

Archaeological Data Concerning the History of the Evangelical Church in Dealu Frumos, Sibiu County

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Most historians agree that the original planimetry of the church in Dealu Frumos consisted of a hall church with nave and two aisles, a square choir, a semicircular apse and a western tower. All these were built during the 13th century, before the Tartar Invasion. During the 14th and 15th centuries (but continued during the 16th century as well) the church undergoes major modifications that would fortify it against attacks: the western side of the aisles were dismantled in order to free the western tower, heightened and enhanced from all points of view; the eastern side of the church was dismantled as well, here being built a second defensive tower, over the square choir. The church fortification was completed by surrounding it with an approximately elliptic curtain wall with three towers. A second enclosure on the eastern half of the ensemble and an impressive moat were also built in order to fortify the church. All these elements are meant to confer a maximum resistance to any types of attacks. The archaeological research in 2009 had three main goals: solving the problem of the existence of a semicircular apse on the eastern side of the church, which was discovered in trench 3. Trench 2 was established on the eastern wall of the western tower in order to identify the area where the original 13th century portal might have been and possible recovery of some parts of it laying underground, as well as establishing the existence of a threshold that could point to the original walking level. Traces of a semicircular portal on the elevation of the eastern wall are still visible today, but under the current walking level we have unveiled a uniform masonry, in which we could distinguish neither the northern mullion of the portal, as expected, nor the trace of any threshold. The excavation revealed a regular stone structure bound with mortar. Taking into account the different construction manner as in the naves, the logical hypothesis is that the western church wall was reconstructed at the same time when the western tower was being built. Another major goal of our research was successfully achieved: the discovery of the remains of the western aisle, dismantled at the moment of fortification. Studying the general stratigraphy revealed by the excavations we have to take into consideration the fact that the terrain was at a certain point levelled down (possibly to better protect the inner enclosure). This hypothesis is also supported by the diminished number of graves discovered here (a lot less than at other similar monuments) as well as the discovery of the improvised ossuary in the former lime pit. We have discovered a total of 19 graves, none of them providing datable material. Further research is needed in order to clarify some important aspects of the monument: the original entry into the church, complete unveiling of the remains of the semicircular apse and of the aisles, as well as establishing other stratigraphy data that would help set the evolution of the walking level during the different historic periods of the Evangelical church in Dealu Frumos.