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Land-Plot Mapping and the Construction of an Ethnic Patchwork in the Banat (1773–1848)



The Banat region is famous for being an ethnic patchwork. Not only the cities, like Timișoara, but also the villages were traditionally inhabited by people with different mother tongues (Romanian, Serbian, German, Hungarian, Bulgarian, French, Italian and Slovakian) and religions (Roman Catholic, Greek Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran and Jewish). This situation was the result of a long immigration process, which began in the 18th century with Habsburg rule. At that time, the sovereign organised a massive colonisation, leading tens of thousands of peasants to leave the Holy Roman Empire and to settle in newly erected villages.¹ A lesser-known, but equally important fact is that the Habsburgs had a welcoming policy towards Ottoman immigrants: after having crossed the border, they were considered as new imperial subjects and received lands in existing communities.² Such rural planning was possible for two reasons: the Banat was a sparsely populated area at the beginning of the 18th century and it was governed as a Crown estate – actually the largest one in the Habsburg Monarchy, as big as the Austrian Netherlands. The land was directly ruled by military and civil administrators coming from the so-called “German hereditary lands” – today’s Austria and Czech Republic – directly depending on the Viennese court. Administrators

were deeply involved in implementing fiscal reforms and improving agronomic techniques.

In this context, middle- and large-scale mapping was considered an appropriate tool of government. Cartographers were deploying their skills in the service of rural planning and played a structuring role in the colonisation process. The history of their activity has already been dealt with several times in recent years.³ According to the existing works, there are three distinct periods: the military mapping of the land, the Ottoman frontier and the fortified sites (1720s to 1740s); the civil mapping of new buildings, canals and (only sketched) villages (1750s–1770s); the systematic topographical and cadastral mapping of the entire land (1770s–mid 19th century). The third period began with the “first Austrian military survey” of the Banat in 1769–1773 and continued with the activities of the “Mapping Corps”, founded in 1773. From the 1770s, over twenty cartographer-engineers were employed permanently, compared with only two till the 1760s. 1700 large-scale maps had been already produced in 1789, covering the 600 villages of the territory. A lot of maps were lost, but a significant portion has been saved and are mostly held in the Austrian State Archives and National Archives of Hungary today.⁴

1 FATA, MÁRTA: Einwanderung und Ansiedlung der Deutschen (1686–1790). *Deutsche Geschichte im Osten Europas. Land an der Donau*. Hrsg.: SCHÖDL, GÜNTER. Berlin, 1995. 89–196.; FELDTÄNZER, OSKAR: *Donauschwäbische Geschichte. Das Jahrhundert der Ansiedlung 1689–1805*. Munich, 2006.

2 LANDAIS, BENJAMIN: Enregistrar l’ethnicité au XVIII^e siècle. L’identification des migrants ottomans à la frontière habsbourgeoise. *Revue d’Histoire Moderne et Contemporaine*. Under publication.

3 LANDAIS, BENJAMIN: Villages, Actors of Local Cartography? The Cadastral Maps of the Banat (1772–79). *History of Cartography: International Symposium of the ICA, 2012*. Eds.: LIEBENBERG, ELRI – COLLIER, PETER – TÖRÖK, ZSOLT GYÖZÖ. Budapest, 2014. 129–148.; PATAY PÁLNÉ: A Temesi Bánság kéziratok térképei XVIII. század első felében. *Geodézia és Kartográfia*, 70. (1979) 1:55–58. WOLF, JOSEF: Das Mapping der Peripherie: Raumwissen im Temeswarer Banat 1716–1778. *Die Turkenkriege des 18. Jahrhunderts. Wahrnehmen – Wissen – Erinnern*. Eds.: WOLF, JOSEF – ZIMMERMANN, WOLFGANG. Regensburg, 2017. 265–294.

4 From these thousands of original documents, about 1400 maps, covering 250 villages, are preserved today in the Central Archives of the National Archives of Hungary (Magyar Nemzeti Levéltár Országos Levéltára = MNL OL, S 1 Térképtár, Königliche kameralische Mappirungs-Direction, Térképek = S 1).

None of those documents can be considered as ethnographical maps, in a modern sense. The first actual attempt to map the Banatean ethnic patchwork – in fact the linguistic one – was made much later, by Karl Freiherr von Czörnig in his map of 1855.⁵ Prior to the emerging nationalist movements, in the first half of the 19th century, cultural and linguistic divides among the rural population were by no means natural. These questionable criteria of social distinction made little sense in contrast with status and religion in early modern society. Nevertheless, it would be wrong to think that contemporaries totally ignored the distinction between peoples. It can be found on maps and accompanying texts and lists, especially in the land-plot maps produced after 1773. Was it merely a mirror image of local ethnicity? One might doubt it. In my article, I will examine the performative nature of those maps, how their use guided the action of civil officers and what was the social conception underlying the spatial allocation of the population.⁶

“Nations” on the Map before the Cadastral Reform

Privileged Settlers and Old Inhabitants

Separating the German colonists from the old inhabitants, established on the land before the Habsburg conquest of 1716, is an old idea. As

early as 1722, a recruiting officer required the Banatean administration to isolate the settlers coming from the Holy Roman Empire in a separate village or neighbourhood and to move, if necessary, the former inhabitants to another street or nearby locality.⁷ The justification for these measures was not religious, but juridical: the settlers enjoyed a particular status, granted in their ‘*Ansiedlungsvertrag*’. They were subject to a different legal and taxation system from that of the natives (e.g. they did not pay the head tax; they depended on the regional jurisdiction and not the district’s one; they were not considered as serfs). It is no surprise that the maps of each district made a difference between “inhabited villages”, “depopulated villages” and “new German settlements” as early as 1725.⁸ The will to keep two Banatean societies – the colonial and the ‘national’ one – separate from one another sometimes led to forced displacement: in Dudeștii Noi (1749), Sefdin (1766) Giarmata and Săcălaz (1768).⁹ The project to remove all the old inhabitants from the area located between the rivers Maros, Tisza and Bega to make room for German colonists was seriously discussed in Vienna as early as 1763, but was definitively abandoned in 1770.¹⁰

Fighting against Religious Corruption

On Banat maps produced in the 1750s and 1760s, one can notice a clear distinction between

- 5 CZÖRNIG, KARL VON: *Ethnographische Karte der Oesterreichischen Monarchie*. 1:864 000, Wien, 1855; LABBE, MORGANE: Les usages diplomatiques des cartes ethnographiques de l’Europe centrale et orientale au XIX^e siècle. *Genèses*, 68. (2007) 25–47.; BALLA, BÁLINT – STERBLING, ANTON: *Ethnicity, nation, culture. Central and East European perspectives*. Hamburg, 1998. 19.
- 6 On maps’ performativity, see PERKINS, CHRIS: Performative and Embodied Mapping. *International Encyclopaedia of Human Geography*. Eds.: KITCHIN, ROB – THRIFT, NIGEL. London, 2009. 126–132.; CRAMPTON, JEREMY W.: Cartography: performative, participatory, political. *Progress in Human Geography*, 33. (2009) 6:840–848.
- 7 Österreichisches Staatsarchiv (= ÖStA), Finanz- und Hofkammerarchiv (=FHKA), Neue Hofkammer und Finanzministerium (= NHK), allgemeine Abteilungen, Ungarische Kamerale, Banater Akten, Ältere Banater Akten (= Banat A) Kt. 7. f. 410a/1-22, 18/3/1722.
- 8 ÖStA, Kriegsarchiv, Karten- und Plansammlung, Kartensammlung (= KA KPS KS) B IX a 554, and 1166.
- 9 BARÓTI LAJOS: *Adattár Délmagyarország XVIII. századi történetéhez*. Temesvár, 1893–96. Vol. 1. 13/11/1748. 86.; MNL OL, E 303 Magyar kincstári levéltárak, Bánáti kamarai szervek, Landes-Administration in dem Banat Temesvár (= E 303) - a - 11. cs., f. 6.; ÖStA, FHKA NHK), allgemeine Abteilungen, Ungarische Kamerale, Banater Akten, Jüngere Banater Akten (= Banat A) 304. Fasz. 36. f. 450r and 1768, f. 187. (Kt. 264.)
- 10 ÖStA, FHKA, Sonderbestände, Sammlungen und Selekte, Sammlungen und Selekte (= SUS), Handschriftensammlung (= HS) 495a Votum des Baron von Kempfen über die Banatische Landes- und Bergwerksverfassung f. 299–300., 1770; ÖStA, Haus-, Hof- und Staatsarchiv, Kabinettsarchiv Zinzendorf, Ludwig Graf von, Kt. 6. Konvolut Banat „Banat, Siebenbürgen, Ungarn“, *Historische und Politische Nachrichten von dem Bannat Temeswar eingesamlet in den Jahren 1772 bis 1777.*, f. 93.

“Catholic villages” and “Schismatic [orthodox] ones”.¹¹ A third and intermediate category, the “Greek Catholic villages” sometimes appeared on maps. However, the cartographers had been poor at complying with the map’s key: the symbol was systematically used to identify a non-German village like the Bulgarian Catholic colony of Dudeștii Vechi (Óbesenyő). The only Greek Catholic parish of the Banat, the very small village of Zăbrani, located close to the German colony of Guttenbrunn, was depicted on the map but was amazingly not identified as Greek Catholic.¹² It was as if the Catholics with an Ottoman heritage were not to be treated with the same dignity as German Catholics. Unlike Catholic settlers, native Catholics, as in Slatina-Timiș, Carașova or Recaș, shared the fate and the taxation of their orthodox neighbours.¹³ The Roman Catholic bishop, Anton Engel, count of Wagrain (1750–1777), considered them as bad Catholics. To protect them from the corrupting influence of the surrounding people, he required a territorial separation according to religious lines: Orthodoxes living in Slatina-Timiș had to convert or to quit their lands, whereas isolated Catholics living in the neighbourhood had to gather in the homogeneous village.¹⁴ Maria Theresia issued a decree in 1767, but the local administration dragged its feet and successfully postponed the implementation of the law.¹⁵ This example shows that the status distinction was more important than the religious one in the land allocation process. The religious distinction certainly remained essential in the administrator’s representation of regional space, but it did not play any role in the allocation of land before the cadastral reform.

Property, Discipline and the Grid

Rationalizing and Civilizing Tools

Nicholas Bloomley has already pointed out the active role of the survey – which is not only a model of the “real world” – in the introduction of property rights from above. This sometimes violent process occurred often and dramatically overseas, in a colonial context, where the grid was also a form of disciplinary power.¹⁶ Although this situation seems to be very unusual in Europe, it was the case in the Banat, because of its special place in the Habsburg Monarchy: several historians have already insisted on the experimental nature of the economic policies pursued in the 18th century.¹⁷

As I argue in another article, this territory was a laboratory for the territorialisation of property. The civil administrators of this imperial estate were following the ideas of the German cameralists, promoting a land tax system and small family-owned farms, considered as the best way to rationalize agricultural production. From 1773, the cartographers involved in this land reform did not simply record the existing field boundaries. They were also responsible for imposing a new social and spatial order. It was falsely assumed that the old inhabitants, with Ottoman origins, had no concept of private property, in contrast with the German settlers. With this notion, the surveyors felt free to define new ownership rights and to overwrite the old ones, then to divide and to redistribute lands, removing and shifting the boundaries of village territories if necessary.

The grid was considered as a civilizing tool from two diverse perspectives: scripturalness

11 ÖStA, KA KPS KS B IX a 1281 (1765), B IX a 1282 (1766); Országos Széchényi Könyvtár (= OSZK), Térképtár TK 1888., TK 1770.

12 ÖStA, KA KPS KS B IX a 563., *Temesvar Banat abgetheilt in seine District und Process Anno 1761*, [1:260 000].

13 MNL OL, E 303 - f - 1756 jún. - No. 100. (54. cs., f. 375, 8/7/1756).

14 ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 71. Nr. 29. ex Apr 1775 (Kt. 387. 245-248.)

15 Episcopia Romano-catolică de Timișoara, fonduri parohiale, Temesszlatina, 15/5/1767.

16 BLOMLEY, NICHOLAS: Law, Property, and the Geography of Violence: The Frontier, the Survey, and the Grid. *Annals of the Association of American Geographers*, 93 (2003/3) No. 1, 121–141.

17 JORDAN, SONJA: *Die kaiserliche Wirtschaftspolitik im Banat im 18. Jahrhundert*, Munich, 1967; BORN, ROBERT: Bollwerk und merkantilistisches Laboratorium. Das Temeswarer Banat in der Planungen der Wiener Zentralstellen (1716–1778). *Grenzregionen der Habsburgermonarchie im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert*. Hrsg.: MANER, HANS-CHRISTIAN. Münster, 2005. 37–49.

and geometric order. From then on, the relation between the owner and his property was indeed scriptural, mediated through drawn maps and written lists. Conflicts had to be settled before the estate administration or the land tribunal, according to the Austrian laws, and not before the village elders.¹⁸ One can imagine a property regime without a geometric plan, which was the case almost everywhere in Europe. This distinguishing feature of the cadastral mapping of the Banat was closely related to the latest colonial experience.

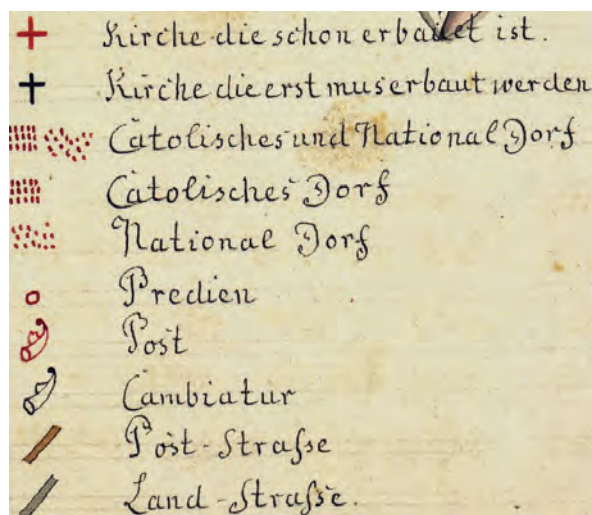
German Colonies, a Model for the ‘Nationalist’ Villages

In history, the orthogonal grid is usually associated with new settlements: Greek and Roman colonies, medieval French ‘bastides’, American colonial cities.¹⁹ It was no surprise that a geometric shape – but with a vast diversity of plans – was chosen for the almost 35 German colonies founded between 1765 and 1773.²⁰ While reflecting on cadastral and land allocation reform at the beginning of the 1770s, administrators noted that the ‘Nationalist’ villages – that is, the villages inhabited by natives, mostly orthodox – were totally disordered in contrast with German colonies. The houses were misaligned and cultivated fields were irregular, causing a loss of productive lands.²¹ Some administrators also argued that disordered villages provided a safe haven for brigands, as well as isolated and badly-built huts.²²

On the cadastral map of the ideal village,

produced in 1772 to serve as a blueprint for the mappers, one can recognize the typical form of a German settlement: not only the geometric plan, but also the three-year crop-rotation system, considered as a “German” farming method.²³ From 1773 to 1779, mappers were committed to imposing this new spatial order in the 600 villages of the Banat. However, the regional administration had abandoned the earlier plan to systematically redraw the road and house network inside the villages and had just imposed the surveying and reallocation of land-plots.

Village communities that accepted to reconstruct all their houses according to an orthogonal grid were granted a tax exemption,²⁴ but few accepted, for example Alioş and Sâna Andrei, in the 1770s.²⁵ For the next genera-



■ Plan des Csadater Kreises, und wie selber in Rent ämbter eingetheilet..., 1777 (MNL OL, A 99 - Fasc. 38. (12) fol. 371.)

18 LANDAIS, BENJAMIN: Du partage communautaire de la terre au lopin familial. Vie politique au village et réforme cadastrale dans les marges balkaniques de la monarchie des Habsbourg au XVIII^e siècle. *Histoire et Sociétés Rurales*. No. 37, 18. (2012) 1:43–116.

19 CHOUQUER, GÉRARD – FAVORY, FRANÇOIS: *Les Paysages de l'Antiquité. Terres et cadastres de l'occident romain*. Paris, 1991; CHOUQUER, GÉRARD: *Les parcelles médiévales en Émilie et en Romagne. Centuriations et trames coaxiales. Morphologie et droit agraires*. Paris, 2015; CURSENTE, BENOÎT: *Les Castelnoux de la Gascogne médiévale. Gascogne gersoise*. Bordeaux, 1980; GOERG, ODILE – HUETZ DE LEMPS. XAVIER: *La ville coloniale XV^e–XX^e siècle*. Paris, 2012. 41–58.

20 ROTH, ERIK: *Die Planmässig angelegten Siedlungen im Deutsch-Banater Militärgrenzbezirk, 1765–1821*. Munich, 1988. 2–7.

21 ÖStA, FHKA, SUS HS 496, („Banat betreffende Landes- und Bergwerkseinrichtung“ von Kempelen 1770) f. 61r, 1770.

22 *Idem*, f. 42v–43r; ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 30. nr. 80. ex Mai 1771 (Kt. 259. fol. 108.)

23 ÖStA, FHKA SUS Karten- und Plansammlung (= KS) L 079, *Grundzuteilungsplan eines entworfenen Idealdorfs*, 1772.

24 MNL OL, E 304 Magyar kincstári levéltárak, Bánáti kamarai szervek, Landes-Einrichtungs-Hof-Kommission zu Temesvár (= E 304) - c - 1773 - No. 4. (4. cs., f. 285).

25 Alioş: ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 30. nr. 80. ex Mai 1771 (Kt. 259. fol. 108.) . Sâna Andrei: MOL, E 304 - c - 1773 - No. 149. (5. cs., f. 660r, 05/05/1773).

tion, the irregular plan (*Haufendorf*) was considered on middle-scale maps as typical for the so-called ‘national’ (that is, native) villages, whereas the geometric one was associated with the Catholic villages, but in fact only German Catholic native villages like Kisszombor, Recaş or Slatina-Timiş had irregular plans.²⁶

Imposing Geometric Order: The Villages’ “Regulation”

After a two-decade reprieve, the geometric order was also imposed on the inner villages. In operations called ‘Regulation’, the inhabitants’ houses were to be aligned, which entailed the systematic destruction and reconstruction of the entire village. The ‘Regulations’ were



■ Ciortea/Csorda in 1780 and in 1783 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 95/1-2.)

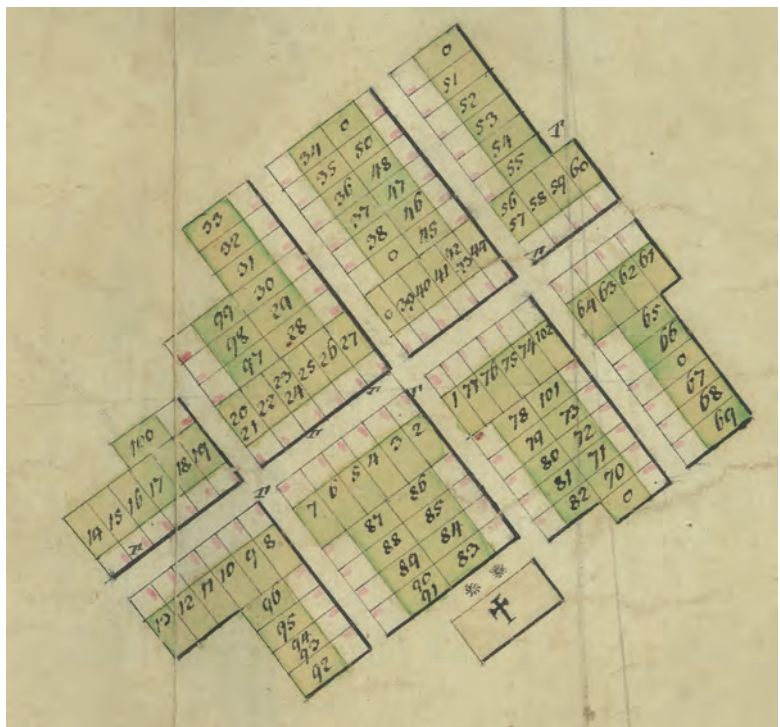
■ Bunea Mare/Bunya in 1776 and in 1786 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 61., 61/1.)

26 MNL OL, A 99 Magyar Kancelláriai Levéltár, Banatica (= A 99) - Fasc. 38. (12) fol. 371. *Plan des Csadater Kreises, und wie selber in Rent ämbter eingetheilet...*, 1777. and fol. 251.

conducted in waves, beginning with the villages crossed by major roads in the 1780s.

Surprisingly enough, this process did not trigger opposition. This stands in stark contrast to the move of the villages' borders, which could be a traumatic experience, involving massive protests and violence between communities or against surveyors and civil officers. Sometimes inhabitants even urged the mappers to 'regulate' their village. The reason is quite simple. Very few buildings, except newly erected churches and some well-to-do people's houses, were made of stones. The majority of houses were built of mud-brick or of wood and had to be reconstructed every twenty or thirty years. Moreover, the regulated villages benefited from the tax exemption during three years for their houses and received free building materials: it could indeed be beneficial for villages located in the plain, with no forest in the vicinity, to obtain timber, ordinarily prohibitively expensive.

Between 1780 and 1820, almost all the 600 villages were 'regulated', erasing any sign of the difference between 'national' and German villages' morphology. The distinction between regular and irregular plan did not appear any more on the regional maps of the Banat from the mid-1780s. The regular plan had become characteristic for the villages of the Banat, as it was for the Bačka and the southern Great Hungarian Plain. More than ever, religious and national distinction within villages remained relevant, however.



■ Neräu/Nyerő in 1771 and in 1791 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 121/2., 4.)

Separating the Nations, a Surveyor's Work

Drawing Land-Plot Maps and Sorting the Inhabitants along Religious Lines

Ironically enough, denominational identities had to play an even more crucial role in this reform than they had before. The cadastral re-



■ Traian Vuia/Bozsor in 1799 and in 1807 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 22/2–3.)

form was indeed encouraged by the opinion of Joseph II, son of Maria Theresia, Holy Roman Emperor since 1765. It was no secret that the new co-regent of the Habsburg Monarchy did not support the religious policy of his mother. One of his followers, appointed as administrator of the Banat, did not hesitate to write in 1772 that “in these enlightened times, religious distinction is not as dangerous as it was once”, because “[we] manage to give rise to a sense of duty and loyalty towards the sovereign in every religion”.²⁷

The objective of the new generation of administrators was not to convert people to Catholicism, but to use Church membership as a sign of cultural affiliation. As it has already been explained, the family and the village

community were deemed appropriate to enforce this enlightened reform. Every nation had to progress at its own pace. Mixing peoples on a small scale was thus not recommended. It could undermine the efficacy of reforms and jeopardize the more civilized mores of peoples: the actual fear of contact between nations reveals anxiety about reversion to type.²⁸ Only the cities, considered as enlightened places, could be cosmopolitan, whereas the rural population could be reified and described as “social species”.²⁹ With the introduction of the new land property regime, it was the responsibility of the mappers to ensure the villages’ homogeneity by sorting the inhabitants.

With the cadastral reform, the ancient dream of the Catholic Bishop could eventually

27 ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 82. Nr. 22. ex Apr. 1772 (Kt. 400. fol. 132-133)

28 RUEGG, FRANÇOIS: *A l'Est, rien de nouveau: de la barbarie à la civilisation? (Les marches impériales et l'Europe)*. Genève, 1991. 152–153.

29 BOURGUET, MARIE-NOËLLE : *Déchiffrer la France. La statistique départementale à l'époque napoléonienne*. Paris, 1988. 135.; about urban cosmopolitanism in Zrenjanin, see MNL OL, E 303 - p - 113. 168. cs. f. 412v.



■ Czerna/Temescserna in 1774 and in 1800 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 88/1., 88/3.)

become reality. At his insistence, Slatina-Timiș was one of the first villages to be surveyed in 1773.³⁰ The political and intellectual contexts were totally different from ten years before. The planned expulsion of the Orthodox was not seen as a punishment, but as an implementation of technical measures. Clerics did not play any role. Surveyors and engineers were

responsible for those tasks: from the identification of denominational affiliation to the small-scale transfer of population. Contrary to expectations, a lot of families were more attached to their faith than to their lands and claimed to be Greek Orthodox. Engineers' reports warned about the difficulty of founding a new village in this narrow valley.³¹ To their

30 Episcopia Romano-catolică de Timișoara, fonduri parohiale, Temeszlatina, 3/4/1773.

31 ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 71. Nr. 4. ex Mai 1774 (Kt. 386. fol. 26–27.); MNL OL, E 304 - c - 1774 - No. 452., No. 614. (7. cs.).

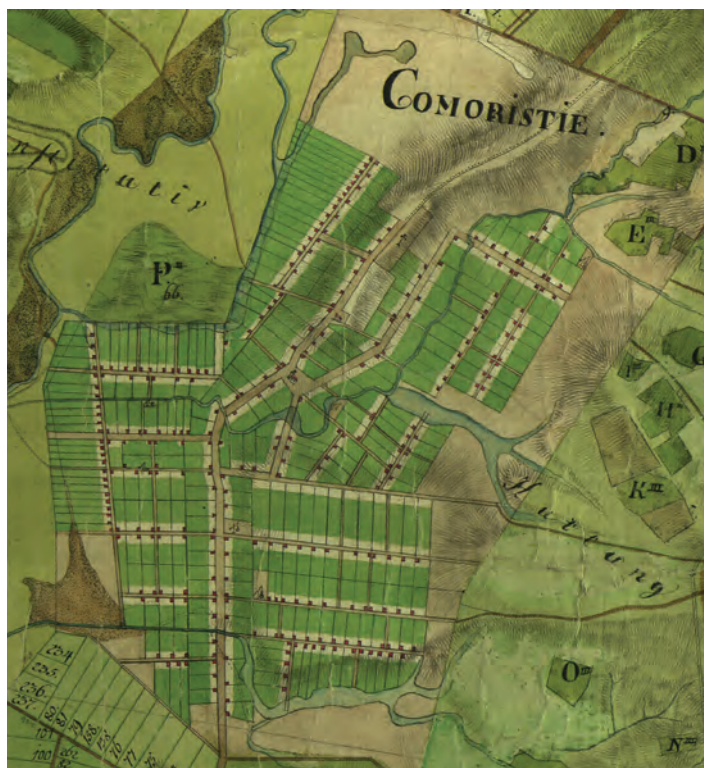
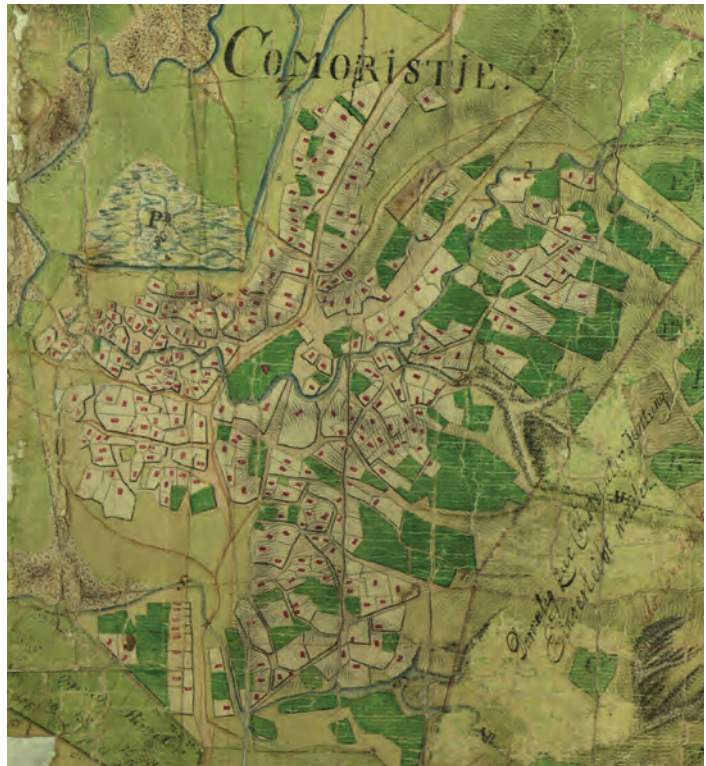


■ Drăgoiești/Dragonyfalva in 1775 and in 1806 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 107/8., 107/4.)

great relief, Slatina was incorporated into a military district in 1775 and the decree lapsed.³²

The process had, however, been completed in other settlements. In New Arad, isolated Orthodoxes in this German colony had to find a new home far away. In this case, the grievance of an evicted inhabitant was rejected, in compliance with the Court Regulation (“Hof-Generalien”). The surveyor tried to justify his decision as well, by pointing out that the Orthodox houses there were nothing more than scum shelters.³³ In Făget, Orthodoxes living on the “German” side of the river Maros were expelled to the other bank.³⁴

More generally, in every double village, that is, villages with two distinct communities – a German Catholic one and a ‘Rascian’ or ‘Wallachian’ Orthodox one, like in Lugoj, Caranșebeș, Făget, Ciacova, Cenad, Vrșac – surveyors had to carefully draw the boundary between them. The engineers tried to act fairly and to meet the requirements of both communities. Unfortunately for them, complaints were frequently sent to the regional administration. The supplicants were not only complaining about a wrong distribution of lands, but also about the definition of communities’ social boundaries. In Caranșebeș, the deputies of the ‘Wallachian’ community contested the artificial separation between the two sides of the market town. In this place, engineers had not sorted inhabitants according to religious lines and were seemingly acting as if the small ‘German’ community was only composed of Catholics. This mistake was used as a pretext by the Orthodox worthies to

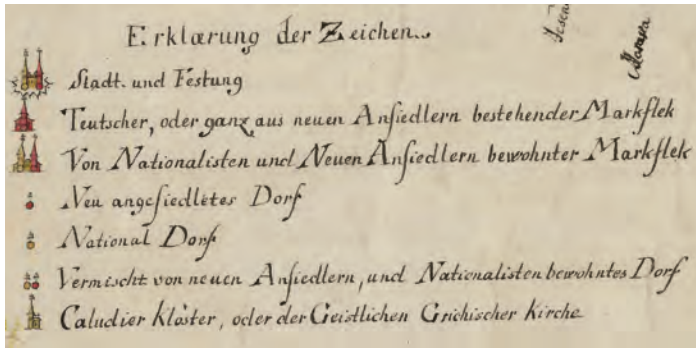


■ Comorâște/Komornok in 1787 and in 1815 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 304., 304/1.)

32 Episcopia Romano-catolică de Timișoara, fonduri parohiale, Temeszlatina, 24/9/1774.

33 ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 82. Nr. 21. ex Aug. 1775 (Kt. 409. fol. 1032.)

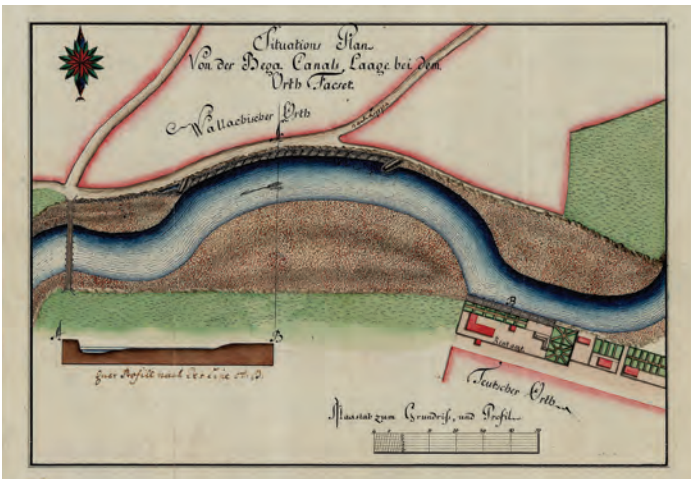
34 MOL, E 304 - c - 1776 - No. 814. (13. cs., f. 247., 15/9/1776), c - 1777 - No. 109. (14. cs., f. 84., 16/2/1777) c - 1777 - No. 940. (16. cs., f. 283–288., 19/12/1777).



■ Administrative Map of the Banat, 1787 (OSZK, Térképtár TK 1133.) No more division between geometric and disordered grids or between spoken languages. However, the separation between Colonists (*neue Ansiedler*) and Natives, mainly orthodox (*Nationalisten*) remains

after the distribution of land had begun. This last criterion had been important enough in the surveyor’s work, albeit less so than the religious one. There were never attempts to separate the inhabitants along linguistic lines at that time, but the spoken language could determine the destination of an immigrant. Before 1740, the Banatean administration did not hesitate to mix people with different languages in one village, as in French-Italian and German-speaking Mercydorf. By contrast, the colonists from Lorraine who spoke French were settled in three nearby villages in 1773.³⁷ The aim was to maintain a single Catholic priest and schoolmaster.

But the financial the financial reason was not the only one. After 1776, the Orthodox emigrating from the Ottoman Empire to the Banat had to declare the language they spoke.³⁸ According to this information, the central committee of land distribution in Timișoara – where all cadastral maps and land-registers were central-



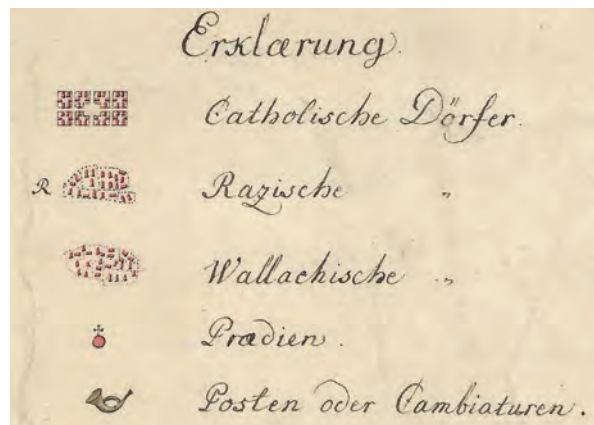
■ Map of Făget, 1787 (MNL OL, S 12 - Div. XIII. - No. 99.) The land-plot map drawn in the 1770s is missing. But one can see on the situation map the clear demarcation between the ‘German’ and the ‘Wallachian’ side

question the principle of land distribution – the best lands were given, as usual, to the ‘German’ side of the settlement.³⁵

Building Unilingual Communities: a Short-lived Attempt

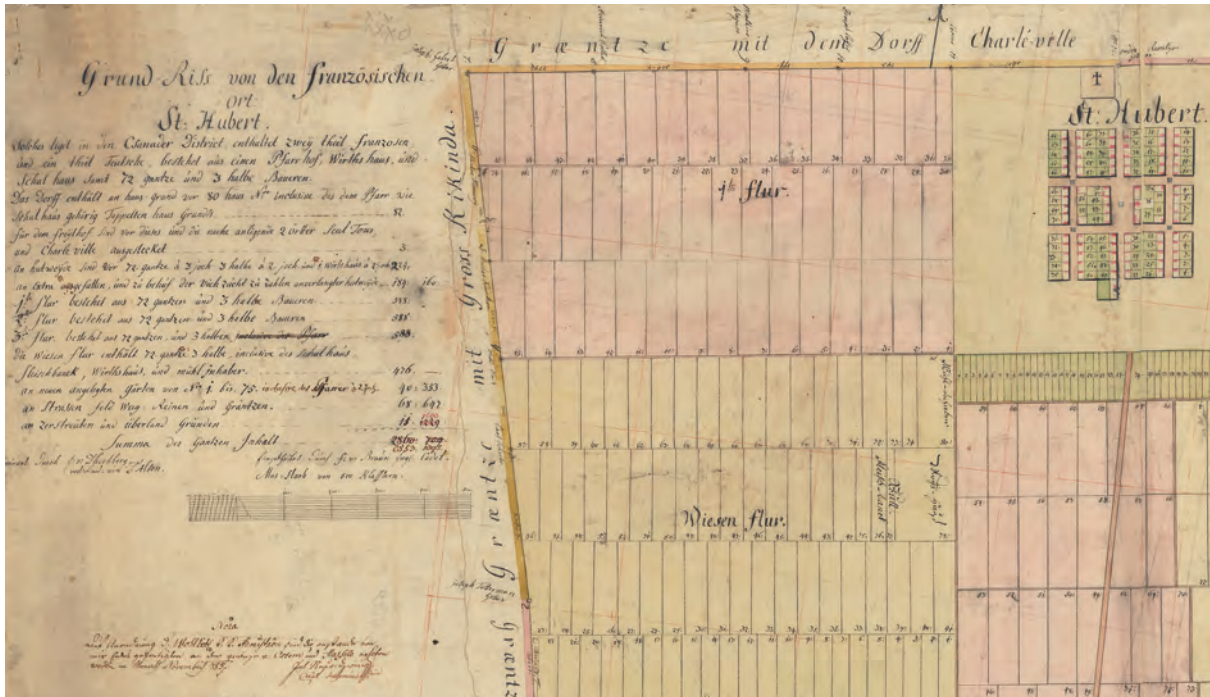
In 1781, the author of a map of Banatean counties distinguished between “Catholic”, “Rascian [Orthodox and Serbian-speaking]” and “Wallachian [Orthodox and Romanian-speaking]” villages.³⁶

It is no accident that a mapper paid more attention to spoken language only ten years



■ Map of the Torontál County, 1781 (MNL OL, S 11 - No. 245.) Remaining division between geometric (regulierte Dörfer) and disordered grids (unregulierte Dörfer). An additional distinction along the linguistic line – between Rascian (Orthodox and Serbian-speaking) and Wallachian (Orthodox and Romanian-speaking) – can be observed

35 MNL OL, E 304 - c - 1774 - No. 374. (7. cs., f. 4., 06/05/1774; complaint of the ‘German’ community) and c - 1774 - No. 380. (7. cs., f. 1., 09/05/1774; complaint of the ‘Wallachian’ community).
 36 MNL OL, S 11 Térképtár, Kormányhatósági fondokból kiemelt térképek, Kamarai térképek - No. 245. (1781).
 37 Urbarial map of Szent-Hubert (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 193/1.).
 38 ÖStA, FHKA NHK Banat A Fasz. 82. Nr. 29. ex Febr. 1777. (Kt. 414. fol. 114.); MNL OL, E 304 - c - 1776 - No. 756. (13. cs., f. 115., 10/9/1776.)

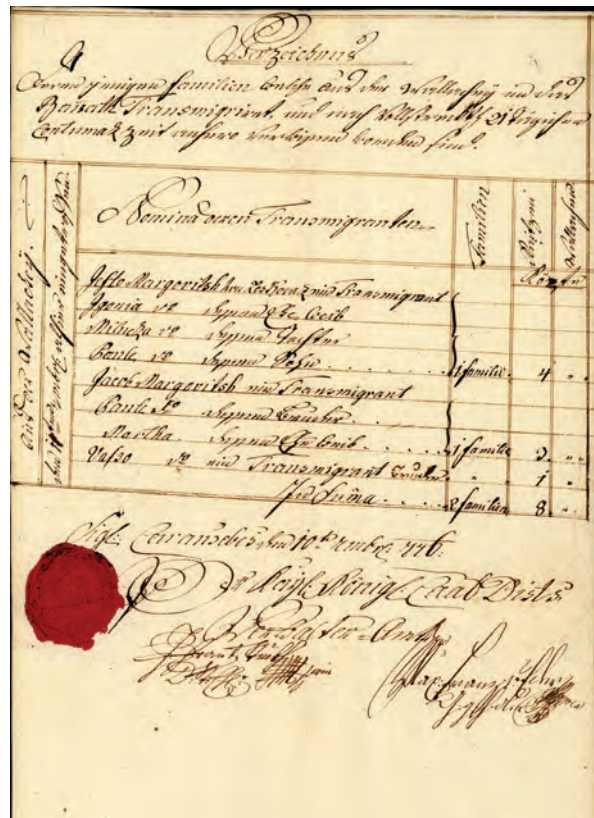


■ Land-plot Map of the “French place” of St Hubert, 1784 (MNL OL, S 1 - No. 193/1.)

ized – had to find an empty plot of land in a corresponding village. The person responsible for land management even planned to create new colonies specifically devoted to Romanian- and Serbian-speaking settlers. A shared language was supposed to facilitate labour relations and cooperation.³⁹ However, these colonies never got off the ground. What is more, Joseph II made an Imperial decree in 1785 explicitly prohibiting the forced displacement of inhabitants. The need to gather people with the same language and the same religion in a village was also abandoned.⁴⁰

Spatial Planning in Mixed Villages

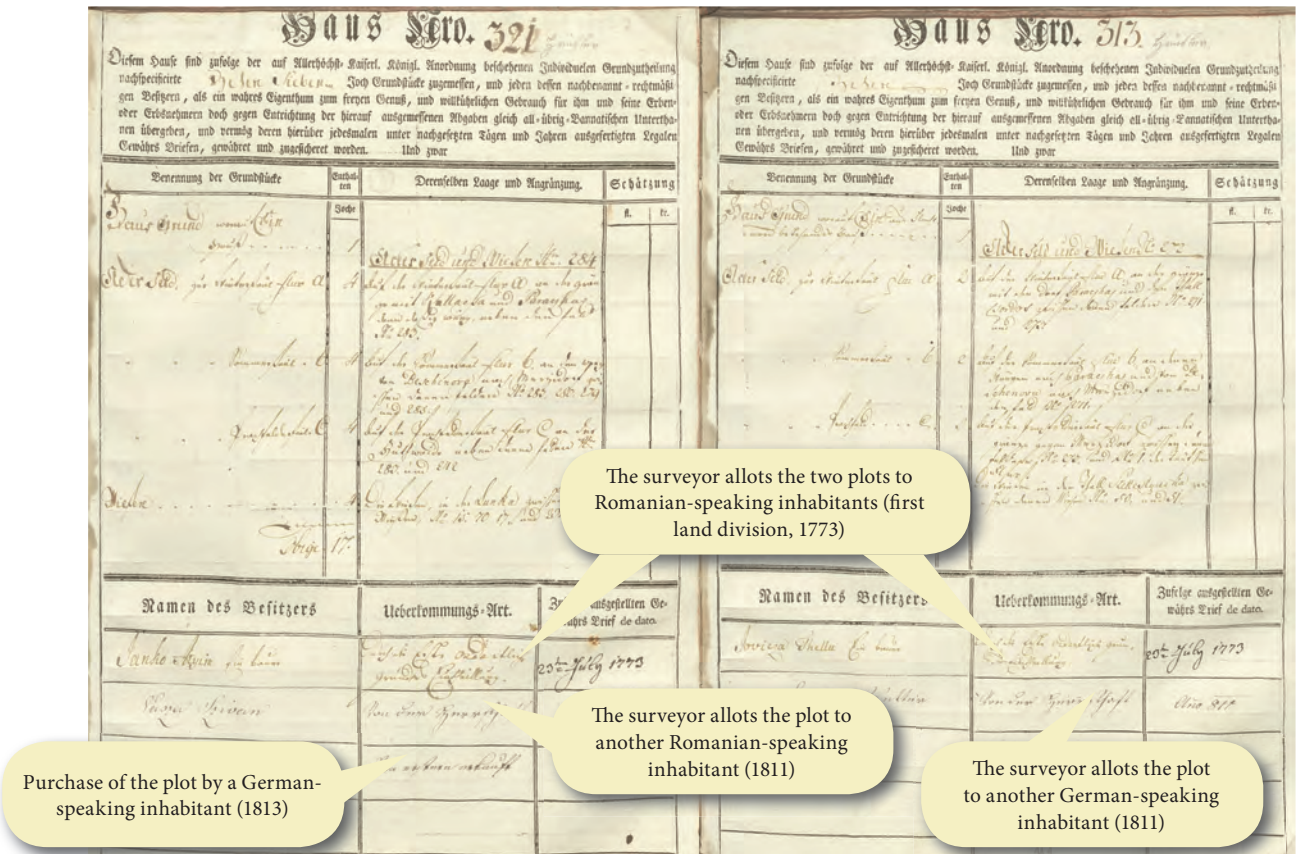
Separating the nations according to a religious or linguistic definition was no longer required after the 1780s. Nevertheless, double villages – genuinely separating Catholic and Orthodox – had not been united and remained split up. The Banatean estate administration continued to send German settlers to newly created colonies or to old ones. In 1786, it tried to stop arrivals from the Holy Roman Empire, be-



■ Identification of the language spoken by Ottoman migrants on the border (MNL OL, E 304 - c - 1776 - No. 756.)

39 LANDAIS, 2019.

40 MNL OL, E 305 Magyar kincstári levéltárak, Bánáti kamarai szervek, Ungarische Kameral-Administration zu Temesvár c- 6 (Vol. 8. f. 45–46., 04/07/1785.).



▪ Land-register of Sânanndrei/Temesszentandrás (MNL OL, S 10 - No. 1/18.)

cause the only free land plots were situated in ‘Nationalist’ villages. It was still assumed that mixing German peasants with old inhabitants or Ottoman migrants was dangerous for the former and resented by the latter. However, there were more and more mixed villages, where the German Catholics represented a minority. These colonists were not settled progressively, but all at once, in groups of 10 to 50 families. It was rarely possible to keep the new settlers separated from the old inhabitants from the beginning. The spatial division of the villages between Germans and ‘Nationalisten’ remained a main objective for the administration and was sometimes also required by the inhabitants. The land registers show how this kind of division occurred. In Sânanndrei, the constitution of a separate German quarter in the 1810s was the result of two processes: the

purchase of Orthodox houses and lands by German neighbours and the intervention of the estate’s administration, who chose to allot lands to colonists.⁴¹

In Satchinez, the separation took place in two steps. In 1797, a group of 17 German families were granted 17 empty plots in this Orthodox village. But they had to wait until 1819 to live in a separate area, surrounding the Catholic Church. On this occasion, a surveyor mapped the inner village, representing in green the houses inhabited by Germans and in white the others.⁴² In doing this, he could display the success of the policy of separation. However, some isolated green spots showed that the process was still incomplete: several German families were still living in the middle of their supposedly unwanted alien neighbours.

41 Land register of Sânanndrei: MNL OL, S 10 Térképtár, Königliche kameralische Mappirungs-Direction, Térképekkel kapcsolatos iratok (= S 10) - No. 1/18.

42 MNL OL, S 1 - No. 247/6. (1819).



■ Map of Satchniez/Temeskenéz, 1819 (MNL OL, S 1 No. 247/6.) German houses and courtyards are green-coloured. Wallachian ones are colourless

Conclusion: Land-Plot Mapping as Practice

Land-plot mapping in the late 18th and early 19th century Banat must not be considered as the simple record of pre-existing land division. It was a more crucial process for the villages' inhabitants. In their first survey, the engineers were not only drawing the fields' boundaries on the map and the ground. They were also creating a new property system and redistributing lands among the peasants. Every new survey could be an opportunity to transform the spatial structure of a village, to settle new inhabitants or to move old ones. It was during these

operations – called 'Reambulaciones' – that the ethnic patchwork was gradually made: by means of short-distance displacements along religious and linguistic lines. After a top-down and authoritarian approach in the first years, the surveyors adopted a more precautionary and flexible one after the 1780s. The numerous land-plot maps produced in this period are invaluable witnesses and bear the traces of these micro-practices. They were not conceived as ethnic maps, but as tools of spatial and social transformation. The distinction between peoples – usually imposed from above – was not a descriptive category, but a performative one.