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The Orthodox Romanian Churches of Guşteriţa

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The "Annunciation" Orthodox Church in Guşteriţa is the only church founded by Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna in the surroundings of Sibiu. But it was not the first Orthodox church built in this little community. Despite the unfortunate historical context, the beginnings of the Orthodox parish in Guşteriţa were not as modest as one would think. This paper reconstructs the historical context and follows the traces of the first Orthodox church in Guşteriţa, pointing out that at the end of the eighteenth century, the Romanian community had managed to build a worship place made of stone. While the structure has long since been demolished and knowledge of its exact location has been lost, the site of this important structure can now be approximated based on available topographical evidence.

Keywords: *Ecclesiastic history; Romanian Orthodox Church; Guşteriţa; Hammersdorf; Sibiu; eighteenth-nineteenth centuries*

1. Introduction

Amid all the historical regions of Romania, Transylvania has a special history regarding the relations among the inhabiting nations even if it is often stated that it was not cohabitation, but rather colonization[1]. It should be noted that, throughout time, a balance was created among all the ethnic groups present in Transylvania even though the relations between them were not necessarily mutually beneficial, the Romanians being excluded from political life. The territory of medieval Transylvania was divided among socio-ethnic estates called "nations": the Hungarian nobility, the Saxons, and the Szeklers. On the other hand, the Romanians, called *Universitas Valachorum*, had only the status of a tolerated nation, and their religion was also just "tolerated".[2]

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[1] Constantin Horia Oancea and Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan, "The Donation Act of Hagi Constantin Pop's Family for the Annunciation Church in Sibiu," *Religions*, 11.108 (2020): 1, https://doi:10.3390/rel11030108.

[2] Dragoş Boicu, "The Ethnic Pluralism of the Nineteenth Century in Transylvania according to the Ecclesiastical Painting of the Grecu Brothers," *Review of Ecumenical Studies* 8 (April 2016): 56–58.

To preserve their ethnic identity, the Saxon administration sought to restrict the right of settlement (an act known as "concivility") in the cities of the Royal Lands (Fundus Regius), especially around Sibiu (Hermannstadt), the capital of the Saxon nation of Transylvania. Only the 1781 Edict of (religious) Tolerance, issued by Emperor Joseph II (1780–1790), ended the restrictions.[3] The law stated that it was permissible for all citizens, of any religion, to build stone and brick churches with bell towers and to raise schools in every village, where there were at least one hundred families living together.[4] Through a new decree, published on September 3, 1783, the Emperor stated, with regards to the members of the Greek-Oriental (Orthodox) Church, that they were compelled to support, with their own contributions, priests and churches without receiving any "support from the state and other religions".[5]

In such an ethnic and religious context, it is interesting to see how the Romanian Orthodox communities evolved, starting from the particular case of Guşteriţa, a village near Sibiu.

2. A Brief History of Guşteriţa

Guşteriţa was, until its incorporation into the city of Sibiu, an old Saxon village that was first mentioned in 1309 under the name of Villa Umberti/Humberti[6] when parson Johannis from the said village was mentioned as bearing witness in a litigation case between the Alba Iulia Chapter and the Saxon Deanery. Over time, the village has been mentioned in various documents under several names: Villa Hupardi (1332–1335) –when a certain chaplain (German: Geistlicher) was mentioned by the Papal tax list –, Villa Humpery (1342), Hammersdorf (1414), Hommolzdorph (1440), Hamostorf (1686, 1709),[7] Gustericze (1733), Gusterica (1750),

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[3] Daniel Dumitrean, "Edictul de toleranţă iosefin în Transilvania: repere istoriografice şi perspective ale cercetării," *Annales Universitatis Apulensis, Series Historica* 11, I (2007): 237–39.

[4] Ioan Lupaş, *Istoria bisericească a românilor ardeleni* (Sibiu, 1918), 125, 163.

[5] Paul Brusanowski, *Pagini din istoria bisericească a Sibiului medieval* (Cluj-Napoca: Presa Universitară Clujeană, 2007), 235.

[6] Ioan Cosmin Ignat, "Un monument mai puţin cunoscut al Sibiului: biserica fortificată din Guşteriţa," *Buletinul Cercului de Medievistică 'Radu Popa'*, no. VIII–XI/2009–2012 (2012): 58.

[7] Pál Inczédy, *Történeti emlékek a Magyar Nép községi és magán életéből*, vol. II (Pest, 1860), 11.

Szenterzsébet (1808).[8] Thomas Nägler argues that the name Hammersdorf is a corrupt form of the eponym "village of Humbert" (Humbertsdof), pointing out that this name derives from German origins. Even though in Latin the village is called Villa Umberti,[9] the name makes no reference to any Saint Umbertus but rather to the "landlord" or locator designated as the person in charge of the recruitment of people and the carrying out of the works required for the establishment of the new community.[10] Ioan Moga equally adheres to the opinion that "Villa Umberti" (Hammersdorf = Guşteriţa nearby Sibiu), is first mentioned in official documents in 1309[11] and that its name does not stem from a Saint Umbertus but from the founder landlord's name. The church, founded around 1300, was "Ecclesia S. Elysabeth", from which the Hungarian name of the village: "Szent-Erzsébet" derives.[12]

Thus, Guşteriţa joins the group of villages that received their name after the leaders of settlers' groups or colonists, just like Sibiu (villa Hermanni), Turnişor (villa Egonis), or Bradu (villa Gerhardi).

But the Saxon "establishment" had only sealed a long line of civilizations and human settlements that animated this territory, as evidenced by the numerous archaeological discoveries from the Roman period, but also belonging to the Bronze Age and even the Stone Age, which proves that the traces of habitation extend at least until the second millennium BC.[13] Traces of Dacian habitation and vestiges from the Roman period indicate that there was a village (vicus)[14] that had the role of station (mansio) on the Roman road connecting the basins of two large rivers: Olt

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[8] Hermann Fabini, *Atlas der siebenbürgisch-sächsischen Kirchenbürgen und Dorfkirchen*, vol. I (Hermannstadt-Heidelberg: Honterus, 1999), 267–70.

[9] Thomas Nägler, *Aşezarea saşilor în Transilvania* (Bucureşti: Kriterion, 1992), 184.

[10] Paul Niedermaier, *Habitatul medieval în Transilvania* (Bucureşti: Editura Academiei Române, 2012), 280.

[11] (Urkb I, 242).

[12] Ioan Moga, "Contribuţiuni la istoria colonizărilor din Transilvania. Numirile satului Cristian şi semnificaţia lor istorică," *Anuarul Institutului de Istorie Naţională*. IX (1944): 464.

[13] Sabin Adrian Luca, Zeno Karl Pinter and Adrian Georgescu, *Repertoriul arheologic al Judeţului Sibiu – Situri, monumente arheologice şi istorice* (Sibiu: Editura Economică, 2003), 108–13.

[14] Dumitru Popa, *Viaţa rurală în Transilvania romană*, (Sibiu: Alma Mater, 2001), 170, 189.

and Mureş.[15] For this reason, some researchers favored the identification of this settlement with the Roman village "CEDONI(a)E" mentioned in "Segmentum VIII, 1" of Tabula Peutingeria. CEDONIAE situated in the extension of the route DRVBETA (Drobeta) – PELENDOVA (Craiova) – ROMVLA (Reşca) – BURRIDAVA (Râmnicu Vâlcea) – ARVTELA (Călimăneşti) – PONS VETUS (Câineni) – CAPUT STENARUM (Boiţa). Due to its position on the Roman road from Caput Stenarum to Apulum (Alba Iulia) and given the complexity of the discoveries, it is considered that the settlement of Guşteriţa could be identified with Cedonia.[16]

Centuries later, but prior to the Saxon colonization, a Slavic population would settle here,[17] and the Slavic toponym „Guşteriţa" is thus considered the main evidence of this event. It is generally considered that the Romanian name of the village, Guşteriţa, has Slavic origins,[18] which encouraged Ioan Moga to claim "the priority of the Romanian element here, before the foundation of the Saxon village and the Romanesque church by allogeneic elements".[19] However, such ethnic priority cannot be supported by hard archeological evidence.

Teodor Bodogae argues that the origin of the toponym is linked to the presence in the local fauna of an exceptionally large number of green lizards (guşteri - lacerta verdis), that

> even when the land was grub up and prepped for working, for building the centre of the village or for cultivating the productive land of the orchards and vegetable gardens that the locals grew diligently from ancient times – have never ceased to populate the borders of the village more so than in other regions.[20]

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[15] Teodor Bodogae and Ioan Mihu, "O ctitorie şagunianã: biserica din Guşteriţa (1877–1977)," *Mitropolia Ardealului* 23, no. 1–3 (1978): 21.

[16] Dumitru Popa, "Aşezarea norico-pannonică de la Ocna Sibiului," in *Relaţii interetnice în spaţiul românesc. Populaţii şi grupuri etnice* (II î.Hr.-V d.Hr.), eds. Ioan Marian Ţiplic and Silviu Istrate Purice (Alba Iulia: Altip, 2006), 142.

[17] Nägler, "Vorbericht über die Untersuchungen im Hammersdorfer Gräberfeld aus der Völkerwanderungszeit," *Forschungen zur Volks- und Landeskunde*, 14 (1971): 63–73. Ioan Marian Ţiplic, "Necropolele de tip Mediaş din Transilvania," Acta Musei Napocensis, 39–40–II (2002–2003): 9–22.

[18] Franz Miklosich, *Lexikon paleo-slovenico-graeco-latinum*, vol. V, (Vindobonae, 1862), 149–50.

[19] Moga, "Contribuţiuni", 458.

[20] Bodogae and Mihu, "O ctitorie şagunianã," 20–21.

This explanation, brought forward to justify the pre-existence of a Romanian-Slavic settlement before the Saxon colonization, is generally rejected by medieval researchers. The main opinion is that in the case of villages established by Saxon settlers, Romanians would mimic the phonetic pronunciation of the Saxon toponym. For this reason, it has been suggested that the name "Guşteriţa" is a Romanian interpretation of the German "Geistlicher", the title of the Catholic chaplain in charge of this community.[21] Yet, on the other hand, the idea of a corrupt form of a toponym cannot stand out since it was not even used by Saxons.

Walther Scheiner considered the toponym "Guşteriţa" as "ausgesprochen bulgarisch",[22] but as Emil Petrovici pointed out, the term is also present in Serbian with many villages on the territory of former Yugoslavia being called Gušterica.[23]

Although the origins of the Romanian toponym are uncertain, there is a lingering certitude that the local economy was based on vegetable crops both in Roman times, as evidenced by the many agricultural tools discovered,[24] and especially after the establishment of Saxon settlers, who developed this segment of agriculture. Guşteriţa became the main source of food for the population of Sibiu, which was then situated only a few kilometers away (today Guşteriţa is part of the city). Another peculiarity explaining the predilection of various populations to settle in Guşteriţa is the important resource of Pontic clays in this area, exploited for making bricks and tiles, a commercial activity that is continued even today. The easy access to the raw material required for the industry further encouraged the development of the village. The proximity of Sibiu meant a capitalization of this economic potential, with Guşteriţa becoming one of the most important suppliers of tiles and bricks needed for the construction of numerous buildings in the neighbouring city. The village is mentioned in various documents since 1500 as an important clay exporter.

The history of Guşteriţa is inextricably intertwined with the destiny of Sibiu. The Saxon city was deeply affected by the numerous battles between the Habsburgs and the Ottomans for the domination of the old

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[21] Fabini, *Atlas*, 268.

[22] Walther Scheiner, "Ortsnamen im mittleren Teil des südlichen Siebenbürgen," *Balkan Archiv*, Band II (1927): 10.

[23] Emil Petrovici, "Daco-slava," *Dacoromania. Buletinul „Muzeului Limbei Române*" 10, no. 2 (1939): 238.

[24] Popa, *Viaţa rurală*, 170.

Hungarian kingdom, by repeated sieges, but also by natural calamities, such as those of 1529–1533. All of them had disastrous effects on Sibiu and the surrounding villages.[25] Consequently, Guşteriţa was burned to the ground by General Basta's troops in 1600 and later destroyed once again by the Ottoman armies in 1658. After each disaster, the community flourished, invariably regrouping around the old Romanesque Basilica (built in the thirteenth century), that, affected in its turn by the Ottoman attacks from the beginning of the sixteenth century, had been rebuilt in Gothic style and prepped for defense as it was provided with fortifications.

After this succession of misfortunes, and with the stabilization of the Habsburg rule in the eighteenth century, Guşteriţa flourished and received the status of a free village, without any obligations for military encampments on its territory.

3. Tracking the First Orthodox Church of Guşteriţa

While as far as the Saxons are concerned it is quite clear that they developed their community from Guşteriţa around the old basilica, things are not as clear in the case of the Romanians.

Conventionally, the same pattern is assumed, linking the presence of the Romanian element to the construction of the Orthodox church. The only problem is that the church was built in the second half of the nineteenth century, with the effective support of Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna. Mention is rarely made, and mostly within the inhabitant's oral testimonies, of a wooden church that would have been used by the Romanians to celebrate the Liturgy.

But the recorded settlement of the Romanians in Guşteriţa dates merely from the beginning of the eighteenth century, according to the archpriest Emilian Cioran, who also identifies the first five Romanian families: "Jangoiu, Murgoiu, Câmpeanu, Stănilă and Spânu, who settled on hayfields near the forest, in huts".[26]

The Habsburg conscription from 1721 records fifteen Romanian (Wallachian) families from Sebeşul de Sus and Sebeşul de Jos, from Răşinari, Gura Râului, Topolog, Bungard, and other localities, registered

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[25] Ignat, "Un monument," 58.

[26] Emilian Cioran, "Biserica zidită cu cheltuiala Mitropolitului Şaguna," *Revista Teologică* 24, no. 3–4 (1934): 113.

with parcels of land and some domestic animals, having the status of settlers.[27]

The conscription established by Bishop Inochentie Micu in 1733 mentioned the existence of twenty Romanian families (incolae valachici) in Guşteriţa. No reference is made to the presence of a Romanian church or a priest, be it Greek Catholic or Orthodox[28]. In another variant of the *Conscription of the Romanian clergy on the Royal Land from 1733*, edited by Keith Hitchins and Ioan N. Beju, there are twenty-six Romanian families (numerus familiarum).[29]

The number of Romanians settling in Guşteriţa grew quite rapidly, and, following insistent requests, they were given smaller plots of land for exploitation, "called «delniţe» in the place called «Rimetea», and places of houses on «Hula Guşteriţii» – today Şaguna street, populated only by Romanians".[30]

The conscription drafted by Petru Aron in 1750 attests to the presence of 118 Romanians in Guşteriţa. Yet, once again, nothing is mentioned about any Romanian clergyman or place of worship.[31]

Slightly later, in the *Conscription of the Greek Orthodox Church in Transylvania*, drawn up in 1766 by the administration of Bishop Dionisie Novacovici, there are 129 Romanians mentioned in Guşteriţa: sixty-six men and sixty-three women.[32] Orthodox Romanians were still a minority in this village although their presence was overall overwhelming. The Habsburg census of 1766 provides the first general statistics on the Transylvanian distribution of denominations, as follows: Orthodox Church – 558.076 men and women, Greek-Catholic Church – 127.080, Romano-Catholic Church – 93.133, Reformed Church (Calvinism)

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[27] Friedrich Schuller, "Zwei Konskriptionen des einstigen Hermannstädter Stuhles aus dem Beginn des 18. Jarhhunderts," *Archiv des Vereins für Siebenbürgische Landeskunde. Alte und Neue Folge* 32, no. 1–2 (1903): 590–91.

[28] Nicolau Togan, *Conscripţia Episcopului Ioan In. Klein de Sadu din 1733* (Sibiu, 1898), 14.

[29] Keith Hitchins and Ioan N. Beju, "Conscriptia scaunala a clerului român de pe pământul crăiesc. 1733, (II) –Conscriptiones Popparuta Wallachicorum in Natione Saxonica," *Mitropolia Ardealului* 34, no. 4 (1989): VII.

[30] Cioran, "Biserica zidită," 113.

[31] Augustin Bunea, "Statistica Românilor din Transilvania în 1750, făcută de vicariul episcopesc Petru Aron," *Transilvania* 32, no. 9 (1901): 252.

[32] Hitchins and Beju, "Statistica românilor ortodocşi din Transilvania din anul 1766," *Mitropolia Ardealului* 22, no. 7–9 (1977): 545.

– 140.043, Evangelical Church (Lutheran) – 93.276, Unitarian Church – 28.647.

Since the Romanians settled in Saxons villages did not contribute to the payment of taxes owed to the authorities, the magistrate's meeting of April 24, 1776, chaired by the provincial consul Johann Georgius von Honnamon, decided to expel all Romanians from the villages belonging to Hermannstädter Stuhl (the See of Sibiu) and to destroy their houses, to discourage them from returning.[33] Following this provision, the Romanians from Slimnic, Şura Mare, Hamba, Noul Săsesc, Vurpăr, Roşia, Caşolţ, Brad, and Guşteriţa, being highly affected, have forwarded their complaints to the governor and the empress. In response, Empress Maria Theresa ordered the return of the Romanians to these respective villages and the rebuilding of the destroyed houses at the expense of the Saxon communities. The report drawn up on June 28, 1776, by Commissioners Joseph Miske and Michael Medve, who were appointed to control the application of the imperial order, acknowledged the Saxons' systematic refusal to rebuild the old huts they had set on fire,[34] a situation that lasted several years: in 1780 the Saxons were still delaying the reconstruction of Romanian houses in Guşteriţa.[35]

Under these circumstances, it is easy to understand how difficult it was for the Orthodox Romanian community here to develop and even more so to build a place of worship during this period.

The Josephine topographic survey carried out between 1769–1773 does not confirm either the existence of any new church in Guşteriţa, especially since such a landmark would have been essential and indispensable on a map that included elements of military topography. The Orthodox cemetery is equally missing from the graphic representation, but so is the more recent Calvinist cemetery, which indicates that they both respectively appeared later.

However, it seems that during this period Orthodox liturgy was occasionally performed in the house of Aron Rădiciu, the community being at that time only a branch of the Bungard parish.[36]

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[33] Nicolae Togan, "Material istoric privitor la alungarea românilor din satele săseşti ale Scaunului Sibiului la 1776," *Transilvania*, 32. 3 (1901): 82.

[34] Togan, "Un important," 169–70.

[35] M(eteş), "Plângerea," 230.

[36] Sebastian Dumitru Cârstea, *Monografia bisericilor ortodoxe din Sibiu* (Sibiu: Agnos, 2008), 59.

There is an interesting testimony dating from the end of the eighteenth century: an *Octoechos*, printed at Râmnic in 1763, contains on page thirteen the following inscription:

> "This Octoechos was bought with 10 florins, from the priest Moise of Bungard by the people of Guşteriţa and was dedicated to the holy church from Guşteriţa, and whoever would alienate it should be cursed by the 318 Holy Fathers [of Nicaea]. In the year 1795 November 11, was written by me Savva Popovici, archpriest of Sibiu, from Răşinari.[37]

Thus, Sava Popovici, who in 1792 preached in Sibiu, affirming the Latinity of the Romanian people, in tune with his contemporaries, Petru Maior and Gheorghe Şincai,[38] attests with this short note the erection of an Orthodox place of worship, to which the mentioned Octoechos is donated. Based on these references *post quem* (1773) and *ante quem* (1795) the construction of the building could thus be pinned within this interval.

According to the archpriest Emilian Cioran, the first parish priest who served at this church and lived in the village was the priest Ivan, originally from Dobârca.[39]

Another testimony regarding the existence of an increasingly cohesive Orthodox community can be found on the last page of an Evangeliary printed in Buda in 1812, where the following text appears:

> This holy Gospel was given by Coconu Stan (Popovici) and Hagica (Păuna) to the disunited church [Greek Orthodox] from Guşteriţa. May he, who would alienate it, be anathema, February 19, 1825.[40]

The donation of the two representatives of the Greek Company is completed by another volume donated on the same day, February 19, 1825, this time by the Orthodox Christians from Guşteriţa. It is a *Triodion* printed in Blaj in 1800, where the following inscription is found:

> This Triodion was bought by the disunited [Greek Orthodox] community of Guşteriţa to belong to the disunited [Greek Orthodox] church and may he, who would alienate it, pour out his intestines like Arius [condemned at the First Nicaea Council], February 19, 1825.[41]

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[37] Bodogae and Mihu, "O ctitorie şagunianã," 23.

[38] Mircea Păcurariu, *Cărturari sibieni de altădată* (Sibiu: Editura Andreiana, 2015), 56–57.

[39] Cioran, "Biserica zidită," 113.

[40] Cârstea, *Monografia*, 62.

[41] Bodogae and Mihu, "O ctitorie şagunianã," 23–24.

Both the inscriptions are signed by Teodor or Toader Necşa. He was probably the confessional teacher and "at the same time (1825) he would have been employed as a priest at Guşteriţa"[42] and, through his pastoral work here until 1856, he became one of the spiritual leaders of the small community. In the Schematism of the Orthodox Church from 1847, Guşteriţa continued to appear as a branch of the Bungard parish, which was pastored by the priest George Vlad, while the priest Teodor Necşa is mentioned as chaplain.[43]

It is generally considered that the services were officiated in a wooden church, which Professor Teodor Bodogae presented in an article published forty-five years ago as follows:

> Located in the cemetery near the easily recognizable place, where nowadays the tomb of the priest Teodor Necşa can still be seen, on a seated place. The dimensions of the church would have been about 20 / 8m. Straight Basilica style with round apse. It still functioned after 1873, when the brick church was erected, as witnessed the late Maria Bica, who died in 1966 at the age of 101.[44]

Sebastian Cârstea also supports this opinion, stating that according to "the information received from the parish archive, we can speak of an incipient phase of ecclesiastic life, due to a small wooden church".[45]

The presence of a new church in Guşteriţa, in addition to the Evangelical one, and of the cemetery is also confirmed by an Austrian map drawn up in 1838: *Hermannstadt mit seinen Umgebungen nach Grundlage der Militair Archiv Charte Reambulirt im Jahre 1838* (see Map 1). The same topographic landmarks were resumed in another cartographic representation of Sibiu and its surroundings dating from 1878 (see Map 2).

And yet the beginnings of the Orthodox parish in Guşteriţa were not as modest as one might think. Benefiting from the provisions of the decree of cohabitation or "concivility" and the Edict of Tolerance issued in 1781 by the Habsburg Emperor Joseph II, the Romanians of Guşteriţa were also allowed to buy property and build a church, provided the community would bring together at least one hundred families.

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[42] *Ibidem*, 23.

[43] Aloysium Rersch De Lewald, *Universales Schematismus Ecclesiasticus. Venerabilis cleri orientalis Ecclesiae Graeci non uniti ritus I regni Hungariae Partiumque eidem adnexarum* (Budae, 1847), 190.

[44] Bodogae and Mihu, "O ctitorie şaguniană," 23.

[45] Cârstea, *Monografia*, 59.

In an inventory drawn up at the diocesan center in 1872 and submitted by Archpriest Ioan Hannia to the parish priest George Stănese "for public notification of the parish committee"[46] mention is brought up at that time and before the construction of the current church in Guşteriţa, of yet another church built in 1790 "with walls made of stone and bricks and a tile roof" by "comuna Bis. Gr. Ort." [the community of the Greek Orthodox Church].[47] Moreover, the bell tower was endowed with 4 bells of different sizes donated by voluntary contributions in 1795.

According to the measurements indicated in this inventory, the dimensions of the place of worship were impressive, even compared to many churches today, with a length of eighteen fathoms and five feet (approx. thirty-six m), and a width of ten fathoms and two feet (approx. twenty m), being valued at 12,000 florins (Austrian guldens).

The building attested in this document is almost twice as big as previously suspected. Very importantly, it was not built of wood, but of stone and brick, being located near the tomb of Priest Teodor Necşa.

The patron saint of the church is unknown. Instead, two icons from this old church are known to have been preserved. One represents the Mother of God and Infant Christ. The other depicts the Savior Christ and on its back it bears an inscription with Cyrillic characters: "they [the icons] were paid by Nuţa [relative] of Ioan Rădeţ. 1823".[48] Teodor Bodogae also mentions two other icons of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel, that half a century ago were still in the new church and which were, "executed between 1815 and 1822, in oil, probably by the well-known painter Nicolae Zugrav from Luduş, who also worked at Ocna Sibiului, Topârcea and other places".[49]

The parish also owned a plot of four jugs and 900 fathoms in the middle of the village, "donated by the commune", on which laid the Orthodox cemetery. Further gardens (1847, 1856) and agricultural lands (1869) bought by the Romanian community or donated by the commune would add up to this land.

Another token of the thriving situation of the Romanians from Guşteriţa is, should we give credence to the same mentioned inventory,

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[46] The Archive of Parish Guşteriţa (from now on Archive) 42/1872.

[47] Archive 889/1872.

[48] Ioan Ovidiu Abrudan, "Pictori muralişti şi iconari, în bisericile din părţile Sibiului, din vremea păstoririi episcopului Vasile Moga," *ASTRA SABESIENSIS*, III (2017): 596.

[49] Bodogae, Mihu, "O ctitorie şagunianã," 24.

the construction of an Orthodox confessional school in 1819, located near the church, according to the cadastral number and the land registry. It is highly likely that Teodor Necşa had been teaching at this school created in Guşteriţa, which would explain even better the aforementioned writing of the inscriptions from February 19, 1825.

Priest Teodor Necşa led the Orthodox community from Guşteriţa until his death, which occurred in 1856, being succeeded by Priest Dimitrie Ivan, who marked on the inside cover of a *Kiriakodromion* printed in Sibiu in 1855 the following inscription "I came to Guşteriţa village as priest on November 15, 1856. Guşteriţa on March 1, 1858. Dimitrie Ivan".

4. The New Orthodox Church in Guşteriţa

In 1861, Dimitrie Ivan was replaced by Priest George Stănese. During his activity, in October 1872, Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna decided to build a new church from his own funds, offering for the beginning a donation of 3000 florins (Austrian guldens). Enthusiastic about the Metropolitan's intention, the priest initiated the necessary steps to acquire adequate space and projects for the new building, which advanced quite quickly until mid-June 1873, when Metropolitan Şaguna died. A few months later, Father George Stănese made the following note:

> By the gift of God and with the help of three thousand florins (Austrian guldens) given on June 16 this year by the late Archbishop and Metropolitan Andrei Baron of Şaguna, the construction of this divine place began and today, after reaching the belly band, the cross was consecrated and raised to the top of the tower.
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> Szalay I. Ferencz was the architect and site supervisor, paid with 5700 florins not including the construction materials, that were provided by the Christians and the sons of this holy church, together with the place on which it was built, which they bought with 900 florins.
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> It all started with the promise of the late Bishop and Metropolitan Andrei Baron of Şaguna that His Holiness will build this holy church at his expense from the beginning to the end, but his premature death thwarted this proposal and our plan. The foundations were laid in June, and the construction began on August 19 and until today it reached the roof.
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> All these were done under the glorious reign of Emperor Francis Joseph I, the Archbishop and Metropolitan of our Roman Greek-Oriental

> Romanian Church in Transylvania and Hungary along with His Excellency Procopiu Ivaşcovici, archpriest Ioan Hannia, parish priest George Stănese, the parish administrators Irimie Bica and Nicolae Câmperan, teacher Ioan Banciu, mayor Georg Hann and chief councillor Michael Pildner. The master builder was Johann Heldauer.
>
> Recorded in Guşteriţa / Hammersdorf on October 10th/22nd, 1873.[50]

From this text it would appear the church was almost completed towards the end of 1873, the works being executed at a fast pace, which is partly confirmed by another document drawn up with the occasion of the consecration of the church dedicated to the Feast of the Annunciation, four years later:

> This holy church of the Greek Oriental Christians of Guşteriţa began to be built in 1873 and was finished in October 1877; and its making was like this:
>
> The political commune gave us all the necessary wood and 100 florins in money; all the transports were made by our Christians, who pledged to give 6 florins per each family to buy 1000 bricks each. Many of them gave voluntarily even more than 6 florins.
>
> Guşteriţa, November 13th, 1877.[51]

Of notable interest is the deeply changed socio-political framework under which the construction of the church unfolded and how the building would quickly become both a symbol in the culture and spirituality of the little village and an important landmark for the new topographic representations.

In the military maps from the end of the nineteenth century onward, next to the fortified Evangelical church, stand out both the new Orthodox churches and the two recently created cemeteries: one for the Orthodox Romanians and one for the Reformed Hungarians (see Map 3).

Built in the composite spirit of the time, the church presents on the outside numerous neoclassical elements, that are recurrent in the creations of the Hungarian architect Szalay Ferenzc, who left his mark through a series of buildings that still adorn Sibiu today. Having already had the experience of coordinating the building works of the Orthodox church from Miercurea Sibiului (1864–1872) together with Andreas Ungur from Sibiu, Szalay Ferencz created the "Plan for building a Greek

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[50] Archive 658/1872.

[51] Archive 595/1964; Cioran, "Biserica zidită," 114–15.

Orthodox church in Guşteriţa". Szalay also led the construction work as site supervisor. An essential contribution to the building of the church had the Saxons: Georg Hann, mayor of Guşteriţa, and the chief councillor Michael Pildner, respectively the master builder Iohann Heldauer.

Unfortunately, the attention paid to the construction of the new Orthodox Church also meant an abandonment of the old place of worship, which was transformed into a mortuary chapel and eventually fell into ruin, being demolished in the late nineteenth or early twentieth century. It should also be noted that with the old church, the confessional school disappeared. The traces of the old structures gradually faded away, the construction materials from the walls (stones, bricks) being reused for the construction of the new confessional school – inaugurated in 1908 –, or of the parish house from the new ensemble created near the centre of the village (see Figure 1).

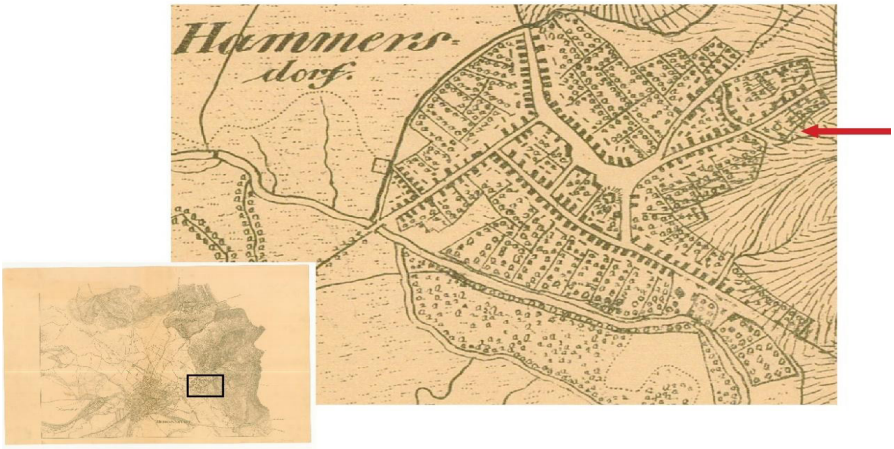
5. Conclusions

Despite the delicate historical context, the beginnings of the Orthodox parish in Guşteriţa were not as modest as one might think. After the publication of the imperial edicts in 1781, the Romanians from Guşteriţa were allowed to buy property and build a church in 1790, which, contrary to the hypotheses set forth so far, was not just a wooden chapel, but a stone and brick building of impressive dimensions, erected inside the Orthodox cemetery in Guşteriţa. Therefore, the "Annunciation" church, the Sagunian foundation, is the second Orthodox worship place made of bricks and stone that was built in this ancient Transylvanian village.

In the second half of the eighteenth century, the Orthodox Romanians faced marginalization or even exclusion from Transylvanian society for ethnic, economic, and religious reasons. It is fascinating how much the attitude of the Saxons towards the Romanian community has changed in just one hundred years. It is certainly true that the constraint of the Habsburg legislation contributed to this change, but also the influence of the "Zeitgeist" fostered a more tolerant attitude that reigned in Transylvania after the Revolution of 1848.

The case of Guşteriţa bears witness to the fact that in the second half of the nineteenth century, something had changed, and this change is due also to Metropolitan Andrei Şaguna's efforts to create a favorable framework for the social, cultural, political, and religious emancipation of his flock.

Through these interventions, the Orthodox Romanians were not only accepted to be part of the relatively hermetic communities of the Lutheran Saxons but were even encouraged to assert their ethnic and religious identity by building a monumental church. Moreover, the local administration facilitated the allocation of a plot of land as close as possible to the centre of the village where the new building was to be built and, at the same time, contributed with raw materials and craftsmen for the construction.[52]



Map 1. Sibiu and its surroundings based on the Militair Archive Charte Reambulirt in 1838 [Hermannstadt mit seinen Umgebungen nach Grundlage der Militair Archiv Charte Reambulirt im Jahre 1838].

[52] The author thanks Revd. PhD Alexandru Ioniţă and Revd. PhD Marius Tofan for facilitating access to the archives of Parish Guşteriţa, Sibiu. Also, the author is grateful to Kristóf Csákvár from HM Hadtörténeti Intézet és Múzeum, Térképtár (Ministry of Defence, Military History Institute and Museum, Map Department) from Budapest, for his generous permission to reproduce the maps above.



Map 2. Sibiu and its surroundings. 1879 [Umgebungs-Karte von Hermannstadt. 1879].



Map. 3. Sibiu and its surroundings. 1890 [Umgebungs-Karte von Nagyszeben. (Hermannstadt). 1890].

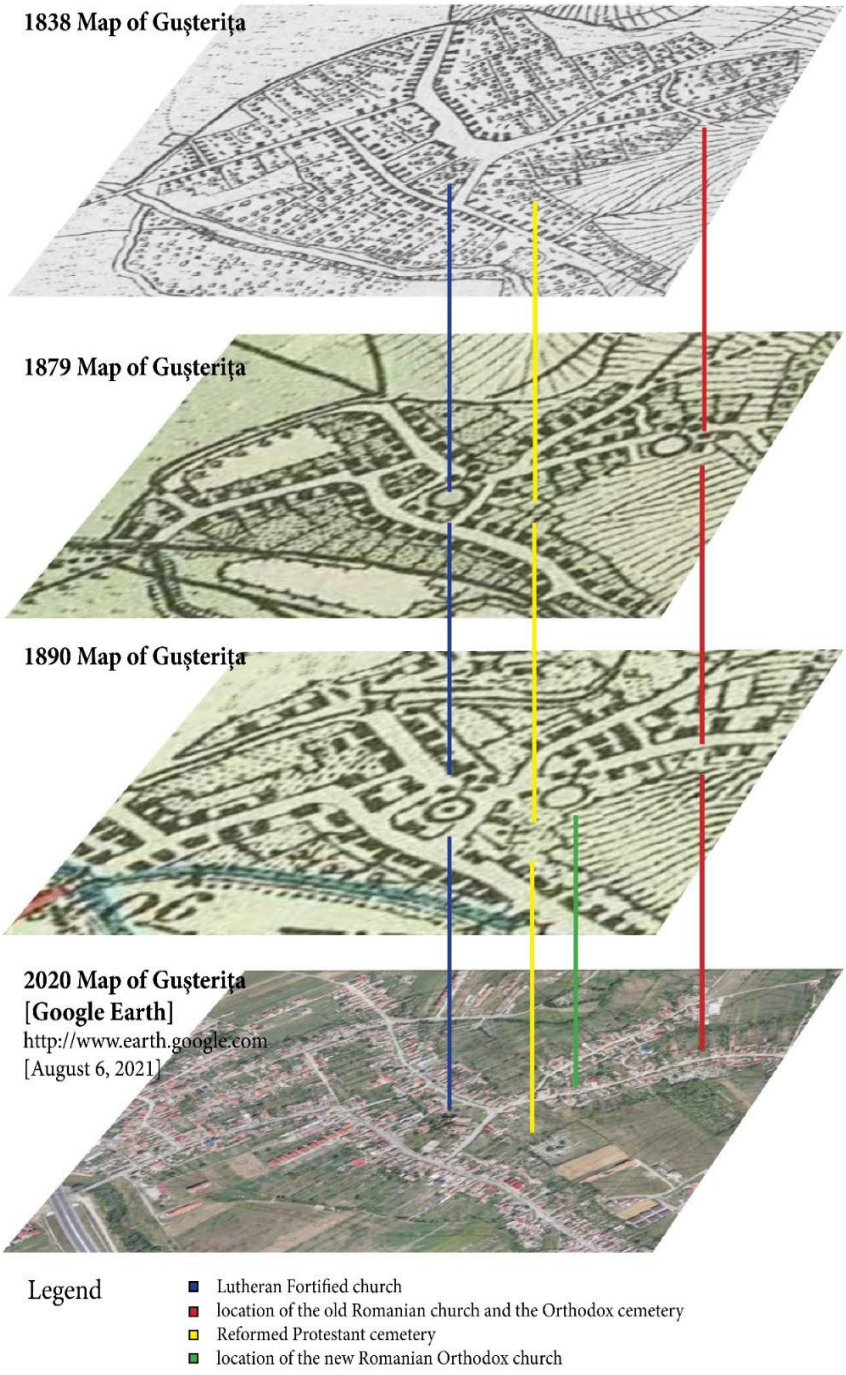


Figure 1. Overlayed maps.