

The Saint Martin Church and its Fortification in Motiș(Mortesdorf), Valea Viilor (Wurmloch), Sibiu, Romania

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1. Introduction

The project refers to the ensemble of the fortified church and its parish house in Motiș, commune of Valea Viilor, county Sibiu, Romania.²

Fig. 01. Motiș ensemble

- a. Parish church and its fortification, probably end of the 13th – 20th century



- b. Parish house and its courtyard, end of the 19th – begin of the 20th century



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² Motiș is the actual Romanian name of the village, Mortesdorf in German. Similary, Valea Viilor – Wurmloch.

The association *Motiș Ark / Arca de la Motiș- Mortesdorfer Boot*³ was founded in 2014 as a cultural experiment, aiming to restore and rehabilitate the ensemble of the fortified church with its parish house and to improve the social and economic environment in Transylvania, Romania. The question behind is whether and by which means the revitalization of a protected monument and its locality through a rural *agora* is possible. Organizing *in situ* an informal meeting place between top experts in restoration–conservation, scholars of different disciplines related to history, art history and architecture, further representatives of the public administration and local villagers showed in the last six years how individual life patterns can be improved through professional and cultural contacts.

2. Topics and goals

The restoration and conversion of the ensemble in Motiș as a medium and long-term program is seen as an educational and architectural project, integrating concepts such as multi-functionality, flexibility, minimal intervention, soft development, keeping of traditions while encouraging implementation of modern knowledge, new architectural and artistically values. Continuing education, architecture for everybody, cultural and spiritual support for the children and the young generation of the village balanced the particular interest for science and research of the founding members of the *Ark of Motiș*.

a. Restoration and functional conversion of the ensemble of fortified church and parish house

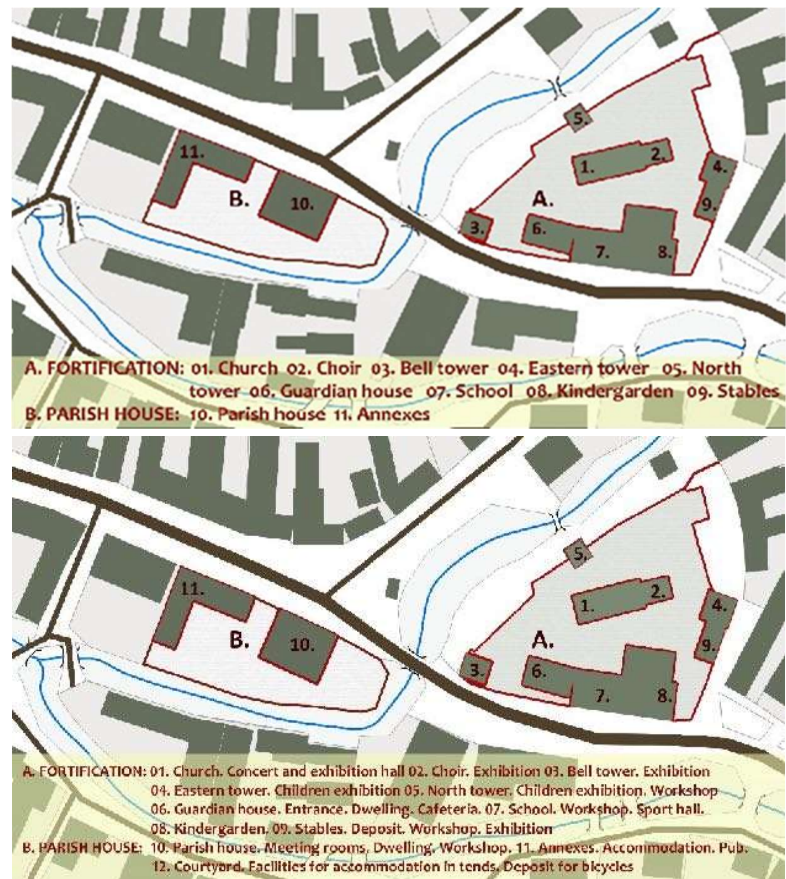
Fig. 02. Center of the village with the fortified church

a. Historical functions

- A. Fortified church
 1. Parish church
 2. Choir
 3. Bell tower
 4. Eastern tower
 5. Northern tower
 6. Former major house
 7. Former school
 8. Kindergarten
- B. Parish house
 10. Main house
 11. Auxiliary buildings

b. Proposed functional conversion

- A. Fortified church
 1. Church, concert and exhibition hall
 2. Choir
 3. Bell tower, exhibition
 4. Eastern tower, museum
 5. North tower, museum, workshop
 6. Entrance, cafeteria, museum, dwelling
 7. Workshop, sport hall
 8. Kindergarten
 9. Workshop, deposit, exhibition
- B. Parish house
 10. Meeting rooms, library, office, accommodation
 11. Accommodation, pub, meeting room
 12. Courtyard - facilities for accommodation in tents, Bike deposit



The Association followed multiple goals: preventing degradation and forgetfulness, restoring the St. Martin church, its fortification (Fig. 01 and 04 a-b.) and parish house (Fig. 01 b.); working with experts (Fig. 12 a-e.) as well as with local people (Fig. 14 a-b.) and encouraging the new generation to create its own stories

³ <https://www.facebook.com/arcadelamotis>.

around this monument (Fig. 13 a-e.). The initial concept included the implementation of an accommodation for guests engaged in research and restoration efforts, for the members of the Transylvanian-Saxon community and for people interested in sustainable development, continuing education and heritage preservation. It was only partial possible to reach these goals. The experience *in situ* shows that there is need for such a function, both currently and in a future, i.e. once restoration accomplished, in order to ensure the maintenance of the ensembles and the entire educational and cultural program.

Since the beginning of the 1990s, when the Transylvanian Saxons lived Romania, the fortified church as well the parish house were practically abandoned. With temporary repairs during the last six years, it was possible to protect the ensemble from massive degradation, always in struggle to defend further decay by disinterest and natural degradation. As in the interior of the fortification there is no infrastructure, no running water, no sewerage, but just an old and unsafe electricity system, it is impossible to use the existing rooms for accommodation. School and kindergarten, both in rather bad conditions, are property of the community. The only building used throughout the years is the kindergarten. As in 2016, the fungus *boletus destructor* was detected inside the church, the entire wooden floor and parts of the furniture needed to be removed and to be burned. In this way it was discovered that the entire floor is covered by concrete constructed in the 1970s (Fig. 08 a-b). The church and the other buildings being in the administration of the Association *Motiș Ark* are now in a safe condition, but in a precarious state of preservation.

The only suitable building used for accommodation is the parish house. Initially it was far from a modern comfort, but the investments made since the Association took it over improved the living conditions. However, it remains the problem related to drinking water supply and sewerage, solved improperly, similar to all other households in the village. The roofs of the main building as well as all of the auxiliary buildings are in need of a general remediation. The number of rooms, their size and the lack of adequate furniture require a long-term solution, including adaptation of the auxiliary buildings in view of their future functions.

The fortified church with its parish house needs a general concept of conversion, according to the necessity to bring new life in the old ensemble. The necessity of restoration and preservation involve the development of an architectural project that allows (Fig. 02 a-b.):

- the organization of conferences and research, with class- and meeting rooms, library, offices,
- accommodation for guests involved in the restoration as well for soft tourism, kitchen and possibly a pub,
- restoration ateliers and small workshop rooms,
- an interactive museum,
- playing and recreation area,
- a dwelling for the administrator.

The adaptive reuse concept should allow the organization of various activities in parallel to each other. Any conversion project must keep in mind to yield sufficient profit to carry on the preservation works.

b. Education, training in traditional skills, research program

The architectural project must consider various activities performing during the annual cycle:

- Summer activities focused on more practical, conservation-oriented issues. In the form of national and international summer schools on historical, art historical and building research, architectural heritage conservation and similar, small groups of experts and students shall have the possibility to jointly work on specific theoretical and practical aspects related to the site.
- Local craftspeople must be involved in different experiments and building activities with traditional materials, co-operating with experts and students in a way to provide added value to either parties by exchange of knowledge.
- The idea of a rural *agora* involves the possibility for the participants to bring their families, especially their children offering them a specific youngster programs together with the children of Motiș, who will take the role of hosts introducing their young guests to the many possibilities offered by their

village and its surroundings (swimming, hiking, horseback riding, etc.). Language courses might be another element of such children programs. In this way, friendships will form and young people from both sides will receive better understanding of their respective conditions of life.

- A typical summer course of this type would last 2 to 3 weeks and end with a 1-day meeting on a larger scale to which regional experts are invited for presentations, discussions, and a big evening event. Ideally, this would include a concert performed in the courtyard of the church.
- Spring and autumn activities could be addressed to individual artists to use the premises for their work and studies.
- Annual programs such as a story-telling *My grandmother / My grandfather – the architect* can be a long term educational project involving retired professionals conceived as a partial offer of a holiday in the countryside, in exchange to lectures on their expertise (history, archaeology, architecture and art, drawing, study trips in the region) to the local young people.

The nucleus of all the above activities would be the complex of the parish house, completed by the museum spaces inside the fortification. While the main building is already in a good enough state to host a number of about 10 people, there also exist several side wings (named as auxiliary buildings in the previous) grouped around a closed courtyard. These buildings would require refurbishment in order to provide additional guestrooms along with meeting and working rooms. The whole complex could then host groups of up to 20 people and provide space for meetings of up to 40 persons. In case the project develops well, more space could possibly be adapted in the former school building of the church complex, though this is a matter to be settled with the local authorities.

Small concerts and conferences must be possible to organize inside the church, after its restoration.

As the local tradition has validated, the churchyard can be used from springtime until autumn as a venue for concerts and theater spectacles, involving the necessity to design and create an outdoor covered stage. Accordingly, it is necessary to plan public sanitary spaces inside the fortification.

The conversion of the historical major house into a dwelling for the administrator of the ensemble offers the possibility of a private space, in parallel to the remediation of the parish house for guests.

c. Accommodation and pub

In order to use the facilities also during the off-seasons, especially in spring, tourists could be attracted to spend a few days or even more in Motiș. To this end, hiking, biking, cultural activities and horseback riding would form some of the most attractive programs to offer.

Winters in this region are cold and rich in snow, offering a special experience of the nature. During the Christmas holidays, local Christian traditions could be revived by use of just a few modest resources.

One of the many assets of interest both for summer school fellows and for tourists is definitively the richness and excellence of the traditional Romanian and Transylvanian-Saxon cuisine. Until now, there is no pub neither restaurant in the whole area, although meat, dairy products and vegetable are locally produced at an outstanding level of quality, and local kitchen personnel can be found at fair conditions. It is likely that opening a pub in Motiș that would offer warm meals upon request, would become a focal point of meeting for the local population as well as for the visitors.

3. General background. Present socio-economic conditions. Geographical position

Motiș is a part of the commune Valea Viilor in the county of Sibiu, one of numerous villages in Romania's South Transylvania founded by German colonists in the Middle Age.

Called in by the Hungarian Kings in the 12th century to settle the tableland of Transylvania and to protect central Europe against different invaders from the East, these Transylvanian Saxons preserved in this name their prevalent origin from the Rhineland's and Flanders. For over eight centuries until to date, the Transylvanian Saxons were continuously separated from the German-speaking mainland. Initially belonging to the Hungarian Kingdom, later part of the Transylvanian Principate, and then coming under the Habsburg's from where Transylvania finally joined the Romanian state in 1918, this ethnic group survived even World War II

and the following periods of Ceausescu. Soon after the cease of communism in 1990, however, the majority of the Saxons left their villages and towns for a new life in Germany and other western countries.

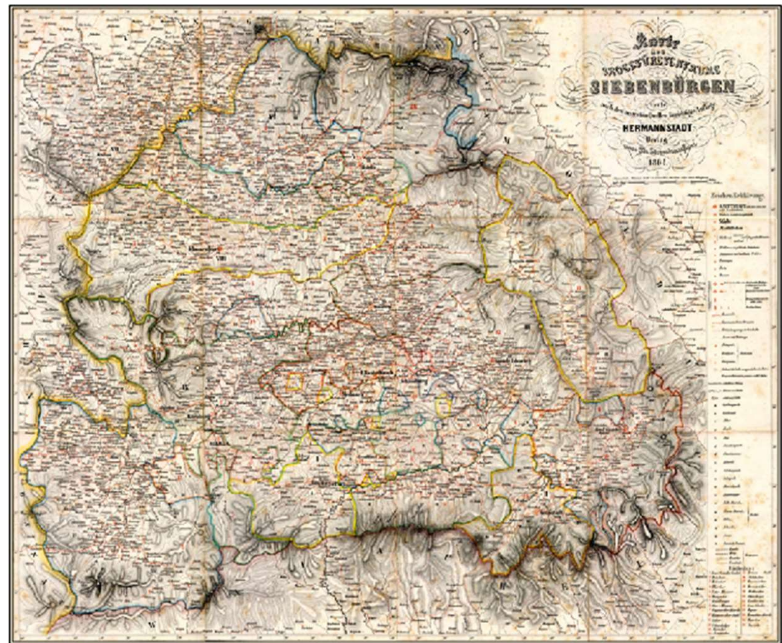


Fig. 03. Transylvania, 1862⁴

The German emigrants left behind places of extraordinary beauty, natural as well as agricultural wealth, scenic villages and stunning medieval towns. Although today they are spread across all over Germany, the emigrants and their families have kept a feeling of relatedness to their former home country. Organized in an association of former villagers of Motiș,⁵ they eventually organize common visits to their village, sometimes even ministering a church service in their fortified church, visiting their ancestors' graves, and having a party in their still existing Culture House next to the church. Just a few of them travel back home to visit their Motiș every summer, with their children or grandchildren enjoying the atmosphere of the village. Their state of wealth in Germany being quite modest on average, they are not able to donate or invest larger amounts of money for the maintenance of their home village. Even if their contact to the present villagers is generally good, no significant movement back to Motiș can be expected for the years to come.

The local population today consists of Romanians of various ethnics, most of them moved there in the early 1990-s when they could acquire properties at low prices from those who left. Just a minor part of villagers has their roots in the area, usually gypsy families who had formed a small non-Saxonian minority already in German times.

Regardless of their ethnicity, the majority of the present villagers can be considered poor by western standards. Although small-scale agriculture activities supply them with good food of any kind, and most houses are fairly well maintained, most families don't dispose of sufficient money to achieve a certain economic status needed to provide their children higher education, hold cars, etc. A number of villagers shuttle by bus each day to work in neighboring towns such as Mediaș, but wages are generally low. A relatively high percentage of the middle generation works abroad, in countries like Germany, Italy, Austria or Spain, leaving their children with their grandparents throughout the year. Nevertheless, Motiș appears vivid as compared to many of the villages of similar size in central Europe. Since the local school was closed a couple of years ago, children attend the school in nearby Valea Viilor, today the centre of the commune though not much larger than Motiș. During the school holidays, the youngsters of Motiș spend most of their time outdoors on the streets of their village. Prior attempts by *Ark of Motiș* to offer them organized summer programs (language courses, singing,

⁴ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siebenb%C3%BCrgen>.

⁵ <http://www.mortesdorf.de/ueberuns.htm>.

playing in the courtyard, movies by means of a beamer, small car excursions, etc.) were readily accepted by most of the children up to an age of about 12 years.

In general, the social atmosphere is very good in Motiș, and the village is safe by day and at night. The rare foreign visitors are friendly received. Many people speak or, at least, understand some words of German or English, those who have lived abroad for a number of years speak it even fluently.

Concerning the religious life, there are no Lutherans any more living in the village since the times the German population has left. Most people today are either orthodox or neo-protestant. The Orthodox community has built their church outside the centre of the village, so that the Lutheran fortified church is of no use to them. Consequently, the church complex with its former school building lies abandoned in the very center, protected by the wall and accessible only through a door that is locked. Any concept of refurbishment must consider bringing it again in the minds of the villagers and making it become a landmark of identity.

The settlement, well positioned in the urban network of Sibiu County, is situated in the middle of Romania and in the middle of Transylvania, near to significantly developed cities of international, national or regional importance:

- Sibiu, the European Cultural Capital 2007 (international airport, highway), capital of the County;
- Valea Viilor, Sighișoara and Biertan - on the World Heritage List at 1999;
- Târgu-Mureș, Transylvanian Hungarian representative urban center, capital of Mureș County (international airport)
- Mediaș, a pre- and industrial city, historical center at the level of micro-region of Târnava Valley (international railway station on the route Vienna - Budapest – Bucharest)
- Coșta Mică, a small city with important industrial archaeological heritage (national railway station on the route Bucharest – Mediaș - Sighișoara) and a Saxon fortified church;
- On the countryside, accessible on foot, bicycle, carriage or on horseback, the Saxon villages with their fortified churches are the testimony of the medieval Secondary Defense System of Fortified Church (Șoala, Petiș, Alma Vii, Moșna, Moardes, Metiș, etc.).

The asphalt road coming from nearby Coșta Mică makes its way along the valley, runs through the village of Valea Viilor, crosses again meadows and pastures for a number of kilometers, until it finally reaches Motiș where the paved track ends right in the centre of the village, where the fortified church is located.

4. What is a fortified church, a church citadel?

Fig. 04 a-b. St. Martin church with its fortification, Motiș⁶



Western aerial view

⁶ Foto: GergelyTibad, 2018.



Southern aerial view

The scientific terminology does not fundamentally differentiate between a church with an added fortification and a church originally built as a fortification. Generally accepted is that a fortified church is built to serve a defensive role in times of war, providing protection not only to parishioners, but also to their belongings and cattle, in case of danger. Most of them were initially built as parish churches, later receiving military features, such as thick walls, battlement walks, and embrasures, thus becoming fortress churches or *Kirchenburgen* (literally transl. *church castles*). Fortified churches have been built in all European countries⁷ since the 10th century, mostly as self-protection of the rural population, more rarely in connection with cathedrals and monastery churches (e.g. Königsberg, Havelberg, Albi, Großkornburg, Mont-Saint-Michel).⁸

5. Building history of the St. Martin church in Motiș and its fortification⁹



Fig. 05 a-b. (left) Historical plan (left)¹⁰ and (right) Contemporary aerial view of village center (right)¹¹

⁷ Sascha Priller. *Wehrkirchen als gesamteuropäische Erscheinung am Beispiel von Siebenbürgen*. Diplomarbeit, Universität Wien: Fakultät für Philosophie und Bildungswissenschaft. 2010: Austria, Belarus, Belgium, Czech Republic, Germany (Erzgebirge, Friesland, Werra and Main Region), Great Britain, Hungary, France, Ireland, Luxembourg, Italy, Poland, Portugal, Romania - Transylvania (here partly with multiple circular walls, bastions and external towers; inside the walls were found Storage buildings), Russia, Switzerland, Scandinavia, Slovakia, Spain.

⁸ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fortified_church

⁹ In 2018 a team of scientists from various disciplines - 3D-Laserscanner Adam Macsaj and ist team, Cluj; archaeologist Doris Schön, Vienna; art historian Günther Buchinger, Vienna; dendrochronologists Boglárka Tóth, István Botár, Denis Walgraffe, Miercurea Ciuc; arch. student Flavia Trifan and Miruna Vecerdi, Technical University Vienna; wall painting conservator Maria Dumbrăvicean with students, National University of Art Bucharest.- carried out a study of the fortified church of Motiș with the aim of drawing a comprehensive picture of the history of its construction, decoration and furnishing, cf. Günther Buchinger. Doris Schön. *Report of the building research*, 2019, unpublished.

¹⁰ Joseph II. Land survey, 1767-1773, Detail.

¹¹ Foto: GergelyTibad, 2018.

St. Martin Church in Motiș formed the center of the village, a position that indicates the simultaneous foundation of the church along with the village (Fig. 06 a-b).

The church was built probably at the end of the 13th century as a parish church, a Romanesque or Early Gothic¹² construction of stone, surrounded by a stonewall ca. 3 m high. The current nave is the original one, a church hall with a flat wooden ceiling. The roof turret was destroyed in the second part of the 19th century to permit the installation of an organ. The current choir is an enlarged construction from the 15th century, built in two stages. The churchyard wall was raised at the beginning of the 15th century as a fortification with towers, machicolations, battlement walk and, inside the courtyard, with cellars for people and cattle. The fortification was finished in the first half of the 17th century (fortified towers), at a time when it had rather a representative function than a defensive one, in order to show the community's legal equality with the villages developed on royal land.

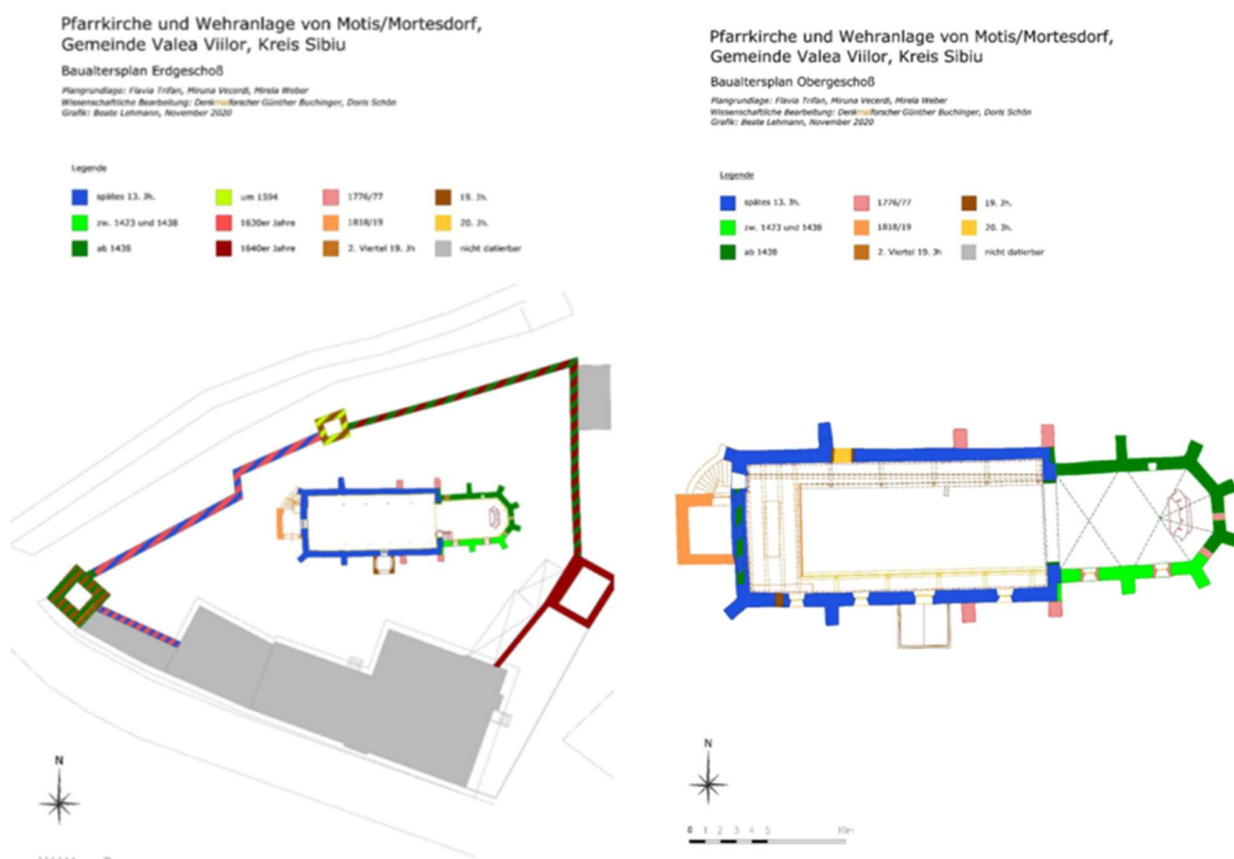


Fig. 06 a-b. Historical evolution, St. Martin church and its fortification: (left) Ground floor (right) First floor

The mural paintings of the choir are today visible just in a few small parts since they were overpainted by the Lutheran reformers. Recent trials of uncovering brought to light a painting of particularly high artistic quality. Stylistically, the portraits show a 15th century striking closeness to nature, the quality of which goes beyond all known, roughly contemporary wall paintings in Transylvania (Fig. 07 a-b). Neither the *Crucifixion* by Johannes von Rosenau in Sibiu (1445) nor the stylistically closest frescoes in the Marytower in Mediaș reach the artistic level of the Motiș figures, whose creator was under the clear influence of the high quality of the early Italian Renaissance. This fact is astonishing in view of the otherwise modest architectural character of the St. Martin parish church and its furnishings. Ideally, the frescoes should be fully uncovered for the sake of a better study and classification the iconographic program and the artistic contexts in a regional perspective.¹³

¹² Maria Crîngaci-Țiplic, remark in a private letter.

¹³ Günther Buchinger. Doris Schön. *Report of the building research*, 2019.



Fig. 07 a-b. Choir southern wall. Portraits, ca. 1440

6. Summary on materials and the current state of preservation

Structurally in a stable state of preservation, the church, its fortification as well the parish house nevertheless need imperative restoration linked to a concept of new utilization as discussed above.



Fig. 08 a-b. Church's interior (left) in 2014 and (right) in 2019 after the after removal the floor and the wooden elements affected from the fungus *boletus destructor*

The oldest parts of the church and courtyard walls, dating to the late 13th century (Fig. 06 a-b.), are built from local quarry stones, while later additions such as the choir and the towers as well as the extension of the walls are brick constructions. All exterior architectural surfaces are covered by several layers of render, the age of which needs to be still assessed. The interior of the church is also generally plastered; the lower areas of all walls up to about a level of 3 m are fully covered by a cement-based plaster replacing the original one.

The state of the buildings of the ensemble is generally fairly good from a static point of view. Individual structural problems (e.g. the triumph arch, the structure of the former major house) still need to be studied for their possible remediation. The architectural surfaces are in general in bad to very bad condition; the exterior render layers appear deteriorated and require conservation. They carry several testimonies of historic values such as inscriptions and remnants of mural paintings. The church interior suffers from rising damp especially along the north side. Given the unsatisfactory or even lacking precipitation sewerage of the church and the courtyard on a whole, the cement repairs addressed above have obviously contributed to increased moisture

contents in the walls. It is not yet clear to which extent the insertion of the concrete floor has even aggravated the situation in which case it would have to be removed.

Fig. 09 a-b. State of preservation



Western façade of the parish church with main entrance – large portions of the render and paint wearing through weathering agents, needing conservation resp. repair.



North façade of the former major house facing the courtyard. The arched opening represents the main entrance into the fortification areal

7. Tourism in Transylvania – present situation and perspectives

It is for very good reasons that Transylvania today is considered as one of Europe's treasure chests, with a high potential to develop into one of Europe's leading tourist resorts. However, mass tourism is still largely missing, certainly a lucky situation since it would quickly destroy the rural societies and the charming character of the country, which is unique in that it has kept alive what elsewhere in Europe, has largely vanished.

Small-scale tourism with a focus on culture and nature has started to exist in Transylvania since the 1990s, and it seems to have good perspectives to offer for the country and for its inhabitants. Organized bike tours, horse-back riding, mountain hiking and guided tours to a few picturesque villages, towns and castles are currently amongst the standard programs. Visitors good and readily book them, though many of the best sites remain undiscovered. In principle, it is far better and more sustainable to open this sleeping beauty piece by piece or gradually, and never so much as to let it loose its identity.

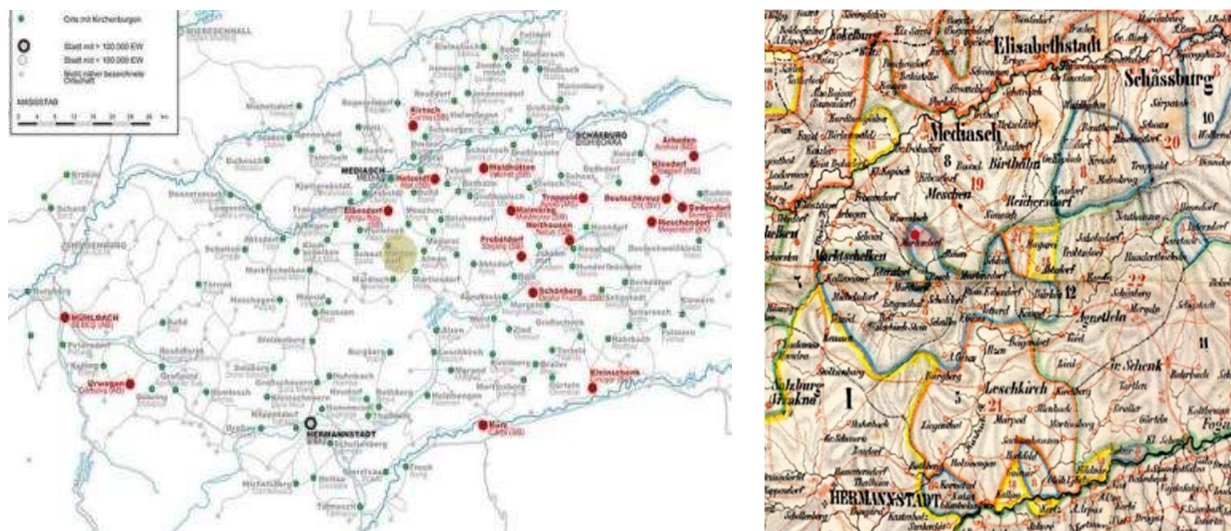


Fig. 10 a-b. (left) South Transylvanian map with fortified churches¹⁴ and (rights) Motiș with its regional street network, 1862¹⁵

Back to Motiș, a quite remote village, which has almost remained untouched by modern times and foreign visitors, probably because it is position at the end of a valley on whose slopes the best wines of Transylvania, were cultivated until a few decades ago. Just like in many other Transylvanian villages, the church of Motiș, dating back to the times when the village was founded probably at the end of 13th century, marks the junction of two small creeks, which flow down the hills. With its houses built along both banks of each stream, the village has since ever developed in the form of different neighborhoods, which spread like fingers from a palm defined by the areal of the church.

Whoever wants to explore Motiș and its hinterland by following the from here on unpaved roads beyond the margins of the village, will soon discover that these tracks are in fact elements of an old system of pathways, which used to connect neighboring villages with each other (Fig. 10 b.). Today just rarely used by the local population to reach their land and graze their cattle, these historic paths are in fact forgotten heritage. They are the most charming and the quickest way to pay a visit to one of the neighboring communes. Once they must have been of much importance as the only means of contact between the villages, and their revival could be beneficial both for the locals and for the tourists.

Motiș is surrounded by a hill land with dense beech woods and meadows (Fig. 11.). The village has a good climate and environment, offering at every corner a picturesque perspective: shepherd carrying their sheep, children playing and people debating on the street, and every morning and evening, the cows going to

¹⁴ 2020_11_12: <https://www.evang.ro/ro/18-cetati-fortificate/> and https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Liste_von_Orten_in_Siebenbr%C3%BCrgen_mit_Kirchenburg_oder_Wehrkirche: only a part of the 150 Transylvanian fortified churches, seven on Unesco World Heritage list. Here, marked with red, the 18 fortified churches restored through the US Ambassador Fund for Cultural Project.

¹⁵ <https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Siebenbr%C3%BCrgen>.

the grassland and coming back, giving with their bells the daily measurement of the time. The poetically atmosphere of the abandoned fruit orchard hanging above the village, the perceptible presence of Paleolithic archaeological sites everywhere, is completing this ancestral picture of a rural paradise.¹⁶



Fig. 11. Hills landscape, Motiș¹⁷

As mentioned above, people living in the village have various ethnic background, coming from many different historical areas of Romania (surroundings of Mediaș, Apuseni Mountains Region, Oltenia, Valachia). Despite of its scale, this village preserves the Transylvanian status of multi-ethnic society. Which wouldn't mean it is a paradise since life is obviously very real in Motiș whose inhabitants are not wealthier than the people elsewhere in Transylvania are.

8. Activities organized by the Association in Motiș in the years 2014-2019

The six years of effective on-site experience have shown positive development. By making intensive use of the village's resources for interdisciplinary and international workshops, much knowledge about the local and the building history of the church and its fortification has been achieved. In parallel, the activities had some positive effects for the village and its surroundings in respect to the economic and social network between the villagers.



¹⁶ The dam between Valea Viilor and Motiș, surrounded by beech, deciduous woodland and small meadows creates a landscape with an intimate atmosphere offers a special biosphere, not only beautiful images but also peaceful recreational spaces. The newly founded riding school *La Haiducu* develop successfully a professional alternative for sport and travel. The rehabilitation of the Culture House, an investment from the Saxon community beginning of the 20th century was finished last year and it's running now the EU project for the secondary route system in Valea Viilor and Motis.

¹⁷ Foto: Andrea Leindl, 2016.



Fig. 12 a-e. Workshop *in situ* activities, 2015-2019

With relatively simple resources and passion, it was possible to transform a restoration project into a nucleus of development, integration and personal involvement of the villagers confronted with a patrimony that they did not create, nor their ancestors. With no economic ambitions, national and international experts had accepted the invitation to work with students, local authorities and local artisans, increasing the interest around the monument and its preservation, as the Austrian experience with the concept of *Baukultur*¹⁸ shows.

A specific aspect in the Motiș project has since the beginning been the work with the children of the village who enjoy interesting activities during the summer break (cinema, birthday parties, cultural trips, drawing program, language lessons, etc.).



Fig. 13 a-e. Summer school for villagers' children, 2014-2019

¹⁸ *Baukultur* as implemented by the Austrian Association *Landluft* (<http://www.landluft.at/>) is a concept of building and restoration in small settlements, including the local population from the beginning of planning, not only based on their technical support, but also on their social skills, the local traditions and cultural intentions.

The personal contacts proved very important in respect to the quality of buildings repairs, maintenance and construction. The mutual trust and the possibility of regular involvement in the activities together with the comparatively low level of wages enabled to continue the work every year, usually employing the same teams of craftsmen from the region.

Fig. 14 a-b. Ieremia Bârcea, master builder with his team, partially his sons



2015



2019

Although 2020 had no activities *in situ*, it was used for publication of articles,¹⁹ as well as to support an architecture masterwork at the Technical University of Vienna.²⁰

¹⁹ Günther Buchinger. Doris Schön. *Die Kirche und Wehranlage von Motiș / Mortesdorf, Gemeinde Valea Viilor, Kreis Sibiu – Bau- und Nutzungsgeschichte vom Mittelalter bis in die Gegenwart / The Church and Fortifications of Motiș / Mortesdorf, Municipality of Valea Viilor, District of Sibiu – History of Construction and Use from the Middle Ages to the Present*, 9-58 and Mirela I. Weber-Andreșcov. Überlegungen zur Gründungsgeschichte der Martinskirche in Mortesdorf, politische Gemeinde Wurmloch, Kreis Sibiu, Rumänien / Some considerations concerning the foundation of the Saint Martin Church in Motiș, commune Valea Viilor, Sibiu, Romania, 59-188 in biannual review *Anastasis. Research in Medieval Culture and Art*, Volume VII, No.2 / November 2020.

²⁰ Stud. arch. Flavia Trifan. *The fortified church of St. Martin in Motiș. Preservation and conversion strategies*, coordination univ. prof. dr. phil. Gerhard A. Stadler (Technical University of Vienna) and univ. assist. dr. arch. Liliana Cazacu (Ion Mincu University of Architecture and Urban Planning).

9. Instead of conclusions

Closely linking architectural restoration to assisting the sustainable improvement of the socio-economic situation of those who live with the monuments is the decisive element of the Motiș project as seen by the Association *Ark of Motiș*.

According to the legal context of the Romanian Law of Monuments Protection, the urgently necessary restoration of the ensemble consisting of the church with its fortifications and the parish house of Motiș requires a number of studies to be included in a complex project of architectural rehabilitation and conversion of function to be agreed by the Romanian authorities. Much of these prerequisites have been already implemented through the input by the Head of Association, herself an architect, and due to in-kind contributions of numerous expert colleagues from various European countries who came to work on the site. Summer 2021 might see an ultimate effort by a small group of professionals aimed at designing a concept of architectural surface conservation. Without further financial means, however, this might be the last event if this kind to take place.

Thanks to the helpful involvement of passionate local workers paid from private financial means, urgent interventions could be started, or even fully completed. On a whole, a network of people and institutions which also include the association of former villagers in Germany has been successfully created. The major office of the community has always been supportive within their legal possibilities.

In parallel to the above efforts, the Association has initiated various actions to involve especially children and youngsters of the village. These were accepted very well and helped to be acknowledged by the villagers.

The economic aspect is presently the main obstacle to continue the Motiș project. Thus it is very much hoped that either private sponsors or public institutions could become interested in supporting the further project activities.

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