THE SYSTEMATISATION OF THE MULTICULTURAL HISTORIC CITY OF KRONSTADT/BRAȘOV. A CRITICAL PERSPECTIVE (1921–1965)

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Abstract
The multiethnic and historic fortified city of Kronstadt (Brașov[1] in Romanian and Brassó in Hungarian – located at the base of the Carpathian Tâmpa Mountains), whose existence is first documented in the 13th century, played a significant role under Hungarian and Habsburg rule (1211–1918) as a border city and centre of trade. Following the First World War and the unification of Transylvania with the provinces of Bessarabia and Bukovina, Kronstadt became part of the Kingdom of Romania in 1918. This chapter discusses the modernisation of the historic city following the territorial and administrative reforms of 1921, which challenged its multiethnic character and built legacy. In this regard, the process of urban systematisation of the historic city, initiated during the Habsburg monarchy (1711–1918) and carried out in the interwar period and the aftermath of the Second World War due to the damage caused by the city bombardments, will be analysed. Overall, this chapter asks how the transformation under various political regimes of the historic multiethnic "Saxon burg" ultimately into an industrial socialist city impacted its built legacy. Particular attention will be given to the (inter)war period and the first decade of the communist regime, when the city was renamed Orașul Stalin (Stalin City) (1950–1960). The study makes use of archival and visual documentation, such as systematisation maps, to highlight significant steps in the transformation of the city from a multiethnic historical settlement into a modern socialist industrial city with potential for tourism development.

Keywords
Systematisation, mapping, multiethnic cities, historic city centres, war damage, socialism, Brașov

1 WHAT MAKES A CITY MULTICULTURAL? HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter aims to analyse the urban transformation of the multiethnic city of Kronstadt, which was founded as an "urbis" in the Middle Ages, when it was part of the historic province of Transylvania. As a border town until the beginning of the 20th century, it played an important role under Hungarian and Habsburg governance in ensuring trade and transit into the Romanian Principate. This chapter will discuss the transformation of the multiethnic border city into an important industrial hub located in the centre of the modern Romanian nation-

1 After 1918 to be referred as Brașov throughout the chapter.

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state following the union of Romania with Transylvania (December 1918), and with the historic provinces of Bessarabia (March 1918) and Bukovina (November 1918). After a short historical overview of the evolution of the medieval "Saxon burg" into a multiethnic city of trade and crafts under the Habsburg monarchy (1711–1918), this chapter discusses important steps in the modernisation and preservation of the historic city during the (inter)war period and communist regime until 1965.

"The city of the Crown" (Kronstadt in German) took shape during the 13th century, following the colonisation of the Carpathian southern region of Transylvania by the Teutonic knights (Stroe & Stroe, 2009, p. 83). During the 14th century, it became an important trade centre due to its strategic location in the Kingdom of Hungary on the border with the Romanian provinces, which at that time were Ottoman protectorates. The city's development was influenced by its location in the Carpathian Mountains and the availability of water resources, around the Romanesque church, which was replaced in the second half of the 14th century by the Black Church (Institute for Monument Preservation Archives [INP], 1966, p. 2), that is still standing today (Figure 1).

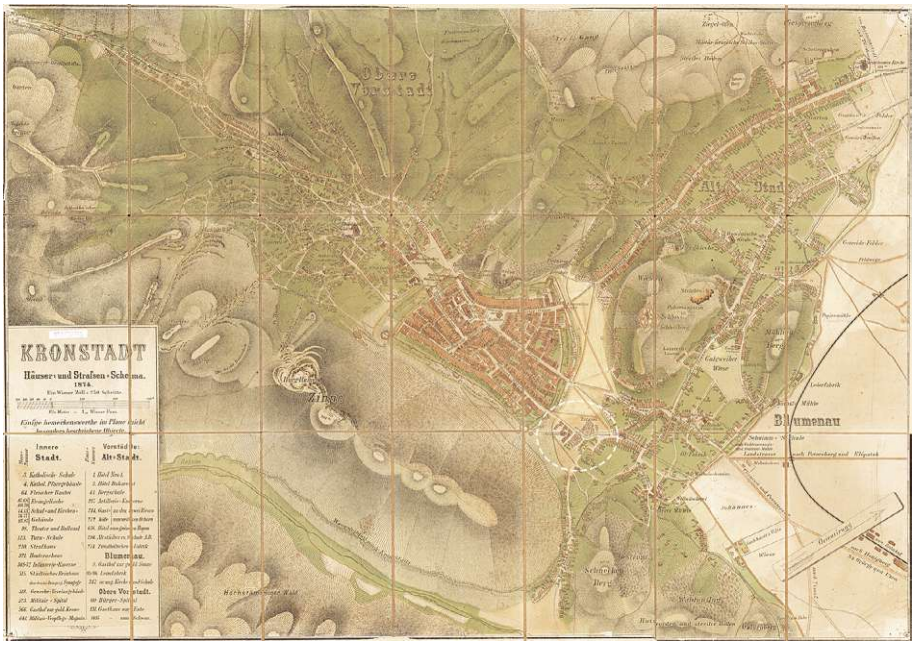

FIGURE 1 Kronstadt Häuser und Straßen Schema, 1874, [Kronstadt: houses and street plan, with the Roma settlement marked in white by the author, 1874]. (From Municipal Archives Brașov, SJAN, BV-FD-00323-B-912-4-45, CC BY-NC)

Eventually, it expanded and integrated smaller communities in Schei, Bartolomeu, and Blumăna. Starting in 1427, following the Ottoman military incursions (1421), the city expanded its defence system, which included walls, bastions, towers, and a *Zwinger* (defensive area). The fortification system was concentrated exclusively in the medieval town, where the wealthiest inhabitants (nobles, traders, and craftsmen) and workshops were located (INP, File 1434,

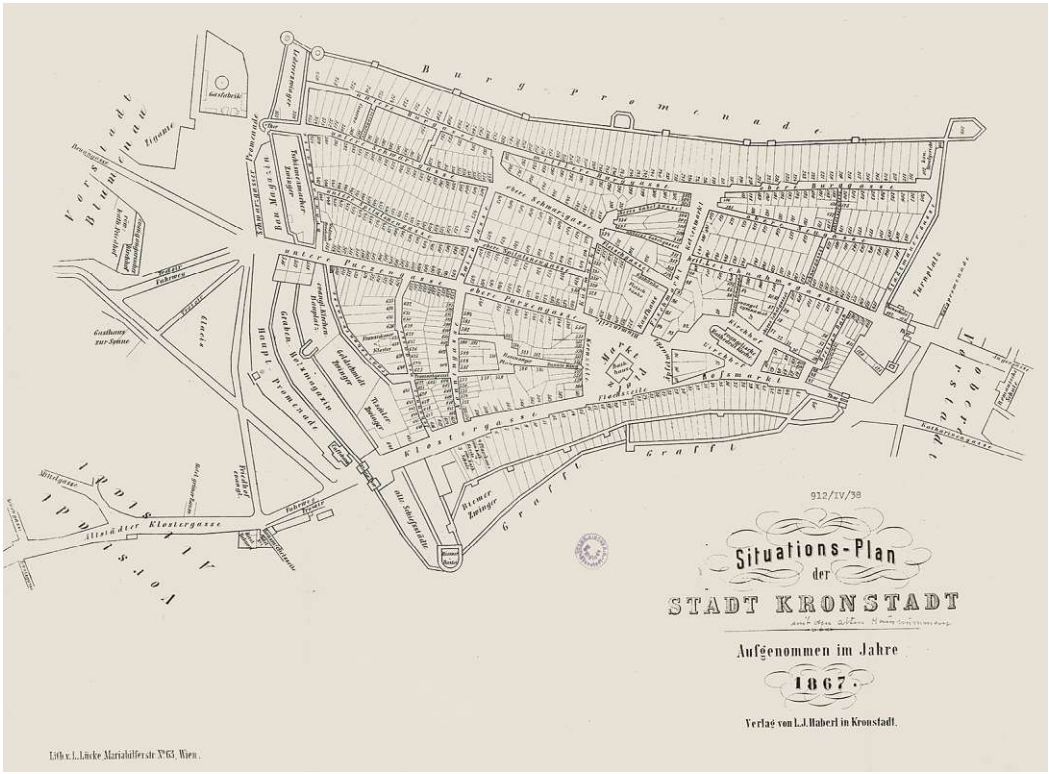

FIGURE 2 Situation Plan of Kronstadt, 1867. (From Municipal Archives Brașov, SJAN, BV-FD-00323-b-912-4-38, CC BY-NC)

1965, p. 3). During this period, the city was divided into four quarters for tax reasons: *Porticae* (1475, Porții Street and surroundings), *Carporis Cristi* (1480, Town Council square), *Catharinae* (Horse Market, Str. Bariț iu and surroundings), and *Patri* (1486, Monastery Street and surroundings). This division was retained until the 18th century (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 7) (Figure 2). Furthermore, despite numerous political transformations in the region, the street layout defined during the 14th century and the fortification have also been largely preserved over the centuries. The population in the area predominantly consisted of German (Saxon) and Hungarian-speaking groups, in addition to Romanian, Greek, and Armenian communities. Roma communities were located outside the city walls, as indicated by the Habsburg maps from the 19th century (see Figure 1).

The end of the 17th century marked a significant shift in the city's historical evolution due to changing political conditions generated by the Habsburg military presence. During the inhabitants' uprising of 1689, the city was set on fire, destroying all the city's wooden structures (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 14). The damage and integration of Kronstadt in the Habsburg Empire in the 17th century as an autonomous city was followed by a period of reconstruction in the Baroque style (1711–1774), replacing the local Renaissance style that had predominated since the 16th century (Stroe & Stroe, 2009, p. 87). Various public institutions were built, including the Catholic Church of Saint Peter and Paul (1773–1782), schools, and trade halls, while the city slowly expanded beyond its walls (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 14). Transformations

took place in the northern (*Schei*) and southern (*Blumăna*) parts of the city. From the 18th century, the walled city formed Kronstadt's core (*Innere Stadt*), while the developments outside the fortification were identified as suburbs (*Vorstadt – Altstadt*). According to the study issued in 1965 by the heritage conservation authorities in Bucharest, it is the more modest housing from the 16th and 17th centuries that has been better preserved in the historic city, because prosperous families would often change or even reconstruct their houses, particularly during the 19th century. The same survey also identified the predominant architectural style of the historic city as late Gothic and late Renaissance, from the 16th century onwards (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 14).

In the 19th century, Kronstadt began to lose its autonomy (1806) and was eventually fully integrated into the administrative structures of the Austrian and Austro-Hungarian Empires (1806 and 1867, respectively). Numerous cities in Transylvania started to undergo a process of modernisation, which involved carrying out public works in line with the planning ordinances of the time, such as the construction of pavements and sewerage systems, and the alignment of streets. Regulations concerning building construction for the historic core of Kronstadt can be identified at the end of the 19th century (Municipal Archives Brașov [SJAN], BV, Plans 456, Baureglulierung Kronstadt, Innere Stadt, 1890). During this period, parts of the walls and bastions (in the north in 1835, and the south in 1857) were demolished (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 16). In their place, triumphal arches were built in a neoclassical style, of which the Schei Gate (1827) has survived to the present. New public buildings were erected, including the courthouse, post office, tax office, prefecture, and banks. Over the centuries, Kronstadt had retained its role as a city of crafts and trade. However, during the 19th century under Austrian and Austro-Hungarian governance, the peripheral city at the empire's borders began to lose its commercial relevance due to increasing trade across the Danube and through Black Sea ports. Yet at the same time, its industrial potential emerged, particularly following the construction of the railway network.

Transylvania's peripheral position in relation to various European empires prior to the early 20th century has been discussed recently by Parvulescu and Boatcă, who defined the region as a "semiperipheral area with an inter-imperiality history" (2022, p. 6). This study has significantly improved our understanding of Transylvania's peripheral position and the traceable legacy of empires in rural spaces. Former empires' legacies in urban areas were discussed in Puia's study (2022) on Transylvanian urban architecture in the interwar period. The legacies of the former Russian and Habsburg empires, as well as visions of modernity in Eastern Europe up to 1940, were similarly highlighted in the edited volume by Behrends and Kohlrausch (2014), who predominantly focused on the metropolitan areas and capital cities of Eastern Europe. Horel (2023) and Kisiel (2018) analysed the multicultural cities of the Habsburg Empire from the 19th century to 1914. Particular emphasis was made by Horel (2023) on the multicultural aspect of the cities, as reflected in cultural institutions, religion, education, and modernisation processes in cities such as Poszony/Bratislava, Lviv, Sarajevo, Zagreb, Czernowitz/Chernivtsi, Arad, Temesvar/Timișoara, Brno/Brünn, and Trieste. Kisiel's (2018) contribution to the politics of space in Austro-Hungarian cities in comparison to Prussian cities focused on Polish

cities and symbolic urban landscapes. However, these studies focused rather on the period from the 19th century until the end of the monarchy (1918).
The connection between historic cities, heritage preservation, reconstruction, and urban planning at the beginning of the 20th century has been studied by several authors. Research on historic city centres and heritage politics in urban planning debates in the European context focused on the Western European tradition, with particular emphasis on case studies from countries such as Germany, Italy, Switzerland, and France (Enss & Vinken, 2016), as well as the UK (Pendlebury et al. 2014; Larkham 2003). Yet, the aspect of multiculturalism was treated less by these authors. Similarly, the connection between spatial planning, heritage preservation, and reconstruction in Europe between 1945–1975 has been extensively analysed in Western Europe (Diefendorf 1990, Barjot et al. 1997, Bullock & Verpoest 2023, Knauer 2023), while case studies from Poland and the GDR reflected developments in Eastern Europe (Briesen & Strubelt, 2022). Studies on urban planning politics and modernity in Eastern Europe have received recently more attention, as shown in interdisciplinary research on knowledge transfer and networks in urban planning at the beginning of the 20th century (Gantner et al., 2021), and interdisciplinary studies on urban planning of the socialist cities in postwar Eastern Europe (Grau & Welch Guerra, 2024; Welch Guerra et al., 2023). The space of Romanian modernity at the beginning of the 20th century has been analysed by authors such as Carmen Popescu (2010; 2011), who discussed the "national style" and "modernity" projects from an interdisciplinary perspective. Further aspects of urban planning policy at the beginning of the 20th century have been researched by Răuță (2013) and Vais (2022), who focused on the creation of the civic centres and the *sistematizarea* (systematisation) of the Romanian cities, as a planning measure to ensure the regulation of the urban and rural spaces. Further research has discussed the systematisation of small towns in Romania in the context of the 1940 earthquake and its impact on the reconstruction debates regarding damaged towns and affected Jewish communities (Demeter 2024). Issues of postwar reconstruction in Romania have been problematised by Iuga (2016; 2019) and Tulbure (2016) with a focus on socialist postwar reconstruction projects. Romanian publications such as *Arhitectura* (1973, Issue 4; 1977, Issue 6) have produced special issues on modernisation and the preservation of historic city centres during the communist regime. Particular attention has been given to research on the reshaping of the city centre of Bucharest and Transylvanian historic city centres such as Brașov and Sibiu. Aspects related to the integration of restoration, reconstruction, and renovation of historic cities have been emphasised, indicating their role in the modernisation of "socialist cities with a historic character" (Sandu, 1973, pp. 4–5). The historical and urban evolution of Brașov has been recently addressed by authors such as Stroe (2008) and Stroe & Stroe (2009), who highlighted the architectural value of various historic buildings and provided a comprehensive overview of its architectural and urban history.

This chapter aims to fill a gap in research dealing with the transformation of multicultural and ethnically diverse Transylvanian cities from an interdisciplinary and *longue durée* approach by combining disciplines of urban history

and heritage studies. It questions how the transformation of the historic and multiethnic Habsburg trade city of Kronstadt into an industrial socialist city, renamed Stalin City (1950–1960) by the communist regime, impacted its built heritage. By scrutinizing urban transformation and systematisation policies in the context of modern nation-state formation after 1918, the consequences of war damage, and the installation of the communist regime in 1948, this contribution highlights the mechanisms by which the historic city centre and its multicultural legacy have been transformed or subjected to preservation. Following the territorial and administrative reform of Romania (1921), the multiethnic character and built legacy of the city were challenged by interventions aimed at reflecting the Romanian national identity. In this regard, this chapter will examine modernisation processes and systematisation policies from the Habsburg monarchy through the interwar period to the Second World War. Lastly, it addresses the impact of major political changes on the city generated by the communist regime installed in power from 1948 to 1965.

The paper makes use of archival and visual documentation, such as systematisation maps, to highlight significant steps in the transformation of the city from a multiethnic historic settlement into a modern socialist industrial city. To achieve this, contemporary publications such as *Arhitectura* have been analysed and archival documents from the Institute for Monument Preservation, the National Archives in Bucharest, and the Municipality Archives in Brașov were consulted.

2 SYSTEMATISATION POLICY FROM THE INTERWAR TO THE MILITARY DICTATORSHIP (1921–1944)

Following the unification of the historical provinces with Romania in 1918, a new administrative reform was issued in 1921. It aimed to harmonise the existing legislative traditions in the newly acquired provinces, namely Russian legislation in Bessarabia, Austrian in Bukovina, and Hungarian in Transylvania (including the territories of Crișana, Banat, and Maramureș).

This significantly impacted the modernisation processes of cities and rural settlements. According to Mihnea (2016), the impact of the 1921 administrative reform in semi-autonomous Transylvania was twofold. Firstly, suburban estates owned by cities were being entirely expropriated, excepting properties that served for social and educational purposes. (It is important to note that, before the unification, Transylvanian cities were major landowners). Secondly, urban areas were nonetheless expanding due to the distribution of building plots (Mihnea, 2016, p. 124). As the author argues, two different laws with overlapping purposes were in effect after 1918 in Transylvania concerning the distribution of building plots: the *1921 Agrarian Law* (which focused on the expropriation of the suburban lands) and the *October 18, 1921 Law* on building plot distribution in cities, which concentrated on city-owned properties (Mihnea, 2016, pp. 124–125). Responsibility for the implementation of the *October 1921 Law* was assigned to municipalities, and the parceling plans had to be approved by the authorities from the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Public Works in Bucharest (Mihnea, 2016, p. 125). These

measures contradicted the specification of the *1921 Agrarian Law*, whose enactment was assigned to local authorities under the Ministry of Agriculture and Domains. This was beyond the municipality's competencies, generating a conflict between various authorities. Additionally, the Superior Commission for Systematisation Plans, Beautification, and Cities Development was the main authority – under the Technical Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs – responsible for the approval of urban, technical, aesthetic, and sanitary issues to be considered by the national, regional, and local systematisation plans. Later, due to war damage, the systematisation and reconstruction of the damaged areas also became the responsibility of the Systematisation Commission, including the creation and revision of the systematisation plans (National Archives of Romania [SANIC], ODSA, 83/1946, p. 3).

Norms and instructions for the creation of the nationwide systematisation plans were issued in 1927 by the Technical Office of the Ministry of Internal Affairs (revised in 1939) (SANIC, SAOT, 1/1927, p. 1). According to these norms, the systematisation plan aimed to provide information on the current status and future needs of cities, including envisioned extensions and developments triggered by geographic, economic, demographic, social, cultural, and aesthetic conditions (SANIC, SAOT, 1/1927, pp. 1–3). Under such circumstances, the present conditions of cities and potential zones of extension, as well as urban and suburban areas, had to be indicated and mapped. Various neighbourhoods (commercial, collective housing, villa neighbourhoods, industrial and military areas, green areas, and parks) were also subject to zoning and mapping, as were public institutions (squares, schools, hospitals, public baths, theatres, museums, markets, train stations, ports), and transport infrastructure networks (roads, railways). Plans had to be created at the scales of 1:5000 or 1:2500, and plans for detailed and important areas at 1:1000 or 1:500 (SANIC, SAOT, 1/1927, p. 1, 5).

During the interwar period, various cities in Transylvania contested the expropriation measures, arguing that they would hinder their urban development. Large cities, which were important industrial and administrative centres, such as Timișoara, Cluj, Brașov, and Sibiu, experienced rapid demographic growth and housing shortages before the First World War and the unification of 1918 (Mihnea, 2016, p. 129). Puia (2020, p. 55) argues that regulations concerning urban transformation before the 1918 reunification, such as those issued for Sibiu, Târgu Mureș, and Cluj, remained valid until the new national administrative reform came into force in 1925 (revised in 1936) when new systematisation plans had to be created.

Based on the new administrative rules, three cities in Transylvania created systematisation plans during the interwar and war periods: Hermannstadt (Sibiu – 1926, finalized in 1936), Kronstadt (Brașov – 1931 by the architects Alexandru and Ion Al. Davidescu, and 1937–1946 by Duiliu Marcu), and Deva (1943–1944) (Puia, 2020, p. 56). By the end of the war, only 10 of 16 municipalities had systematisation plans (including Brașov), as did only 9 of 42 county-seat cities (SANIC, ODSA 83/1946, p. 3).

In the case of Brașov, the city expanded beyond its fortified core before the 1921 land reform, and its most recent systematisation plan dated back to 1917 (SANIC, SAOT, 1/1917, Plan). Further systematisation plans

for Brașov were elaborated between 1937 and 1946 by Duliu Marcu (1885–1966). Various international theoretical approaches were considered for the elaboration of the road infrastructure plan, including works by authors such as Cesare Chiodi (1935), Sierks, H.L (1926), and August Rey (1928), who discussed the orientation of housing in relation to transport infrastructure (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944, pp. 54–55). The plans proposed by Marcu focused on the north and north-western part of the city, in the proximity of the historic city walls, which included the slaughterhouse, considered an unsanitary area (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944, p. 57). The plan was first approved in 1942 by the Commission for Systematisation, yet debates on the systematisation of the city and the proposed plans continued during the war and in response to war damage (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944). The heavy bombardment of the railway station, tracks and depots, and the damaged neighbourhoods near the railway station, where important industries were located, prompted a reconsideration of the systematisation debates (SANIC, SAOT 2/1945, p. 107). Under these circumstances, local authorities argued that no request for the reconstruction of the war-damaged buildings (industrial and private buildings – the latter representing approximately 50 percent of the building stock) should be granted until the systematisation plans were revised, and proposals to regenerate the damaged areas had been made (SANIC, SAOT 2/1945, p. 108). Due to the war damage, the Systematisation Commission planned an emergency programme prioritising repairs and systematisation measures for the heavily damaged cities and rural settlements nationwide (SANIC, ODSA, 83/1946, p. 3). Law 1315 from April 1945 authorized the reconstruction of war-damaged buildings, even if they were not integrated into the alignment plan, in cases where systematisation works could not be concluded within the proposed timeframe (SANIC, SAOT 38/1945, p. 23).

Up to 1945, Duiliu Marcu proposed nine solutions for the systematisation of the city. The final proposal (January 1944) focused on the systematisation of the civic centre and was finally approved in May 1946 by the Superior Commission for Systematisation Plans and by the local municipality in August 1946 (SANIC, SAOT 19/1946, p. 12). According to this proposal, four zones were identified, comprising residential, protected, mixed, and industrial areas (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944, p. 57). The documentation prepared for the systematisation plans argued for the necessity to preserve buildings, fortifications, and neighbourhoods considered important for the historic character of the city, and important steps were required to designate them as historic monuments (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944, p. 47). These included a proposal to restore the former City Council building, which dated back to the medieval period (SANIC, MLP 55/1942) (Figure 3).

Furthermore, the diverse architectural legacy of the historic city and issues concerning “style” and “unity” were the subject of debate, as was how to integrate new constructions within the medieval structure of a “Saxon burg” considered “foreign” to Romanian identity. The challenge of “harmonising” the diversity of architectural styles of various buildings (medieval, Renaissance, and Baroque) in the historic city was debated, particularly in the context of integrating a project proposal for a commercial academy (not realised) and the systemati-

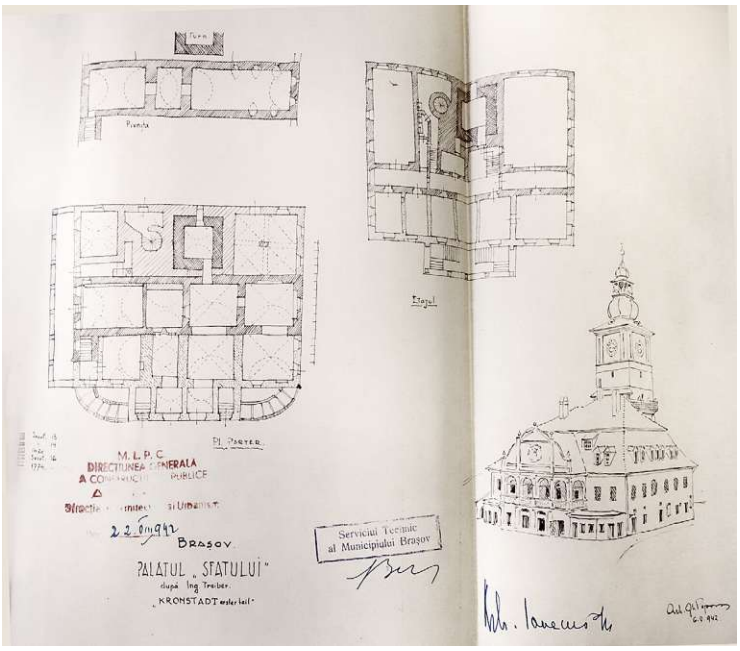

FIGURE 3 Palatul Sfatului, Brașov [City Council building restoration plan, 1942]. (From National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, SANIC, Fond 2764, MLP 55/1942, p. 96, CC BY-NC)

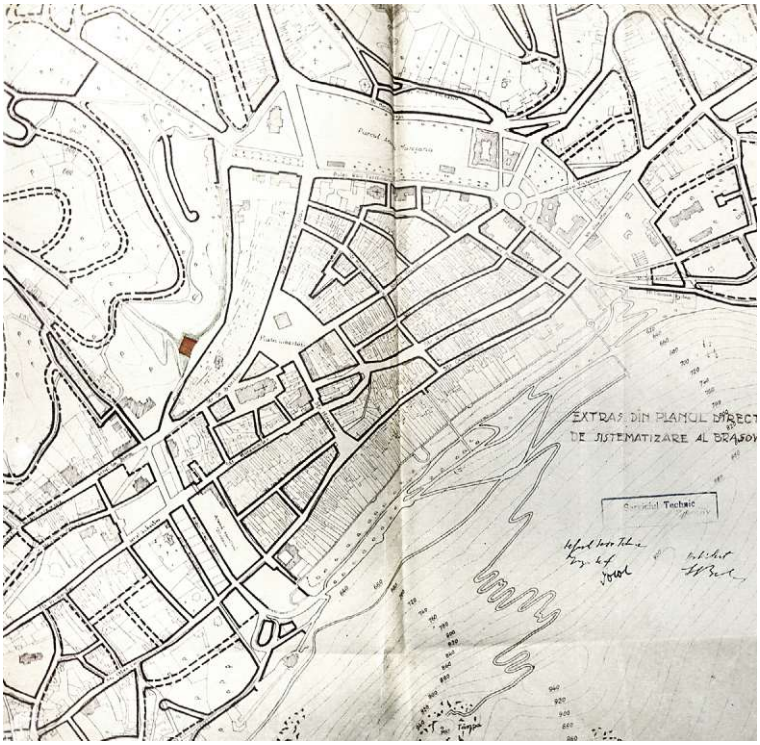

FIGURE 4 Extras din Planul Director de Sistematizare al Brașovului [Systematisation plan section indicating the plot designated for the Commercial Agency (in orange)]. (From National Archives of Romania, Bucharest, SANIC, Fond 3420, SAOT, File 19/1946, p. 20, CC BY-NC)

FIGURE 5 Plan de Situație Țigănia [Situation plan of the Roma settlement indicating houses demolished before 1942 (yellow), houses demolished in 1942 (green), and existing houses (pink), scale 1:720]. (From Municipal Archives Brașov, SJAN, Fond Primaria Municipiului Brașov, Serviciul Contencios, File 2/1942, p. 55, 1942, CC BY-NC)

sation of the historic city and its peripheries (Figure 4) (SANIC, SAOT, 32/1943, p. 12).

For the systematisation of the northern part of Brașov, Marcu elaborated a plan that proposed a new civic centre. Its location was in the proximity of the historic fortified city, encompassing the Roma settlement of "Țigania", which had once been located at the periphery of the historic city, as indicated in the 19th century Habsburg maps. This proposal advanced solutions for the area behind the courthouse building, expanding over the Roma settlement, which would have been cleared to build the new Orthodox Cathedral (SANIC, SAOT 38/1945, p. 106). For the demolition of the Roma settlements, inhabited by "Roma musicians", unsanitary conditions and the perceived "danger" of the settlement were argued (SJAN, Prefectura BV, Inspectorat General Admini-

strativ, 120/1942, p. 1). Marcu's final solution was preferred by the local municipality as it would prevent the demolition of a great number of buildings and largely retain the street alignment. The location of the new Orthodox Cathedral, which was significant for the post-1918 Romanian national identity, on the eastern side of the central park was agreed upon by the religious authorities and the local population. These eventually refused the construction of the Cathedral in the former neighbourhood "Țigania", considered unsuitable for a project of such national relevance, while the expropriation and systematisation of the Roma settlement were eventually carried out, to a large extent (SANIC, SAOT 38/1945, p. 28; 107). (Figure 5)

Marcu's proposals also included the rehabilitation of the war-damaged area around the train station. The relocation of the main train station and the removal of railway tracks that crossed the city was also suggested (SANIC, SAOT 38/1945, p. 3). The idea of reconstructing the war-damaged buildings in the proximity of the railway station, as they were before the war, was dismissed on the grounds that it would hinder the city's development and that the buildings were of modest quality (SANIC, SAOT 38/1945, p. 4). Further debates following WWII focused on relocating the city's industrial area to the suburban northern part of the city, an area which had expanded over the previous 20 years and had been heavily damaged during the aerial bombardments of 1944 (SANIC, SAOT 19/1946, p. 12).

3 SYSTEMATISATION OF THE HISTORIC CITY CENTRE UNDER THE COMMUNIST REGIME (1948–1965)

The 1948 change of political regime, which ultimately brought the Communist Party to power for the next four decades, triggered a series of interventions that significantly influenced the transformation of the multicultural and ethnically diverse city of Brașov into an important industrial hub.

Due to its established industrial infrastructure already from the late 19th century, interwar, and war periods, debates concerning the expansion of the industry at the periphery of the city continued under the communist regime. This eventually contributed to rapid demographic growth over a short period, with Brașov's population increasing from 59,234 inhabitants in 1930 (SANIC, SAOT 56/1944, p. 37) to 129,834 in 1956, and 135,000 in 1961 (INP, File 1434, p. 19). It should be noted that this increase occurred due to the influx of the Romanian ethnic group, against the background of the deportation of the ethnic Germans to the Soviet Gulags in 1945, and the nationalisation policies of the communist regime.

The urban transformation from 1948 to 1958 focused on the city's periphery, where industrial and housing projects of Soviet inspiration for workers were located, and named after nearby factories. According to Pintilescu (2014, pp. 137–138), the historic city centre was mostly ignored in the initial postwar years, with interventions limited to individual projects such as maintaining the city walls, renovating war-damaged buildings, and constructing the new Polytechnic Institute. As the author argues, the renaming of Brașov as *Orașul Stalin* (Stalin City) in August 1950 until 1960, was part of

a broader process initiated by the communist regime between 1948–1950. It included renaming streets, squares, neighbourhoods, and cities nationwide. Streets were renamed not only after the Soviet leader but also after local leaders and personalities. The renaming of Brașov after WWII under the Stalinist regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej (1948–1965) was justified by its intensive industrialisation and urban transformation during the 1940s, which places it along other European cities renamed after the Soviet leader, such as Eisenhüttenstadt (GDR), Katowice (Poland), and Varna (Bulgaria). The street names of medieval Brașov had been retained over centuries until 1918. They reflected the socio-economic functions or professions located in different areas of the historic city, for example the Horse Market and various equine-related professions, which were often named in German. During the socialist regime, a policy was pursued of renaming streets in the historic city after important cultural figures such as Romanian poets, composers, historians, or historical events associated with the Romanian Communist Party (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 7). This was the end of many historically preserved street names in the historic city, which had already experienced a wave of renaming and Romanisation of the city's toponymic landscape in the interwar period.

The politics of systematisation under the socialist regime continued throughout the 1950s and intensified, with a focus on the historic city centre, in the 1960s. Ideas debated during the 1940s were further explored in this period. These included the relocation of the train station, the development of the new civic centre, and the restoration of the City Council building in the historic centre, a proposal already debated in 1942 (SANIC, MLP 55/1942, pp. 3–102). The creation of new cadastre plans was deemed a priority, as these focused mostly on the historic city and had not been regularly updated (SANIC, PCM Consiliul de Miniștri, 423/1953, p. 7; 16).

In the 1960s, the systematisation of the historic city centre was discussed by the institutions responsible for monument protection, the Directorate for Historic Monuments, and the Institute for Studies and Planning of Architectural Constructions and Systematisation. The first comprehensive project, proposed by the architects Gheorghe Pavlu (project director), B. Grumberg (lead architect), and Virgil Bilciurescu (project leader) in September 1965, was initiated at the municipality's request. This study draws upon Erich Jekelins' (1928), *"Das Burzenland". Dritter Band, Kronstadt, I. Teil*, a comprehensive historical study on the urban and architectural development of Kronstadt. According to the 1965 study, few "historic ensembles" in postwar Romania were recognised as protected historic monuments. They included the fortification in Sighișoara and the historic city centres of Brașov, Sibiu, Sebeș, Mediaș, and Bistrița (Bilciurescu,1973, p. 20).

The 1965 study aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state and historical development of Brașov's city centre (known as Cetate/Burg) to better argue the proposed systematisation solution for this area. The study comprised two main sections: a written part and accompanying drawings. The written section included documentation on existing and planned systematisation and architectural solutions, as well as documentation on mobility and infrastructure, water, energy, and gas systems. The drawings section featured systematisation plans (1:20.000) (from 1961 for an estimated

FIGURE 6 Centru Istoric Brașov, [Systematisation plan for the proposed transformation of the historic centre of Brașov, scale 1:1000. Indicated in the legend are city walls (purple), retained buildings, proposed constructions (dark blue), existing streets (yellow), proposed streets (orange), proposed alley (grey), and areas designated for car parking (hatchings)]. (From INP, File 1434,1965, Plan 3, CC BY-NC)

population of 135,000 inhabitants), plans covering the existing situation (1:1000) (1965), plans for the proposed transformation (1:1000) (Figure 6), building age maps in the area studied (1:2000), traffic and mobility plans for the city (1:2000), mobility and traffic plans for the historic city centre (1:1000), and plans of the gas, electricity and water supply networks (all at 1:1000 scale).

According to the study, the historic centre covered 110 hectares (with 85 hectares within the city walls), serving various functions including commerce (covering several streets such as Str. Republicii, 7 November, Ciucașului,

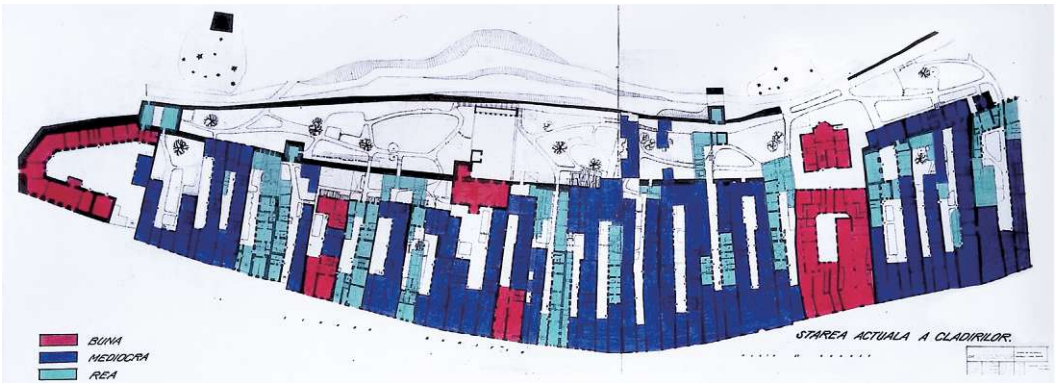

FIGURE 7 Starea Actuală a Clădirilor [Map indicating the condition of buildings (red: good, blue: mediocre, turquoise: bad)]. (From INP, File 1435, 1966, CC BY-NC)

Bariţiu-Armata Roşie, 23rd August Square); tourism; administration; and as a cultural and educational hub (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 1). It also identified that numerous medieval historic monuments had been preserved, such as the Black Church, the Hirscher House, the Greek Orthodox Church, the city walls with some of their towers and bastions, and numerous houses dating from the 16th century onwards. These were considered significant architectural elements in the 1965 systematisation proposal, but above all, as relevant parts of the "ensemble" (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 2). Plans for the restoration of such significant architectural elements, including the Black Church (INP, File 1438, 1968), the Hirscher House (INP, File 1440,1969), several houses along Republicii Street and surrounding the former Marktplatz (renamed 23rd August Square in the 1960s, and currently Piaţa Sfatului) were proposed. The vernacular architecture and housing conditions in the historic area were assessed as only 29 percent good, while 64 percent were mediocre and 7 percent were in a poor state (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 23) (Figure 7). The deterioration of buildings was attributed to a lack of maintenance and consolidation work, the absence of sanitary installations, or the improper use of the buildings (INP, 1435, 1966, p. 2). Despite the poor state of housing, these structures were considered historically and architecturally valuable. Hence, their conservation, protection, and enhancement were proposed.

After identifying these issues in the historic city centre, the study proposed the following solutions to be implemented in the process of systematisation of the area:

1. Renovation of housing, city walls, towers, and bastions,
2. Creation of green areas, including in densely populated areas,
3. Improving mobility in the historic centre by diverting heavy traffic and public transportation from historic streets and establishing pedestrianised areas,
4. Enhancement of the commercial area to increase its tourism potential,
5. Repurposing some facilities with new functions (e.g. galleries, museums),
6. Valorisation of historic monuments, particularly the city walls, towers and bastions and significant individual buildings for tourism purposes (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 2)

FIGURE 8 Desfășurarea Frontului Spre Piața 23 August [Façades of buildings facing the former 23rd August Square, (now Piața Sfatului)]. (From INP, File 1434, 1965, Plan 5, CC BY-NC)

The plan aimed to establish appropriate uses for buildings according to their character and to identify those buildings (or parts of them) with significant architectural value. Twenty-nine buildings were made subject for rehabilitation, six of which were considered of significant architectural value. Most of the retained facades in the historic centre dated back to the 19th century, with some medieval structures also being preserved (Figure 8). Preserved architectural styles varied from late Baroque to Classicist, and Neo-Renaissance. Also, due to the high housing density, increased humidity, and limited sunlight, it was proposed to demolish ca. 18,000 m² out of 136,000 m² in the area, covering unsanitary areas, improvised structures, and auxiliary buildings (INP, File 1434, 1965, p. 28).

The project also aimed to establish a clear division of functions, such as public and private. For public buildings, access would be facilitated from the main streets, while in the case of private housing, interior courtyards would be redesigned for this purpose (INP, 1435, 1966, p. 7). The plan also envisioned the transformation of some buildings for cultural purposes, such as regional museum or public art galleries, while smaller spaces were allocated for commercial activities serving tourism.

Hence, one could argue that the first comprehensive project of integrating the restoration and conservation of the historic city centre in the systematisation plans, which aimed at the modernisation of the historic city centre, was issued by the communist regime during the 1960s and emphasised the tourism potential of the "historic ensemble". This foresaw the valorisation and preservation of the street layout, craft workshops, and vernacular housing, and proposed the restoration of the city walls, fortifications, and bastions, in addition to the already protected individual historical monuments (INP, File 1434, 1965, pp. 27–28). The main aim of this proposal was to preserve and conserve the "ensemble of the walled city" for its historical and architectural value, illustrating its "medieval value of a commercial city". No reference was made whatsoever to the diverse ethnic, cultural, and religious legacies of the architectural structures and their respective historical functions.

The proposed comprehensive systematisation plan had to respond to demographic growth and identify new functions while maintaining the historic city centre, which was defined as the area within the city walls. To address demographic developments, new social, educational, cultural, sanitary,

commercial, and industrial constructions were planned, along with green areas and spaces for public recreation. For this, the development of a new centre in the form of the civic centre, encompassing and responding to socialist needs, became part of Brașov's systematisation process. This concept built upon the civic centre idea that had been elaborated during the 1940s, with the selected area for its development again located in proximity to the historic centre, now envisioned as an important touristic area.

4 CONCLUSION

This chapter adopted a *longue durée* approach to highlight the urban transformation and planning of former Habsburg cities in the processes of nation-state formation after 1918. These were impacted by the modernisation debates in the interwar period, the consequences of the Second World War, and the changes triggered by the integration of cities such as Brașov into the communist modernisation agenda from 1948 until 1965.

After a short historical overview of Kronstadt/ Brașov's development from medieval times until its emergence as a multiethnic trade city under Habsburg and eventually Austro-Hungarian rule, this chapter highlighted interventions aimed at the modernisation and systematisation of the city. Specifically, it scrutinised the urban transformation of the city during the period of nation-state formation after 1918, revealing how urban interventions were shaped by the political agenda of Romanisation and nationalisation of the urban space. This is particularly relevant as Transylvanian cities have been shaped throughout centuries by their multiethnic communities. By discussing the systematisation politics of the historic centre and the ambitious plans to modernise the multiethnic city, this chapter further contributes to the debate on Transylvanian multiethnic cities, which have predominantly focused on the Hungarian and German-speaking communities. By highlighting the systematisation of the Roma settlement in the course of 1940s urban-planning transformations, this chapter also brings attention to a less discussed aspect of modernisation and systematisation of Romanian cities post-1918.

In addition, it has demonstrated how the debates on modernisation and systematisation carried out in the first decade under the communist regime of Gheorghe Gheorghiu-Dej neglected the multiethnic aspect of the Transylvanian cities in favour of attributing new historical values and functions, such as tourism, to medieval cities like Brașov. Nevertheless, this chapter has shown how the politics of urban transformation throughout the interwar and post-war periods integrated debates on historic monuments preservation and, eventually, of historic city centres, into urban planning and transformation processes.

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