

LIFE, TOWNS AND MINING IN SLOVAKIA DURING THE MEDIEVAL TIME

- from 11th century→ beginning of feudalism and stabilization of the power of the king
 - main occupation is agriculture, pasturage, hunting, fishing, cattle breeding, crafts, mining→ names of the villages Kováče, Hrnčiarovce, Tesáre, Psiare, Sokolče, Dravce, Hájniky, Rybáre, Konská, Svinná...
 - towns- established later than in Western Europe, before the Tatar invasion, but mainly after, developed from the previous market settlements where the craftsmen, other skilled people living in the countryside and the foreigners, had moved
 - located in a good geographical position, crossroads (Trnava), ford passages and river banks, under the central castles (Bratislava, Trenčín, Zvolen), in the close proximity of the Church institutions (Esztergom, Nitra), later with the development of the mining (Bánska Štiavnica, Kremnica)
 - conferment of the town privileges to the community of the citizens- the last step in the establishing of the towns, 1238 Trnava, later Košice, Prešov, Bardejov, Levoča, Nová Baňa, Pukanec, Skalica, Žilina (trade and craft centre)...
 - town structure- 3 classes→ rich patriciate (merchants, mine industrialists, rich craftsmen)
 - middle class (most craftsmen united in varied guilds from 14th century)
 - town poverty (shop workers, apprentices, servants, laborers)
 - full citizen was only the owner of a house (or other real estate), others lived in the lodgings
 - town rights, privileges and responsibilities- independent election of the mayor/"richtár" (sometimes also the pastor), members of the town hall and independent judiciary
 - right of free market, release of the toll, right to build the town walls, right of a free fishing, right of a free cutting trees, right to mine the precious metals...
 - responsibilities to pay taxes, giving of the new year's gifts, a number of the soldiers, provide with food and drink the king during his stay
 - formation and development of the towns contributed to the economic rise of the kingdom, the towns were the centers of shopping, marketing and connection with the distant markets abroad
- Mining and metallurgy: 1323-1338→Charles Robert issued reforms- tax reform, currency reform, mining reform 1327- allow of free mining of the precious metals (of course with taxes) → progress of mining and metallurgy- new techniques and mining methods (from surface to underground mining)
- 14th century→2500 kg per year of gold production, mostly at Kremnica together with the mint (coins for Hungarian Kingdom, Austro-Hungarian Empire, the only medieval mint still working)
- 10 000 kg per year of silver production, mostly at Bánska Štiavnica district
 - copper production, Banská Bystrica, Smolník, Gelnica, Spišská Nová Ves, Spiš, Gemer
- miners→ specific class of people, villages around the mines, personally free