

Local history and population

Torda- city located in Romania, Kolozs county. ERDÉLY is the most well-known territory from ROMANIA. In the central of this territory is located Kolozs county which is an administrative unit having the second biggest city named Torda. The administrative central is Kolozsvár of which most of you may know or at least heard.

Due to the advantageous geographical location the city of Turda was populated from the start of the prehistoric age.

A multitude of peoples settled down in this region and this fact contributed to the shaping of the town's image.

We represent the minority of Hungarians. Our school is the **Jósika Miklós Theoretical High School** established in 2008 and in the present there are 381 students.

THE HUNGARIANS IN EUROPE

The Hungarians settled down in Europe, at the end of the first millennium 896 in the Carpathian Basin. Their ancient home was from the Uralic mountains to east in the TOBOL-OB-ISMIR region. From here they got in Central Europe after centuries of migration.

They belong to the Uralic-speaking people as cavalry and by their nomadic Hungarian tribes migration they got in relations with other nations. By this they got to know about the agriculture, industry, commerce and other different forms of states which is proved with the newcomer words.

From the archaeological sources it is probably that from the end of the I. millennium (i.e.) they lived in the region of the Volga – Káma rivers, in present named as Bashkiria, from the Ural to west. Because their occupation was the animal husbandry they probably moved at summer time to north, up to the Káma river's spring-water source and in winter time they got down there where the Volga flows in the Caspian – sea. The seasonal migration can explain the Hungarian language's twos: the north Ugric and the south Turkish elements presence.

In the middle of the 6th century our ancestors went to west. The new home was from the Don's bottom part to the Black-sea's marshy coast and they called it as Levédia. The Hungarians lived in Levédia about 300 years and they got in relations with other people. They were under the supremacy of the Khazars, after that by the Bulgarian, Turkish alliance made Onogur Empire's period the Turkish influence had increased. They also got in relations with the Alans, followed from the ancient Scythians.

Constantine Porphyrogenet Byzantine Emperor was born in Bátor at the beginning of the IX. century, according to him the Hungarians settled down in Dnyeper, Dnyeszter, Bug and Szeret region that Hungarians name as Etelköz. In the new living land there were Slavs but they also got in relations with the Byzantines.

Our ancestor lived in Etelköz for about 80 years but in 895 they crossed the Carpathians and entered the Carpathian Basin. The early medieval Europe was way to event-full in this period. Many kinds of frequent changes and continuous wars followed each other.

The Hungarians were different in many ways from their neighbors: they had a half-nomadic life, living in yurts with different outfits, habit, religion and warfare.

Because of our difference and braveness in short time our neighbors started to be rivals but we planned to stay for a long time in Europe and we needed to fit to the situation so we became Christians. With the leading of Stephen I of Hungary we enrolled a state and tried to catch up the feudal Europe.

TRANSILVANIA

Torda's history is closely intertwined with the history of Transylvania, which is a geographical and historical region surrounded all around by the Eastern and Southern Carpathian Mountains. The varied terrain, speedy, gushing rivers, millennial forests, fertile subsoil, mineral resources have been an attraction for people in every historical period. Starting from the prehistoric ages the multitude of people settled down here and the great powers struggled in range for the possession.

In the ancient times, the Dacian center was built here in Sarmiszegetusa and also the Dacian fortresses and sacred places (the dacian sanctuaries).

Between 106 and 271, the Romans took it in possession and made it to belong to the Dacian province.

In the migration period a multitude of migrating people settled down here from which: goths, huns, avars, slavs and gepids.

In the X century was conquered by the Hungarians and until 1541 it became part of the Kingdom of Hungary.

Between 1541 – 1688 it was an independent principality, the Ottoman Empire tax payer.

From 1688 to 1848 it was the territory of the Habsburg Empire. Identifying the objectives of the Hungarian Revolution, the population living here voted for the union and for a short time the territory was again the region of Hungary.

In the age of the neoabsolutism the Habsburg domination was restored, the military government restores the order.

In 1867 under the Austrian- Hungarian historical compromise the Kingdom of Hungary became a part of the Austro – Hungarian Empire.

1918 December 1th the majority Romanian people decides under the Wilsonian principles meaning for the merge with Romania by the Paris peace treaties.

So now we are at this meeting to say about us, we came from Romania and we are representing the Hungarian minority. Transylvania has always been characterized by the ethnic diversity: Hungarians, Szekely, Saxons, Romanians, Slovaks, Ukrainians, Jews and recently Gypsies are living together. They have accepted each others different branch and they solved their problems together.

TORDA IN THE PAST

Thanks to the favorable geographical conditions our area was inhabited in prehistoric times. The first traces of human life were from the middle of the Paleolithic ages. In this area the systematic archaeological excavations haven't been done. The findings have been discovered under construction and various works.



In the Dacian era, instead of this town there was a smaller town on its territory. The rich ceramic finds and numismatic monuments prove that the one-time settlement was on the today's town place in the south-western region.

Also the Romans recognized the strategic importance of this region, they evaluated the fertile land and the quarry, salt-importance.

On the place of the Dacian settlement around 105 to 106 AD. The Romans founded the Potaissa colonies, which they developed in a strong military fortress.

Potaissa received from Septimus Severus the rank of colonia and ius Italicum.

The most important monument of the Roman rule is the castrum, which was built after the 168 as the V. Macedonica Legion seat. It was built in Twenty-three acres (573x408m) and it was probably the largest province of Dacia. The crafts, trade and urbanization represent a great momentum, This is demonstrated by the excavated villas, baths, tombs, for the Roman's altars built for the Gods and the remains can still be seen in the castrum.

The rich salt mines and the Golden River from which could be washed gold was an attractiveness for the migration period peoples who took in possession the area. Their presence indicates the courtyard where were found Sarmatian Alans graves and the nearby found Huns, Gepids, Avars and Bulgarian archaeological findings.

The Hungarians settled down in Pannonia took in possession Transylvania in the beginning of the II. Millennium. The Kalocsa clan settled down in the area. One member of the prestigious St. Stephen former was called as Torda and he was the expropriated land's espouse and the castle's name giver. The first written mention of the building was by Géza the first and it was released in 1075 in a donation letter which remembers Torda's salt extraction.

With the occasion on the Mongol invasion in 1241 they destroyed most part of the city with all the nearby villages, but the large part of Torda's population hid in Torda's crack caves. As a result, the city prospered up quickly. Between 1288 and 1697 there were held 127 country meetings in our city, also it often turn in here Hungarian kings and Transylvania princes.

In the XIV - XV century were built significant historical buildings in the town: the Gothic Ótordai Reformed Church, the salt chamber - later princely palace, to St. Nicholas recommended parish, where in 1568, was the Reformation era for the first time in Europe, proclaimed the freedom of religion, in the Újtordai fortified church .

In 1541 the loss of the Battle of Mohács Transylvania became an independent principality and the era of the wars's political, religious conflicts greatly influenced the city's development.

The situation is similar in the XVII and XVIII centuries, as well. Austrian, Turkish and Tatar troops repeated attacks led to economic downturn, population decline and to loss of the town's political role.

In the 1661's campaign involved famous Turkish writer Evlia Celebi, recalls:
"In this town 1 day is time lose, we burned and destroyed this too in such a measure that it didn't remained more than a ruin hill".

In the XVIII. Century's second period it's a calmer political situation, the population number had increased, which approached in II. Joseph time's the number of 6,364 people. The economy was lively, many companies worked. Many people dealing with agriculture as the city had 21 thousand acres of boundary and vineyards.

The revolution of 1848 changed again the city and the local life. In 1848 April 10th the Ótordai reformed church held a meeting where Torda county adopted the Union. Beside the Union there were not just enthusiasts but they organized the national guard. In Torda was formed three centuries of walkers and one century, horse-drawn infantry militia which took part in various battles of the War of Independence and protected the residents from the Austrian and Romanian invaders.

Charles Velits pharmacist, and later the city's mayor, because of the activities of the emigrated to the Ottoman Empire and returned after the compromise. The dualistic era's (1867 - 1918) modernization also resulted changes in our region. In the turn of the century took place the largest-scale construction projects:

- built between 1884 and 1886 the **Town Hall**
- between 1901 and 1902, the **Financial and Entertainment Palace**
- modernization of public lighting in 1902 - was handed over to the city's electric plant, in the same year there was a modern water pump house
- in 1905 was built the theatre
- in 1865 the Ótordai reformed church's tower collapsed, according to the design engineer Sztehló Otto-committee of the national monument in 1904 and 1906 a similar church tower was built.
- built between 1908 and 1909 the High School that is an impressive building
- In the city center were built elegant town houses which created today's image
- Based on Hübner Eugene's architect plans from Budapest there was built the city hospital
- The manufacturing industry is developing: pulp, soda, beer and cement factory is built

The spectacular growth ended at the beginning of the I. World War. The events of 1918 and the Versailles Peace led a new situation arose: Transylvania became part of Romania. The Hungarians got two options: to get used to the minority status or to emigrate. Many people choose the second option.

The Second World War also caused deep wounds in the city's life. In 1944, a bloody battle - Turda battle was fought between Hungarians-Germans and Soviet-Romanian armies in which the Hungarian and German troops prevented the Soviet to advance for a month. The massive destruction of the military operations, damage to property, caused hardship, but the biggest blow was the Russians who took as prisoners Hungarian men.

In the communist dictatorship period the city was developed into the province biggest industrial city. Work force was needed...the settlement of the population in the old city's neighborhood were built new city blocks.

In 1989 the changes brought the long desired freedom, but also new problems... The outdated industry collapsed ... many people have lost their jobs and returned to their home villages working on farm lands, also others seek employment abroad.

POPULATION, OCUPATIONS

Taking advantage of the possibilities offered by the geographical and natural conditions, the main occupation for the inhabitants was the agriculture and the animal husbandry. Even in the ancient times they were mostly interested in excavating the salt. The Romans conducted a surface mining, this is proved in the former mining areas formed salt lakes. The Roman road connected to the main cities had also affected the settlement. In the light of the archeological finds the pottery was widespread. This is demonstrated by Roman pot that can be still used – Roman collector words. The stone carving and the metal processing seasons were also widespread.

Considering the town's extension there've been already living a large number of population from the ancient times, especially in the Roman period were significant increases when the military, the Roman administration and the civil population settled down here.

After the Roman withdrawn the population decreased, also the economic significance of the city decreased.

In the Migration Period a multitude of migratory settled down also recognizing the great opportunities offered by this region.

In the Middle Ages, belonging to the Hungarian Kingdom was a significant influence to the region's life. Our city's location being in the middle of Transylvania, the salt store was an attraction for the Hungarian Kings in the early Árpád ages.

The salt mining, trade routes which cross the region had an impact on the city's development. We know that the Tartar devastation was significant, but this effect was enchanted in the next century by the plague which included all Europe. The Angevin documents confess all this.

Louis the Great tries with privileges to attract the colony formation. Our success is measured in the XIV-XV. Century built impressive sized churches.

The XV- XVI. Century's events: power wars, peasant rebellion, foreign ravage had a major impact on the population decrease, depopulating entire districts. In the XVII. century, Prince Gabriel Bethlen settles down in the Újtordai part of the city 200 fighters of his own.

As for the employment there is still the farming as the main occupation so far. The population also deals with handcrafting. The Tordai shoemakers are famous, butchers and tanners, furriers, wheels and blacksmiths, potters, hatters.

In the city is formed a multitude of guilds. The settlement has the right to hold a market town. Weekly and national fairs are held in Torda. The local artisans didn't sold their wares just in the town or it's surroundings. Torda's pottery is know in all Transylvania but also in Poland and Bukovina.

In the XIX. Century there are major changes in all domains. Our town became an important administrative and cultural center. About the population in the rank of the most populated cities in Transylvania, Torda was an upscale ranked in front of the much more populated cities from present. (Segesvárt, Besztercét, Gyulaféhevárt)

E. Varga Árpád's work "The ethnic and religious statistics" show that in this period the city's population is continuously increasing and the Hungarians populations in 1920 is twice bigger than the Romanian's population. It is also revealed that there are just few people from other nationalities. It still remains an important occupation the farming, it remained a tradition the crop cultivation, animal husbandry, fruit and grape cultivation. The populations 2/8 part deals with the industry and also artisans created associations. An important source of income is the salt extraction. The salt-mining techniques didn't change over the time there've been always done with hand tools.

The manufacturing industry's beginning can be situated in the XIX. Century, the pulp factory was built in 1892.

The XX.century's rural industrialization facilitated the introduction of the natural gas in the county seats. Torda became Transylvania's first municipality heated with natural gas. Before the First World War in Torda were working the brewery, gypsum and cellulose factories and in 1913 started working the cement factory.

The developing economic life attracted the workers from the field, mountain-age and beside the Golden river.

Starting from 1918 Transylvania belonged to Romania and also in the history of the city starts a new era. The population, number of houses increases gradually. The industry is developing, the banks appear...and the cement dust settle down on the former old-fashioned city, and is situated in the rank of the little towns. Many Hungarians emigrated but others realized the need to face the reality and continued to work. The economic opportunities were given. New factories were built: the glass factory, the soda factory, china factory and also a number of small factories and workshops were working.

During the years of the communism there were established more factories but there was need of workforce. The settled people's number was increasing. Around the old-town there where built new blocks. rose. The city's image has changed, the population grew, the ethnic composition of religious change. The city is one of the county's industrial citadel. The large-scale industrial activity has caused environmental pollution in the area.

In 1989, not only the dictatorship collapsed, but also the out-of-date economy. The resolution for today's crisis is also unsolved. In the 2002 census, the city population was 55.887, 47.442 Romanian, 5.618 Hungarian, 2.703 gypsies and 82 Germans. In 2012 from non official census data we know that the population decreased from 46.000 to 43.000.

BABOS TIMEA ERZSÉBET

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