate livestock numbers by species
- Presence of infrastructure (church, school, inn)
- Orchards and vineyards
- Geographic coordinates (added by project team for mapping functionality).

5.5. Methodological innovations and paleographic challenges

The 1838 Census employed direct interrogation of household heads by local officials (sub-prefects in county seats, police chiefs in rural localities), a methodologically advanced approach for the period. Census takers recorded responses in manuscript form using Romanian language, Cyrillic script, presenting several paleographic challenges. First, it is the orthographic inconsistency: names, occupations, and place-names exhibit significant spelling variation both within and across localities, reflecting phonetic transcription by census takers with varying literacy levels. Second, the ethnographic terminology: the Romanian term *neam* (literally ‘nation’ or ‘people’) encompassed both ethnic identity and occupational-social categories in ways that resist modern classification schemas. Rudari, for example, appear variously as an ethnic designation (*neam: rudar*), an occupational descriptor (*neam: român*, occupation: *rudar*), or a hybrid category (*neam: țigan rudar*). Third, the age heaping: age data exhibit pronounced heaping at multiples of five and ten, characteristic of pre-statistical populations with limited birth registration.

MapRom preserves reported ages without adjustment, enabling researchers to analyze age-heaping patterns as evidence of numeracy and administrative culture. Fourth, the household definition: the census recorded both simple nuclear households (parents and children) and very few complex extended households (multiple married siblings, three-generation co-residence), with extended families often occupying adjacent houses indicated by consecutive numbering. MapRom preserves original household boundaries as recorded while flagging apparent kin-clusters across multiple household units.

5.6. Data quality and source criticism

MapRom coding protocols prioritize transparency and traceability: all personal names retain original orthography with standardization flags for searchability; ambiguous entries include uncertainty codes and paleographic notes; missing or illegible data are explicitly marked rather than imputed; occupational terms preserve historical terminology (e.g., *aurar*, *lingurar*, *złatar*) with modern occupational codes added for comparative analysis; owner identities reconstructed from external sources are flagged to distinguish census-recorded from archivally-reconstructed information.

However, there are some known limitations: Bucharest (five volumes) remains unanalyzed due to distinct urban census structure; four counties lack surviving materials (representing approximately 15-20% of Wallachian territory); Muslim Gypsies (*țigani turciți*) were generally excluded from the census, appearing in separate 1832 Statistics; and monastery-owned Gypsies coverage is incomplete, with systematic enumeration occurring in a separate 1844 count.

As already said, these exclusions suggest that the 1838 Census focused on the rural settled population relevant to agricultural and housing reform implementation, rather than pursuing comprehensive fiscal registration of all taxable populations.

5.7. Major findings: Romani demography and socio-economic conditions in pre-abolition Wallachia¹²

MapRom analysis reveals unprecedented details about Romani life in pre-abolition Wallachia.

5.7.1. Demographic patterns

In what concerns the household size, the average Romani household comprised 3.9 persons, the same as the average for the total Wallachian

¹²This section summarizes some of the findings published in Gaunt and Rotaru (2021).

population. This finding contradicts stereotypes about distinctly different Romani family structures and suggests significant adaptation to local demographic norms.

In terms of age structure, the analysis of age distribution reveals a young population consistent with pre-transitional demographic regimes characterized by high fertility and mortality. However, comparative analysis with non-Romani populations awaits further research.

In terms of geographic distribution, the Roms were present in 1,304 of 2,586 localities examined (50.4%). This widespread distribution demonstrates deep integration into the rural economy, though with significant regional variation. Romani concentration was higher in lowland (*plasă*) than highland (*plai*) areas, correlating with agricultural intensity.

In what concerns the ethnic sub-groups, the census records multiple Romani sub-groups: Vătrași (settled), Lăieși (itinerant), Rudari (spoon-makers/woodworkers), Aurari (gold-washers), Lăutari (musicians), Căldărari (coppersmiths), Fierari (blacksmiths), Ursari (bear-trainers), Ciurari (sieve-makers), Zlătari (knife-makers), and others. The Vătrași constituted the largest category, while itinerant groups (Lăieși, Netoți, Ursari) represented smaller proportions.

5.7.2. *Social status: slavery and freedom*

The MapRom data confirm that slavery dominated Romani social status in 1838. Only an insignificant number of Roms were free (probably freed after 1831-1832 legislation allowing manumission). The remainder were enslaved, divided into three categories established by Article 68 of the 1831-1832 *Organic Regulation*: Domnești (Crown/State-owned): owned by the Princely treasury; Mănăstirești (Monastery-owned): owned by Orthodox and Catholic churches and monasteries; Boierești (Boyar-owned): privately owned by noble families.

For more than 50% of enslaved Roms in MapRom, owner identities have been reconstructed from unpublished archival sources, including the 1832 Statistics of Boyar Gypsy Slaves and the 1844 Census of Monastery Gypsy Slaves. This reconstruction enables analysis of ownership patterns, estate sizes, and relationships between owners and enslaved populations.

5.7.3. *Economic integration and marginalization*

In terms of occupational structure, the Roms practiced diverse occupations essential to the rural economy: blacksmithing, coppersmithing, carpentry, wheelwrighting, music-making, agricultural labor, gold-washing, woodworking (spoons, bowls, agricultural implements), brickmaking, construction labor, and

many others. This occupational diversity contradicts stereotypes of Romani economic marginality, demonstrating instead their indispensability to the pre-industrial Wallachian economy.

However, economic marginalization is evident in resource disparities. MapRom analysis reveals that Romani households on average possessed significantly less land, fewer domestic animals, and fewer other economic resources than their non-Romani neighbors. Many Romani households had neither land nor domestic animals, indicating extreme poverty and dependence on wage labor or owner provision.

In terms of agricultural participation, despite stereotypes of Romani non-participation in agriculture, census data show substantial Romani engagement with farming. Vătrași communities often cultivated significant areas, though generally smaller than non-Romani holdings. These findings nuance understanding of Romani economic strategies in nineteenth-century Romania.

5.7.4. *Social exclusion and discrimination*

Regarding intermarriage, marriages between Roms and non-Roms were extremely rare, amounting to only 38 cases out of more than 10,000 Romani marriages recorded. This near-absolute endogamy reflects profound social boundaries, likely reinforced by slavery (as enslaved persons could not legally marry free persons) but persisting beyond legal constraints.

In terms of residential segregation, the Roms typically lived in separate settlements, often listed last by census takers after all other ethnic groups (Romanians, Greeks, Serbs, Hungarians, Germans, Armenians). This registration pattern suggests both physical segregation and social ranking. Regarding attitudes toward Gypsies, B.P. Hașdeu's Legal and Linguistic Questionnaires (*Chestionarele*, 1878 and 1884-1885) provide qualitative evidence in this respect. Responses reveal widespread discrimination, though some respondents noted that Gypsies were "good" people because they were "Christians like us." The ambivalence, simultaneous inclusion (as Christians) and exclusion (as despised țigani), characterizes nineteenth-century Romanian attitudes.

5.7.5. *Comparative context: integration vs. exclusion*

MapRom research demonstrates that in 1838, Gypsies were already socially excluded and economically discriminated against, despite being legally enslaved and therefore technically "integrated" into the social order through bonds of

ownership. This paradox, integration through slavery producing social exclusion, reflects the contradictions of the institution.

The concept of “integration through slavery” captures a fundamental contradiction in the status of the Roms in pre-abolition Danubian Principalities. Unlike free marginalized groups who might be excluded from society’s benefits while remaining legally autonomous, enslaved Roms were formally incorporated into the social order through bonds of ownership. They appeared in official registers, contributed labor essential to the rural economy, and were subject to the same administrative oversight as other inhabitants. The 1838 Census itself exemplifies this integration: Romani households were enumerated alongside Romanian, Greek, and Serbian households, with their agricultural production, livestock, and housing materials meticulously recorded. Yet this formal incorporation coexisted with—indeed, produced—profound social boundaries. The near-absolute endogamy (only 38 mixed marriages among over 10,000 Romani marriages), residential segregation, economic marginalization (dramatically fewer resources than neighbours), and the fundamental legal unfreedom of slavery created a form of exclusion more complete than simple neglect. The Roms were simultaneously inside the system (as property, labour, enumerated subjects) and outside it (as socially despised, legally unfree, economically dispossessed). This paradox reveals how slavery’s institutional structure could bind people to society while severing the social bonds that constitute genuine inclusion, a pattern that would persist after abolition, when legal emancipation removed the mechanism of “integration” but probably left the structures of exclusion intact.

5.8. Implications for historical demography

5.8.1. Baseline for Nineteenth-Century population studies

The 1838 data provide a robust baseline for studying demographic change across the 19th century. Future research can trace population growth rates by region and ethnicity, changing household structures, occupational shifts during industrialization (with environmental change cause, in Rudari case), agricultural productivity changes, the demographic impact of slavery abolition (1855-1856), migration patterns (internal and international).

5.8.2. Comparative studies

The availability of nominative data enables family reconstitution studies (linking 1838 Census data with other nominative lists, such as 1832 and 1844 boyar and monasteries Gypsy slaves, respectively), comparative analysis with the 1859 Census (Marțian’s first modern census), longitudinal studies of

specific communities, cross-regional comparisons within Wallachia, international comparisons with other European populations.

6. *Conclusion: reassessing the 1838 Census*

This article has argued for fundamental reassessment of the 1838 Census of Population, Houses and Agriculture. Far from being merely a fiscal instrument of questionable reliability, as Dionisie Pop Marțian (1859) claimed, the census represented an ambitious tool for measuring the success of Pavel Kiseleff's comprehensive modernization reforms. This connection is explicitly codified in Article 94 of the *Organic Regulation*, which established the direct link between census design and reform measurement, providing the legal framework for this ambitious statistical project.

Kiseleff's vision (1831), transforming Wallachia into "a Heaven and another Egypt in Europe" through agricultural rationalization, livestock improvement, and village systematization, required detailed baseline data against which progress could be measured seven years later, in 1838 (the prescribed interval for subsequent censuses). The census's incorporation of population enumeration, agricultural assessment, and housing evaluation within a single framework reflected this reform agenda's integrated character. One of MapRom's significant discoveries, that Muslim Roms and monastery Roms were excluded from the census, provides compelling evidence of its non-fiscal purpose, confirming that it was primarily designed to track the rural settled population subject to Kiseleff's agricultural and housing reforms.

Comparative analysis reveals that the 1838 Census equaled or exceeded contemporary French demographic practice in sophistication, incorporating variables that French censuses would not include until the 1850s. This achievement testifies to the creative synthesis of French administrative expertise (transmitted through Russian channels), Russian imperial statistical ambitions, and Romanian reformist agendas. The census thus represents a prime example of Enlightenment principles applied to governance, where statistical knowledge was viewed as essential to rational reform and societal improvement.

Central to this achievement was the role of Michel Fanton de Verrayon, whose 1832 Statistical Table of the Wallachian Principality served as the methodological foundation for the 1838 Census. This work featured five panels covering land use, population, monastic revenues, economic activities, and public institutions across eighteen counties. As a French-Russian military officer with aristocratic roots, Fanton de Verrayon blended French Enlightenment statistical approaches with Russian administrative methods,

adapting them to Romanian contexts. The document's impressive scope (83 data columns per county, comprehensive resource enumeration, and documentation of marginalized groups including 14,000 Boyar and 6,000 State Gypsies), shows that the 1838 Census methodology resulted from deliberate cross-border knowledge exchange. Though largely unpublished, this 1832 foundation demonstrates how Kiseleff's statistics initiatives, supported by French-trained experts, enabled a census from a politically peripheral region to exceed contemporary Western European standards.

The methodological evolution from the 1832 Statistics to the 1838 Census reflects a significant shift in data collection approaches in 19th century Romania. While the 1832 effort focused on county-level economic aggregates providing a broad administrative baseline, the 1838 Census advanced to detailed nominative records of individuals within households, offering greater demographic precision. The scope similarly transformed from a predominantly economic inventory to a more comprehensive population assessment that included agricultural and housing data. This methodological transition served changing purposes - from establishing statistical baselines to measuring reform progress in village systematization and agricultural development. Perhaps most notably, the documentation of Romani populations expanded dramatically, evolving from simple aggregates (14,000 Boyar Gypsies and 6,000 State Gypsies) to detailed records of 48,567 individuals with names, occupations, and sub-group affiliations, representing a fundamental shift from aggregate statistics to nominative demographic enumeration while maintaining consistent tracking of resources like livestock, land, and infrastructure.

The MapRom project has demonstrated both the feasibility and the immense value of digitizing this nineteenth-century source. By creating a comprehensive database of the Romani population in Wallachia (48,567 individuals in 12,282 households across 1,304 localities), the project has revealed unprecedented details about demography, social status, economic conditions, and lived experience in the final decades before slavery's abolition. These findings provide crucial context for understanding the limitations of Kiseleff's reform agenda, which, while progressive in many respects, failed to address the fundamental inequalities facing Romani populations.

The findings paint a sobering picture: despite economic integration through diverse essential occupations, the Roms in 1838 faced severe economic marginalization (dramatically fewer resources than non-Romani neighbors), social exclusion (near-zero intermarriage, residential segregation), and the fundamental unfreedom of slavery. These patterns, established before abolition, would persist long after legal emancipation, suggesting that slavery's

end revealed rather than created Romani marginalization in Romanian society. This reality stands in stark contrast to the Enlightenment ideals that inspired Kiseleff's reforms, highlighting the selective application of modernization principles.

Pavel Kiseleff dreamed that knowledge of agronomy would transform Wallachia into paradise. That utopian vision failed, but his legacy includes this remarkable census, a time capsule of a vanished world, now accessible to researchers as never before through digital humanities methodologies. Understanding that world, with all its complexities and contradictions, remains essential for understanding modern Romania and the long shadow cast by slavery's history. The census stands as both testament to the ambitions of Enlightenment reform and evidence of its profound limitations when confronting entrenched social hierarchies.

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The Cyrillic documents used herein, many of them unpublished and some of them underused, are part of a collection of materials gathered and transcribed during the MapRom project by paleographer and historian Florin Rotaru.

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