

ABSTRACT

The History of the Colonies in the Luduş Area (1903–1989): Structure and Elements of Cultural and Communicative Memory

The history of the Luduş colonies, Andrásytelep/Roşiori, Eczkentelep/Avrămeşti, Mezőalbistelep/Fundătură, and Belsőtelep/Colonia Internă, is 120 years old. However, the narratives known so far suggest an inexhaustible source of information, as new stories and documents continuously emerge, potentially offering different perspectives on our knowledge about the colonies or even our own families.

My research aims to uncover the family and settlement histories of the four colonies belonging to Luduş, mapping out their history. The colonies under investigation were established as a result of the processes that took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century, regulated by the 1894 Establishment of New Colonies Act V.⁶⁶¹

Systematic research began in 2011, with some interruptions, although my interest and observations on the subject date back much earlier. The sources used during the research period mainly consist of interviews with people I know, informal conversations with acquaintances, the use of documents from institutions (maps, photographs, census data, objects), and the review of publications on the topic.

The century-long history of the colonies can still be explored through the narratives about the settlement that live in the memory of the population. The goal of this research is to examine the memories and narratives of the colonists of Luduş, focusing on how these narratives change, evolve, and possibly erode over generations. I also consider the differences observed within a generation, which manifest in the knowledge and memories of different age groups.

In investigating the stories about the colonies, I considered several aspects. One of these is the generational division, which plays an important role in the transmission and acquisition of knowledge. Additionally, I tracked the different narratives that emerged, existed, and spread at the level of the colonies. What do the residents know about the colony, what do they remember, and what do different generations not remember? I also

⁶⁶¹ In the present research the term *colonize, colonization* is used in the sense of populating (sparsely populated or depopulated) regions of one's own country with people brought from other regions. *The act or process of filling a place or taking control of an area of activity.* Source: <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/colonization> Seen: June 2024.

considered how they remember the events, the sources of their knowledge, from whom they know what they know, and where and under what circumstances they heard about these. Sometimes the question arises whether the knowledge thus acquired is passed on to others at all.

I kept in mind the dimension of national history that emerges during storytelling and how individual life experiences fit within it. A question that arose was how far back the history of the colonies goes, what events and motifs it includes, and what actually constitutes the history of the colonies: is it the history of the colony itself, the history of farming, land ownership, institutions, or family history?

In addition to collecting and analyzing stories, I also focused on examining written documents preserved within families. Reviewing the family documents and photographs of the interviewed individuals was a milestone of the research. A key question was whether the aspects that arise during the analysis of memories could also be applied to organizing written sources and photographs. Can the same questions be asked? Can the history of the colony/colonies and the families be reconstructed from written documents and photographs? Can the dimension of national history be unfolded, or do the stories remain at the level of documenting the particular family? Who recorded and preserved what and how within the family concerning the history of the settlement?

From the collected sources, the types of documents that constitute the 120-year history also became clear. This part of the investigation does not include documents officially preserved in archives, as these were under the jurisdiction of the bodies dealing with the colonies and could have been preserved based on preservation criteria, so the family did not coordinate these. The written sources and photographs preserved in families reflect the mentality of the particular family, depending on how the family history evolved. From the nature and time of the documents, it can also be discerned which generation started systematic collection and preservation.

Family documents are invaluable, as in many families, their selection has already occurred or is in progress. With the selection process, forgetting begins: the devaluation of the document renders it meaningless, old and smelly; there is no longer anyone to verify the identities of those in the photograph.

Through these questions and the details that arise from them, I see the history of the established colonies in Ludaş.