

Nuntași (Duingi) vernacular village church - Digital reconstruction

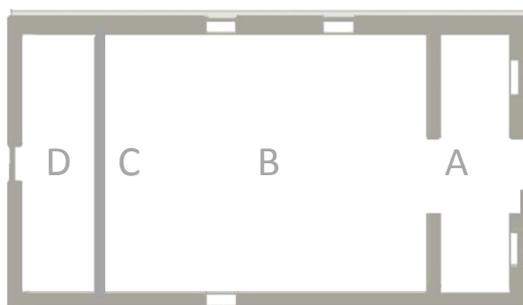
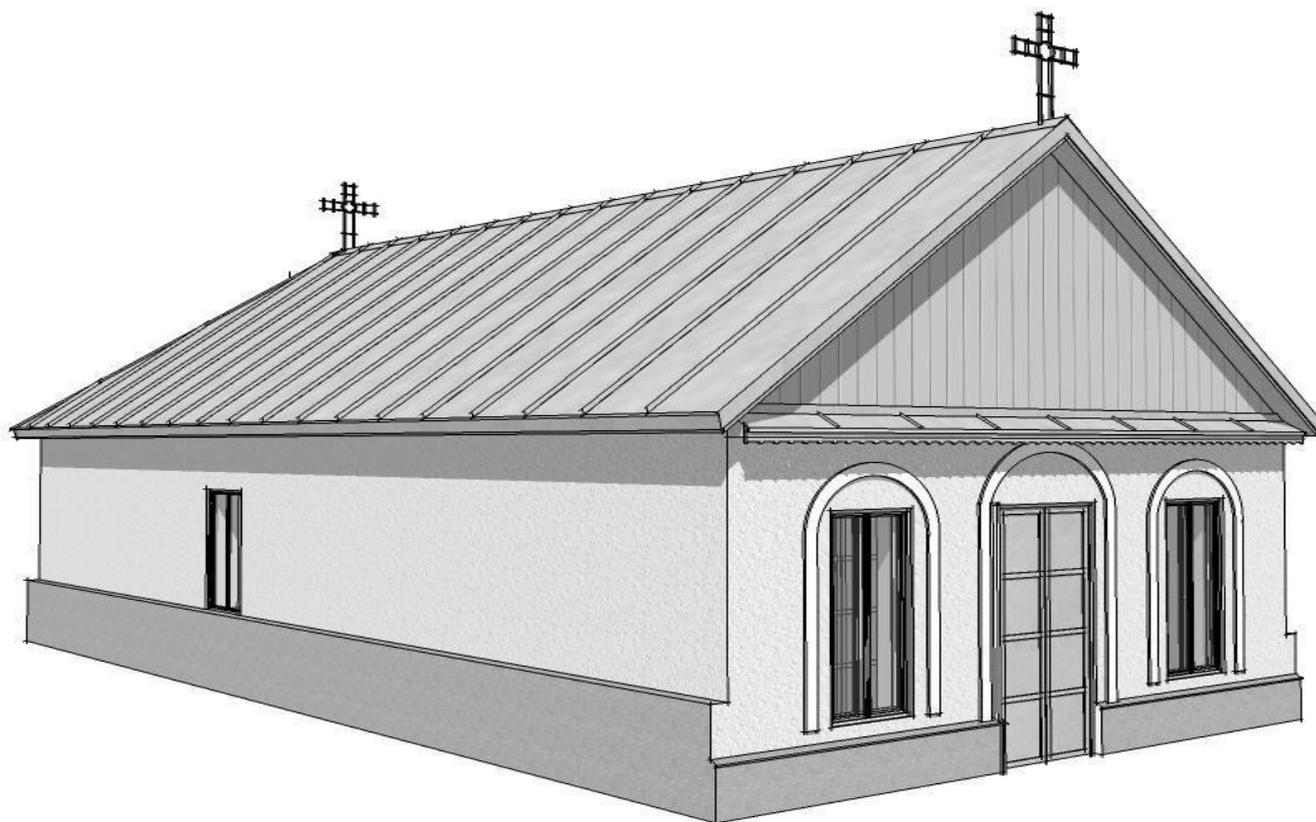
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Nuntași, formely known as *Duingi*, is a village located in the north-eastern corner of Constanța County, nearby the great lagoon area. Some of the settlement's notable architectural heritage sites are comprised of a few slightly well preserved vernacular homes, and the old village church.

The old village church, still in use until this day, is situated within the village's central axis, which also encompasses a few other important buildings, such as the school, the kindergarten, the pharmacy, and the local cultural center.

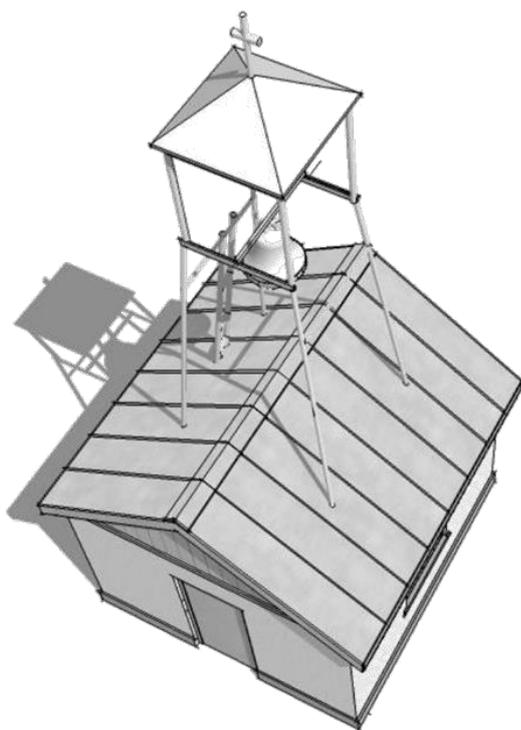
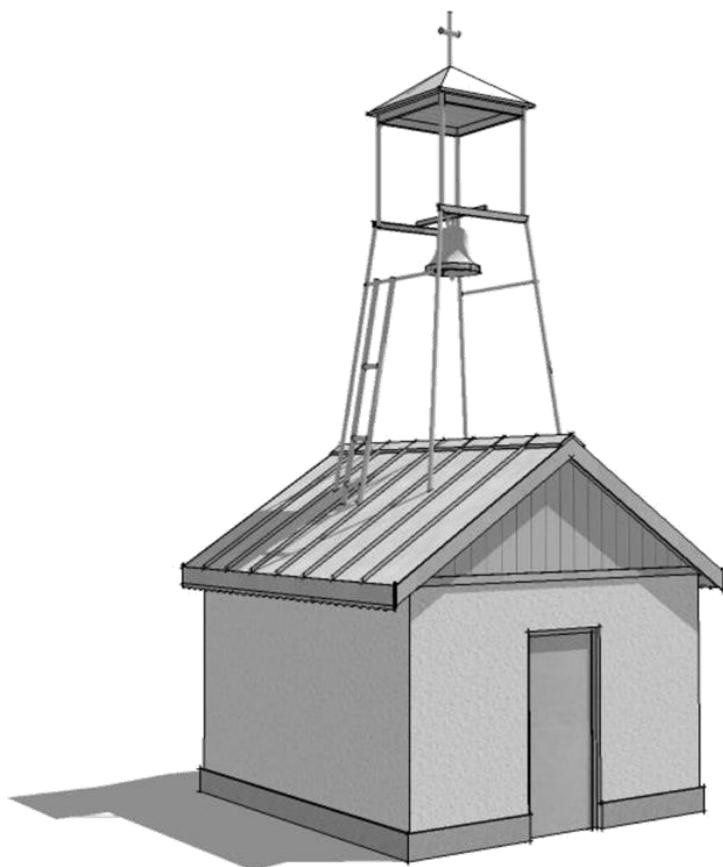
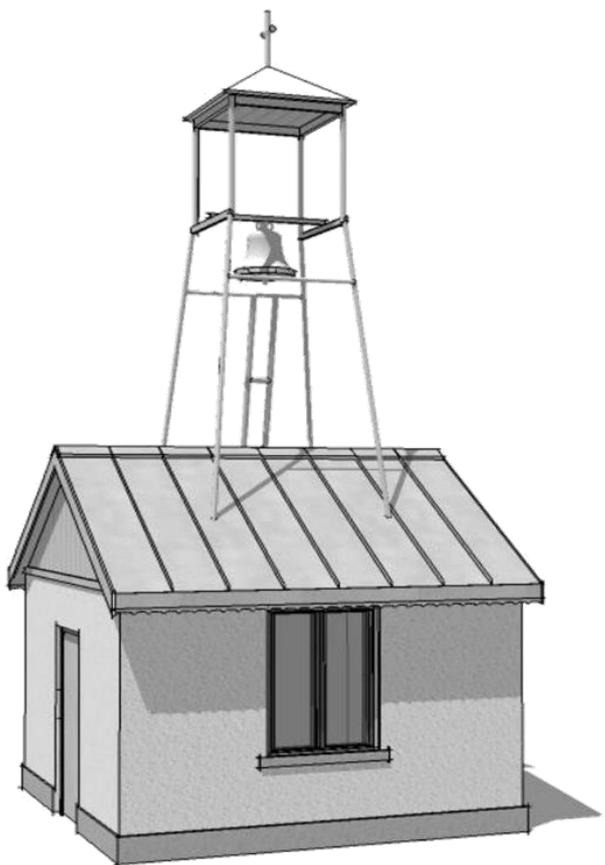
The building is representative for the old vernacular Christian architecture of Ottoman Dobruja, having a rectangular layout, no towers, and having low height. The church, as it is today, was subjected to a few interventions that sought to do some well-needed improvements.

In neighboring Istria, the church of Saint Elijah is a very well conserved Ottoman-era church, sharing a few similarities with the church from Nuntași. During the era of Ottoman rule, churches could not exceed in height the local mosques, and were banned from displaying visible Christian symbols and imagery. As solution to the height restriction, many churches were built quite low above the ground level, but were dug under the ground level, usually having an additional one meter in height due to this.

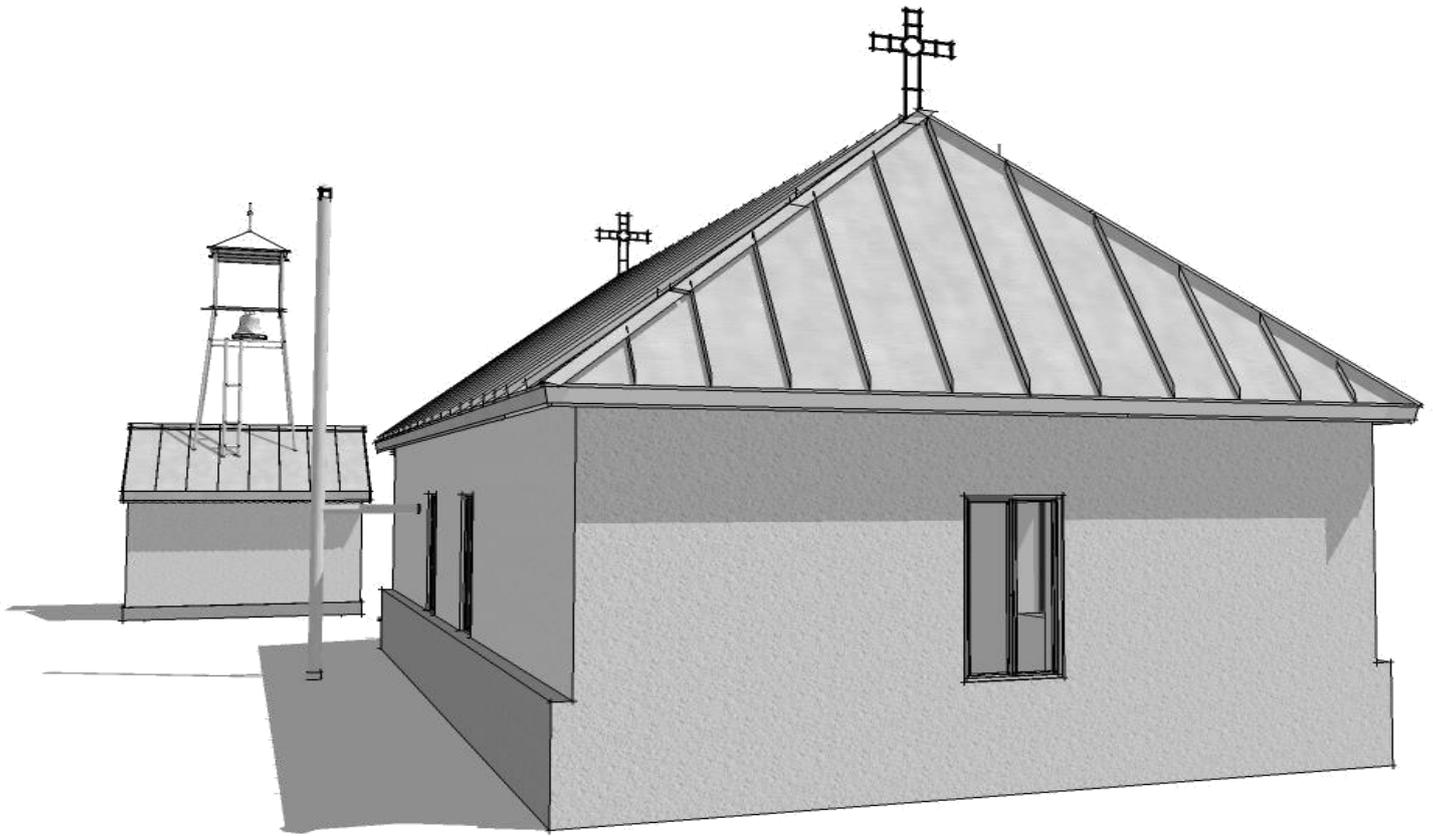


The rectangular layout of the church is divided into three main divisions – A) the narthex, B) body of the church, C) iconostasis, D) sanctuary. Unlike other EO churches, we don't have a curved hall at the back sanctuary. There are no apses, their presence gives a church a cross-like layout, this being a key-feature of EO churches.

The main building of the parish has a rectangular shape, being quite divergent from the usual stylistic and architectural norms that are reserved for Eastern Orthodox churches. The overall look of the buildings is not very different from that of a regular home, even so, some key-details indicate its function as a place of worship. Some of the details that highlight the function of the building are not exclusively represented by the display of Christian symbols, but rather by the way in which certain elements are placed in contrast to the surrounding residential buildings from the village. Even though the vernacular homes from Nuntași share the same rectangular layout, the façade is always placed on the wider edge, while it is facing the interior of the yard and not the roadside. Though modest, the church building preserves a key-feature of religious buildings – symmetry, but only in the case of the main façade. An apparent perfect symmetry is given by the absence of any additions added to the main



The bell tower is not an integral part of the church building, in fact being a free-standing structure located near the roadside, in front of the main building. Free-standing bell towers are commonly found among old EO churches from Dobruja, as they, in fact, were added on later, after 1878. During the time of Ottoman rule, churches were prohibited from having a bell. After the region became part of Romania, as a consequence of the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-1878, the churches that were built from that point on had the bell tower incorporated in the main building, sitting above the narthex usually, these were usually churches that had three tower, two sitting on the narthex, and another one at the point where the nave intersects the apses.



The church, like the majority of buildings from the villages, is built of abode. Over the course of the last decades, a few interventions were made; one of them consisted in adding a few extra layers of abode bricks to raise the height of the building. The church also did not have any interior paintings, those were added later on. For most of the time, icons were displayed throughout the building in order to fill the lack of religious imagery.



Nowadays, the church was “upgraded” with a new, and more colorful, paintjob. New windows and doors were added, both having a dark wood color. The original color scheme of that the church was made up of variations of grey contrasted with the white exterior walls. The original colors scheme can still be seen on the bell tower. The roofing material was also replaced, the original one being made up of thin metal sheets interconnected by thin ribs.