

LOST VILLAGES FROM BANAT IN 18TH CENTURY (I)

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Abstract: In the vicinity and to the east of the area between Timisoara - Lipova road, going towards Lugoj a series of small villages and towns are mentioned on several Austrian maps in the middle of the 18th Century. These settlements do not appear again in the Austrian maps from the late 18th Century and the beginning of 19th Century making us wonder if those small towns and villages have been misplaced or they have been systematized along the colonization process who has took place at the same time of their disappearance. Another aspect to take in mind is that those settlements have been depopulated voluntarily and beyond the control of the Austrian authorities by the will of their inhabitants who sought better places for living, and being freed by the menace of the Turks founded new villages on more fertile grounds near the border.

Key words: cartography, village systematization, Austrian colonization, depopulation, Banat villages

This endeavor started as soon after the discovery of a new map collection available on the Internet¹ including those about Banat of Timișoara².

In this private collection made public by the owner three maps were unknown to me, being Austrian military maps commandeered by different high ranking military officials of the period.

The first one is named *Théâtre de la Guerre dans le Bannat de Temeswar*³ and its author is EtienneBriffaut calling himself : ” ... *Le très humble et trèsObeisant serviteur EtienneBriffaut libraire ed L'université ...* ”⁴. The map is dedicated to ”... *S.E. George Olivier Comte de Wallis*⁵, *feldMaréchal et Colonel d'un Regiment dinfanterie ...*”⁶. Obviously the map shows the realities of Banat and Timișoara after the conquest from 1718 of this region despite the fact that it is dated in 1738, twenty years after the Hapsburg arrival.

The second map that caught my interest is named *Mappa Der GrenzScheidung Des Banat Temeswar Von Anno 1749 Mit Den TürkenGes...*⁷ and the author is someone called simply Geyer and the dedication is again to a high ranking military official ”... *Von Herren General FeldmarschauLieutinontFreiheren Frantz Von Engelshofen....*”⁸ but the

¹ <http://mapy.mzk.cz/en/>

² And also due to the intense and meaningful discussions with our colleague Mr. IoanTraia.

³ <http://mapy.mzk.cz/en/mzk03/001/052/884/2619316647/>

⁴ Ibidem

⁵ After the Prince Eugene of Savoy thenew commander- in-chief of the Austrian forces, was disgraced after the crushing defeat of the Austrian forces in 23 July 1739 by the Turks at the battle of Krotzka.

⁶ The whole text who appears on the map is *Théâtre de la Guerre dans le Bannat de Temeswar Dedié a S.E. George Olivier Comte de Wallis, feld Maréchal et Colonel d'un Regiment dinfanterie Votre Excellence en m'acquittant de mon devoir j'ay Pris la liberté de Publier sous ses Auspices, Cette Carte Originale du BannatTemeswar, pour L'utilité des Generaux et des Officiers, j'espere qu'elle Voudra bien la proteger, et suis avec un très profond respect de Votre Excellence Letrés humble et trèsObeisant serviteur EtienneBriffaut libraire ed L'universitéapud op.cit.*

⁷ <http://mapy.mzk.cz/en/mzk03/001/052/886/2619316644/>

⁸ The whole text who appears on the map is *Mappa Der GrenzScheidung Des Banat Temeswar Von Anno 1749 Mit Den TürkenGeschlossen Von Herren General FeldmarschauLieutinontFreiheren Frantz Von Engelshofen A. 1749 Par Francois De PeyerMaioretIngen.apudop.cit.*

commandeer is *Francois De PeyerMaioiretIngen*⁹. The realities shown here are somehow different probably because the timeframe surprised here is from 1740's and the situation changed in a few years.

The third map in question called *Neüe und versicherteKarten von dem Banat von Temeswar*¹⁰ is without known author and no dedication but the text accompanying it mentions a military official as a commander in chief of a task force repelling the Turks¹¹. This map is almost contemporary in dating with the first one but the details differ significantly.

The map *Théâtre de la Guerre dans le Bannat de Temeswar* mentions a lot of peculiar places for known names of settlements probably due to misplacing but also some villages who are unknown today. For instance near the *Petrovasello* (Petrovaselo today¹²) and *Tesch* (Teş today) in the vicinity and to the east of the area between Timisoara - Lipovaarea but going towards Lugojwe have mentioned *Giurgevaz*, *Gavestia*¹³, *Torbow*, *Wisma*, *Spatta*, *Isvor*, *Kiakoviz*, *Kamas*, *Onus*, *Kraisollas*, *ScharadEukin*, *Sagoritz*, *Gabrillovaz*, *Porta*, *NovoSello*¹⁴ and *Grublosch*. Most of them are in the *Lippovaer District* and few in other districts.

At first glance we considered that they are errors in cartography combined with the misnaming of today's settlements and nothing more, but considering that the rest of the map is accurate enough we started to enquire if those settlements existed there or not.

On the second map those settlement does not exists and the fact that is from another time period enforce our hypothesis. The third map has its peculiarity (for instance mentions *Rudno* – today's Rudna which on the map is nearer to Timișoara than normally but on the river Timiș as it is today) but again does not mention the settlements in cause probably because is not contemporary and also because the scale is smaller.

The peculiarities and other problems found in the second and third map of Banat of Timisoara will be the subject of the second and third part of this present project that we have endorsed so we will concentrate now solely on the missing villages from the first map.

In 2013 a new instrument arrived just in time to help us, the Historic Dictionary of settlements from Banat (11th to 19th Century)¹⁵ and with its aid we tried to shed some light about those missing settlements.

Archaeologically this area is well represented from Iron Age times being a fertile zone with plenty of water, timber and good farming and game areas. In medieval times under Hungarian Kingdom this part of Banat was well inhabited¹⁶ and for instance Lipova/Lippa is a well-established town in 1240 as it is the earliest mention of this centre. Recaș is mentioned

⁹ <http://mapy.mzk.cz/en/mzk03/001/052/886/2619316644/>

¹⁰ <http://mapy.mzk.cz/en/mzk03/001/052/896/2619316632/>

¹¹ The whole text is *Neüe und versicherteKarten von dem Banat von Temeswar und eintheil von Servien, in welcher die Action zwischendenenKeyl. und demErbfeind d. 4 Julij 1738 und weitLugos und Csena, wieauch die belagerung von Orsova und die flucht der Turckenmithintellassung des völligen Lagers, ingleichen der herlich Sig beyMeadia d. 15. Juli 1738 in welchem von den Türckenuber 3000 gebliben auch 33 Fahnen eineJanitscharenTrumel und 2 paarPauken erobertwordendar in zuerschenUnterauführung Seiner Könighoheit General LeutenantHerrn Herzog von Lotharungen und Gros Herzog von Toscanaapudop.cit.*

¹² For convenience we will put aside the today's name in parenthesis were it exists.

¹³ We have a Gavojdia today but is nearer Caransebeș, 50 km away from the pinpointed location.

¹⁴ Probably the future Neudorf – the new village in translation from German because *novoselo* in Serbian has the same meaning, the position on the map is also supporting this hypothesis.

¹⁵ Hațegan 2013

¹⁶ Mare 2004, p. 27

firstly in 1318, Timișoara in 1212 and Lugoj in 1334¹⁷. After the Turkish conquest in 1552 we don't have clear information about the life in this area (as in whole region) but with the exception of the ruling class and some part of rich townsmen who fled in Transilvania the local population stayed under the Turkish rule.

Because in the rest the map is quite correct the assumption that those villages mentioned above have been there at the map creation stands correct and that the fact that these villages have disappeared have to do with Austrian authorities and social and economic changes.

For instance we know that at the middle of the 18th Century (1764-1766) Austrian authorities doubled the number of ethnic German colonists in *Sânpetru*, *Pișchia*, *Giarmata*, *Freidorf* and *Recăș*¹⁸ and maybe wanted to create an appropriate hinterland for the new enriched settlements. In 1771 a new, purely colonist village - *Greifenthal*, is established in this area by the counselor Neumann in the vicinity of today's *Bencec* having at the beginning 32 households¹⁹. So the area was considered for heavy colonization and experimenting also because here is the only circular village from Banat – *Charlottenburg* (formerly known as *Barița/Baricza*, shown on the map in question) established in 1771 as a German colonists village with inhabitants from Southern Tirol, Lorena and Baden-Wurttemberg²⁰.

This facts support the premises that the area has been considered for further colonization after the first wave and that the small and un-systematized villages existing before have been moved or merged in nearby settlements.

It is well known in Romanian scholar literature²¹ the case of the Romanian village *Ghertianosch* which in 1778 have been moved from its original location to a place near *Iecea Mare* and the village hinterland is annexed by the neighboring *Bazoș* village²². The new village established near *Iecea Mare* will use again the name *Ghertianosch*²³. The inhabitants heavily petitioned to the authorities asking to return in their old area and in October 1781 they are granted to move into *Bazoș* area but not to rebuild their village, about half of them returned and the rest stayed and have been complemented in 1785 with German colonists to form the today *Cărpiniș*²⁴.

In similar case we have the *Gavestia* with the correspondent *Găvojdia* on the today's Lugoj – Caransebeș road who have its correspondent name in today map but in a totally different location. The reason to move *Ghertianosch* was that the inhabitants were skilled timbers and they were needed in the new location due to their skills, so it is possible that this motive determined also the authorities forty years earlier in the case of this village in moving it and preserving its name in different area.

¹⁷ Hațegan 2003, p.30

¹⁸ Grisellini 1984, p. 146

¹⁹ Ibidem, p. 150

²⁰ Zollner 1995

²¹ It is known because the documents regarding this episode have been found in archives and later have been made public due to a study.

²² Calincof 1993, p.104

²³ Eadem, p.105

²⁴ Hoffmann 1935, p.104

The rest of the names do not have actual correspondents in today's map and this seems to imply that they have been relocated or abolished by the authorities in order to systematize the region.

In the same time period the river Timiș have been heavily systematized too and the works included the region in cause so maybe this was one reason to start moving the population.

Four of those disappeared village names are easily recognized in Romanian language as having a meaning is the case of *Porta / Poarta* actually meaning *gate* or more accurately *entering gate*, the other is *Isvor / Izvor* actually meaning *water spring*, the third *Spatta / Spata* – meaning usually the *back* of a domestic animal and the fourth *Kamas / Cămașa* meaning *shirt* or *jacket*, so we can assume that those villages were Romanian ones without any doubt. No correspondent today for all those villages or from 1780s onward, the latest mentions of other villages are in Ehrler's work (near 1780's) and then those villages are not mentioned also, but these four settlements are not mentioned at all²⁵.

Another village easily to identify in Hungarian language this time is the one called *Kraisollas / KiralySzállás* and the meaning is the *king's temporary shelter* probably marking such an event from a Hungarian king from when the Banat region was part of that kingdom or a Hungarian village/settlement of some sort. We have the information that some part of Hungarian ethnics stayed into the Turkish controlled region after 1552, the conquest of Banat of Timisoara²⁶. A village near *Pișchia/Brukenau* named *QiralSalas* is attested in 1554 and in 1579 by the Turks²⁷. No correspondent today or after the 18th Century so probably the settlement has been abolished.

An interesting perspective is that the village pointed on the map in question with the name of *NovoSello*, near the *Lippova* town will be actually colonized and transformed into *Neudorf* as mentioned by the *JosephinischeLandaufnahme*²⁸ a village still existing today. The village has been colonized in 1765 by the counselor Neumann because the old village has been abandoned²⁹. We cannot wonder if the desertion of the village has been forced or not but we have the information that after the 1725 the Serbian population allowed to live here by prince Eugene of Savoy in 1698-1699 have revolted and some part of them fled in Russia due to the fact that their promised lands have been given to others and another part moved more to the south near the Danube³⁰.

Another perspective is that those villages have somehow been displaced or even abolished due to the Romanian revolts from 1735 – 1737, revolts crushed with extreme force in some cases due to the fact that they were perceived by the Austrian authorities as favorable to the return of the Turks, this was also one of the reasons to enhance and continue the program of colonization with German ethnics of all of Banat areas.

Finally after assessing all the facts the conclusion which is most certain is that the first map, although is dated in 1738 is presenting realities from a decade before and that most of

²⁵Ehrler 2000, p. 124

²⁶Hațegan 2003, p.33

²⁷Hațegan 2013, p.211

²⁸ http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/d/d4/Banat_Josephinische_Landaufnahme_pg033.jpg

²⁹ Grisellini 1984, p. 151

³⁰Suciu, Traia 2011, p. 6-7

those lost villages have been abandoned voluntarily in order to receive new lands offered by Austrian authorities accordingly with their interests and strategic view upon the future of Banat and its inhabitants.

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