

INSIGHT INTO MEDIEVAL EUROPE CRUSADERS, DUKES & CRAFTSMEN CASE STUDY OF THE DAHNSDORF CHURCH, BRANDENBURG

Medhat Wassef



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1. Introduction:

The state of Brandenburg, in eastern Germany is rich in its Romanesque heritage¹², that dates back to the date of its annexation to the Holy Roman Empire in the 12th century. The Fläming mountain range near Brandenburg is characterized by the abundance of small village churches that were built between the 12th and 13th century. Dahnsdorf village church is probably the oldest and most impressive one of these churches.

Dahnsdorf is about seven kilometers southeast of Bad Belzig and 5.5 kilometers northwest of Niemegek. The church stands in the center of the village.

The village and the church were first mentioned in 1227 A.D.³, when the village was donated to the Teutonic order of knights, which adds a special historical value to the church that served as a command station for the order for about 500 years. It lies on the intersection of Politics, History, Geography and

¹ This region belongs to the TRANSROMANICA network of routes through Europe that is recognized by the UNESCO

² TRANSROMANICA connects the common Romanesque heritage across nine European countries: Germany, Austria, Portugal, Spain, France, Italy, Slovakia, Serbia and Romania. Along the route, you can find the cultural heritage of this era

³ Wentz, G.: Die Deutschordenkomturei, in: Germania Sacra, Leipzig, 1929, p 499-500

Architecture, and presents an interesting insight into the origins of this region of present time Germany.

2. The church and the place of settlement:

2.1. Historical origins:⁴

2.1.1. The Askanians:

The story begins in the tenth century with the eastern expansion of the holy roman empire into the Fläming area, which had been up to that time, a border area between the Slavs and the Germans. After several attempts the land was conquered in 1157 by Albrecht the bear (1100-1170), duke of Saxony, of the Askanian family, who founded the “Mark Brandenburg”. Shortly after that, Albrecht and the Archbishop of Magdeburg “Wichmann von Seeburg” called large numbers of settlers to the new Mark. Albrecht's sons and grandsons continued the skilful settlement policy aimed at stabilizing the young mark and expanding the country . The colonization of Fläming took place in several phases, with the Archdiocese of Magdeburg being the driving force in the western part and the Jüterbog area, while the Askanians were active in the south-eastern part.

Around 400,000 people streamed east in the 12th and 13th centuries. The settlers came to the country in particular from the Altmark , Harz, Flanders and the Rhine regions. The influx was most likely led via Magdeburg first to the Loburg region, then to Wittenberg, on to Jüterbog and, in the last phase, to Bad Belzig. The Flemings played an important role in the migration; After devastating storm surges in their own country they gladly accepted new settlement areas ,and with their experience in dike building contributed to the dikes of the Elbe and Havel, which were tackled in the 1160s. Many Flemings settled in today's Fläming and thus (later and indirectly) gave it its name.

Competition between the Askanians in the young Mark and the Archdiocese of Magdeburg soon developed over land control. The western part of the Fläming with Wittenberg and Belzig remained in the hands of the Askanians. Between 1190 and 1298 they exercised the feudal sovereignty over the extensive Belzig rule of the Counts Baderich, which included around 200 villages, before this area also fell to them as a settled fiefdom.

⁴ Helmut Assing: The beginnings of Askanian rule in the areas east of the Elbe. In: Brandenburg State History and Archive Studies. Festschrift for Lieselott Enders on her 70th birthday, 1997, pp. 21–35.

Albert the bear was engaged in other conflicts until his death in 1170. Otto I, his son, became the first margrave of Brandenburg. He was responsible for the first recorded construction in this area which was the Lehnin kloster in 1180.

2.1.2 The Teutonic order

The document that mentions the donation of this church mentions the “count Baderich of Belzig castle”.⁵ According to Melhardt, the count “became acquainted with the blessed activity of the Knights Hospitaller and Templar during a pilgrimage to the holy lands, and so soon after his return he made the donation with rich equipment.” However, in 1229 duke Albrecht I of Saxony (and margrave of Brandenburg) “confirmed the erection of the Kommende Dahnsdorf and also handed over to the Order the church”

This generous donation can hardly be attributed only to the count’s visit to the holy land, rather, the main reason is political. The Belzig region was on the border of the Askanian rule and at that time a contended area between them and the diocese of Magdeburg, so Albrecht I wanted a strong ally in this region to ensure his income,⁶ hence came the alliance with the Teutonic knights, who received control of the village and the church.

The Teutonic order⁷ was first established in Acre in 1191 as a “hospice” brotherhood, it was formed mainly of German merchants from Lübeck and Bremen for hospital services during the siege of Acre. During the rule of their Grand Master Hermann von Salza (1209–1239) the Order changed from being a hospice brotherhood for pilgrims to primarily a military order.⁸ At the time they acquired the Dahnsdorf church the knights were accompanying emperor Fredrick II in the sixth crusade on Jerusalem (1228). After that they received their first assignment from the pope⁹ in 1230 to launch a crusade against the Prussians to the east of the holy roman empire. That explains why the margrave found the order to be a good ally on the border of his territory.

The church stayed under the rule of the order until 1776 when they had to give up the whole territory for fear of intervention by the Prussian King Friedrich II.

⁵ Wentz, G.: Die Deutschordenkomturei, in: Germania Sacra, Leipzig, 1929, p 499-500

⁶ Koch, 1978, a history of Prussia, p25

⁷ “The Order of Brothers of the German House of Saint Mary in Jerusalem”, Van Duren, 1995, Orders of Knighthood and of Merit, p212

⁸ Forstreuter. Der Deutsche Orden am Mittelmeer. Bonn,1967, S. 12f.

⁹ “The golden bull of Remini that granted and confirmed the privilege of territorial conquest and acquisition for the Teutonic Order in Prussia”, Kamp, N ,1995, Retrieved 25 July 2020

In 2019 a delegation of the Teutonic Order was in Dahnsdorf at the invitation of the local community. Active support in rescuing the church was promised.¹⁰

2.2. The village

The Dahnsdorf village was a part of a settlement program for the newly established Mark, that was discussed in the previous section. It is closely connected to the church, their history is intermingled as well as their structure; the church was built from stones collected from the fields, and the village grew around the church.

2.2.1. Name

The village was first mentioned as “Danesdorp” which could be interpreted as the “village of the danes”¹¹, and given the intense migration to this area at the twelfth century from other regions of the empire, this interpretation could be reasonable. In 1575 it was mentioned as the "Compthurey Dahnsdorf"

2.2.2 Village structure

Dahnsdorf can be described as a church village¹², at least in origin, since it was first mentioned in the document of the church handover to the Teutonic knights. Therefore, it is a nucleated village where settlers built their houses near the center (church) and farms stretch from the central settlement outwards, in this case especially to the west in the direction of Kranepuhl village, and southwest towards Luhnsdorf village, as well as northeast towards Planethal village.¹³

The latest population survey of the village in 2001 counts 448 inhabitants.¹⁴

Total area of Dahnsdorf is 1262 hectares and it is distributed as follows¹⁵

Land use	Building and open spaces	Recreational areas	Traffic areas	Agriculture	forestry	Water surfaces	minning
Area in ha	31	1	46	1020	141	12	0

¹⁰ Markisches allgemein, Deutscher Orden hilft bei Kirchenrettung (Dahnsdorf), 19.06.2017

¹¹ Fischer,1970, Brandenburgisches Namenbuch, part 2 The place names of the Belzig district, p37/8

¹² <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 06/08/2020

¹³ Google maps

¹⁴ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dahnsdorf_11/08/2020

¹⁵ Gemeinde Planetal, Amt Niemeck Landschaftsplan, pp. 6-9,19-20

The forest consists almost exclusively of ostrich oak trees. the Tarpaulin river is the main water source and knatter is the secondary source.

2.2.3 Village economy

Due to the diversity of the Ice Age deposits in Fläming area, the resulting soil associations are very heterogeneous. Their productivity ranges from extremely poor in nutrients and sterile to very fertile. The whole Brandenburg March was described as “the sandbox of the empire” due to its sandy soil.¹⁶

However, the most productive and fertile soils can be found in the sandless belt between Bad Belzig and Dahme.¹⁷ Where Dahnsdorf is located.

Although agriculture and farming are the main economic activities in Dahnsdorf, the village also benefits from the watermills that transform the hydropower of the Tarpaulin river¹⁸ to mechanical power.

At least one water mill was standing in the 13th century, which is still called “komturmühle” today, referring to the local leader of the Teutonic order.¹⁹ The mill that used to grind and produce flour for centuries is still operative today, but for the purpose of trout rearing.

In 1527 the church paid an annual fee of 24 "frustra", which is a tax calculated on the income of the pastor, which suggests a very profitable benefice.²⁰

2.2.3 Land ownership

During the course of the 13th century, the margrave of Brandenburg was the landlord, administrative power was delegated to the “advocati” appointed by the margrave, who administrated the surrounding area from a town or castle. They collected taxes for him in return for their share of tax or land.²¹ Initially the counts of the Belzig castle²² carried out this service, then they were replaced by the Teutonic knights in 1229. The Teutonic order initially received 15 hooves²³ of land but were allowed to acquire more land in the Belzig area.

¹⁶ Koch, A history of Prussia, p25

¹⁷ the website of the State Office for Mining, Geology and Raw Materials of the State of Brandenburg

¹⁸ [https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plane_\(Fluss\)_11/08/2020](https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Plane_(Fluss)_11/08/2020)

¹⁹ Melhardt,1976 Märkische Dorfkirchen Part 28 Dahnsdorf

²⁰ Melhardt,1976 Märkische Dorfkirchen Part 28 Dahnsdorf

²¹ Koch, 1978, a history of Prussia, p26

²² Eisenhardt castle in Bad Belzig

²³ A Hufe in German is a specific area of land, although it differs from region to region. Koch, p26

In later centuries the power of the margrave over the area began to deteriorate and the knights were growing more powerful²⁴. However, it is not clear whether the margrave of Brandenburg still controlled the land after the 14th century or it fell completely under the reign of the order. In 1591 it was recorded that Dahnsdorf expanded to have 55 hooves of land.²⁵

3. Church construction process:

3.1. Date of construction:

Timber ceiling remains in the Nave from the time of construction provide a dendro date.²⁶ Since the edge of the forest is missing relatively around 1235 (+/- 10 years). This corresponds to the structural and historical conditions that make it possible to start construction on the complex around 1220.²⁷

The church was probably built on 2 phases as there is a construction joint visible in the south wall at the end of the choir and beginning of the Nave.²⁸

Therefore, it can be fairly concluded that the eastern parts including the apse and the choir were the first phase (around 1220), and the second phase was completed during the reign or control of the Teutonic order.

3.2. Client or Master

Based on the history of the occupation of the region by the Askanians, and the dating of the church construction, it can be concluded that the owner or client responsible for building this church is the grandson of Albrecht the bear, Albrecht II (1175-1260), Margrave of Brandenburg.²⁹ And in the second phase the local commander of the Teutonic order in Dahnsdorf.

3.3. Architect or builder

The architect of this church is unknown, however, some information about his method can be deduced from examining the building in section 4.1.

²⁴ Koch, 1978, a history of Prussia, p28

²⁵ Melhardt, 1976 Märkische Dorfkirchen Part 28 Dahnsdorf

²⁶ Dendrochronology: science of tree age, is a dating method in which the annual rings are associated with a particular, known growth time of trees according to their different width.

²⁷ www.askanier-welten.de/dorfkirchen/dahnsdorf/-05/08/2020_ Agthe: Kirchenarchäologie im Süden des Landes Brandenburg. In: Kirchen des Mittelalters in Brandenburg und Berlin. Petersberg 2007, 38-45.

²⁸ <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 05/08/2020

²⁹ Heinemann : Albrecht II (Margrave of Brandenburg) . In: Allgemeine Deutsche Biographie (ADB). Volume 1, Duncker & Humblot, Leipzig 1875, p. 243

3.4. Function

As soon as the Teutonic order received the church in 1229, they established a local “kommende” or command center in Dahnsdorf, that was headed by a “komtur” or local leader of the order. This kommende in turn was under the “Bailiwick”, or the regional leadership, of Brandenburg command.³⁰

The order commander was in charge of the higher and lower courts³¹, he also had all administrative rights and controlled the Vogteien (district of a reeve) and Zehnthöfe (tithe collectors) within his rule. In the commandry, all kinds of brothers lived together in a monastic way. Noblemen served as Knight-brothers or Priest-brothers. Other people could serve as Sariant brothers, who were armed soldiers, and as Half-brothers, who were working in economy and healthcare.³²

That means that the church served as a court and an administrative office as well as its sacred function, as they had an appointed pastor for religious services from the diocese of Magdeburg.³³

4. Church configuration

4.1. Construction Program

4.1.1. Building material

The church was built from fieldstone; Fieldstone is stone that occurs naturally in fields and is used as building material. The stones used in the Flaming area are often granite, gneiss or quartzite. They were found scattered near the surface, deposited due to the repeated advances of the Scandinavian inland ice during the Ice Age and is therefore largely built up from Ice Age sediments.³⁴

Fieldstone masons use the method of dry stacking, which refers to stacking dry rock on top of each other in such a way the stones interlock and stand firm without the use of mortar.

³⁰ Melhardt mentions the baileiwick of saxony, but Wikipedia mentions that the bailiwick of saxony was moved to Elmsburg from 1221 to 1260 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teutonic_Order#Medieval_organisation-10/08/2020)

³¹ Melhardt, 1976, Märkische Dorfkirchen Part 28 Dahnsdorf

³² Zimmerling: Der Deutsche Orden, S. 166 ff_ https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Teutonic_Order#Local_leadership

³³ Melhardt, 1976, Märkische Dorfkirchen Part 28 Dahnsdorf

³⁴ https://de.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fl%C3%A4mische_Dorfkirchen#Geologischer_und_morphologischer_Bau,_B%C3%B6den-11/08/2020

Using fieldstone is trickier than using quarried stone because the surfaces are not cut, and they require shaping. benefits to using fieldstone include that it has already aged to the colour it will be when used; it has softer, rounded edges; and best of all, it is usually free, or cheaper, than purchasing quarried stone.³⁵

Usually, farmers remove stones when ploughing their land to clear it for agriculture, they are used either in building farm walls, or transported to the village church as a contribution to its building process.

4.1.2. Components

The Dahnsdorf church is a four-part complex:

1) An apse (5.90m dia.), 2) Retracted choir (7.30m wide x 7.60m long), 3), Nave (9.80m wide x 15.10m long), 4) A western transverse tower (9.80m wide x 6.90m long). The east gable of the choir is made of bricks and is a little steeper than the east gable of the nave, which is built up with field stones in irregular layers. The church deviates magnetically 7-8 ° to the northeast from the ideal east-west direction.³⁶

In elevation the apse is about 5.00m high, topped with a conical roof with an angle of inclination 52 degrees. The choir is about 6.60m high and its roof has the same traditional angle of inclination, 52 degrees. The wider Nave is the same height (about 6.60m), but inclination angle is less steep. To the west the tower is about three times as high as the Nave reaching about 24.0m in its highest point.

4.1.3. Building planning

If axis lines are drawn running through the middle of walls and measured, a certain pattern can be noticed; most of the numbers are multiple of 1.1m: the nave is 8.80m x 15.40m (8x14), the tower is 8.80m x 5.50m (8x5), the choir is 6.60m x 7.30m (6x6 2/3), even the walls are 1.05-1.10m thick.³⁷

The prototype is one of the prototypes of this time: a single-nave rectangular hall with a retracted choir, round apse and flush closing West transverse tower. This prototype can be seen elsewhere in the flaming region.³⁸

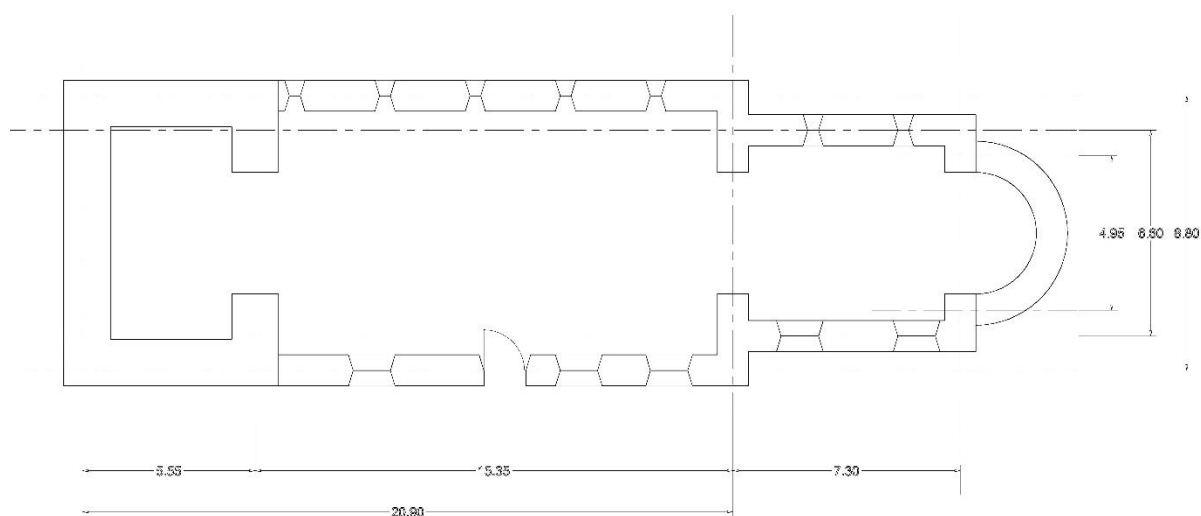
³⁵ Flynn, Brenda: The complete guide to building with rocks& stone, atlantic publishing, 2011

³⁶ <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 09/08/2020

³⁷ Drawing was done by the researcher based on description and photos

³⁸ Gericke, Schleif and Wendland (1974): Brandenburgische Dorfkirchen, p.143

That suggests that the layout was a simple prototypical plan, based on a simple measuring tool that was about 1.10m long, and drawn on the ground as axial lines prior to construction.



4.1.4. Wall masonry³⁹

The church's masonry work is the main aspect of admiration to this church by almost all art historians: "The neat execution of the masonry is remarkable, with mostly cuboid shaped field stones being used."⁴⁰ The layered stones were not fixed by mortar, but only plaster fillings were used to close the gaps.

Apse & Choir: The masonry of the choir is layered with well-squared field stones. Only in the uppermost part of the rising masonry does the masonry become irregular or the small field stones are no longer square. The choir seems to have been slightly increased; A few wedges occur. The east gable of the choir is made of bricks.

Ship: The ship also has a layered masonry design, but the field stones are somewhat less square and there are regular, but thin, broken layers. The east gable of the nave is built up with field stones in an irregular position. A clear construction seam can be seen in the eastern part of the ship.

Tower: The tower has the same masonry design as the ship. The regularity of the masonry only decreases significantly in the area of the sound openings; the gables of the tower are completely irregularly bricked. The wall thickness is approx. 105 cm.

³⁹ <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 09/08/2020

⁴⁰ Pfannenstiel (1991), *Feldsteinkirchen im Hohen Fläming - stone witnesses of Christian faith*, pp.5-7

This difference in masonry execution between east part (Apse and Choir) and west parts (Nave and Tower) is another piece of evidence to the two phases of construction suggested in section 3.1.

Nowadays, signs of decay were noticed on the tower wall because of humidity. Grout has been coming out and some stones fell off.⁴¹

4.1.5. Portals and windows

The round-arched community portal on the north side is blocked. In the south wall of the ship is the main arched community portal (still in use). The priest portal, also arched, is in the usual place in the south wall of the choir. There are no portals from the west side through the tower.

Apse: The apse has the usual three arched windows to the eastern direction, but the sides are plastered. The windows measure 140 x 65 cm, with steep slopes.

Choir: On the north side of the choir are two arched original windows with fieldstone sides. However, cloak and arch stones are only moderately hewn. The south side shows two enlarged plastered arched windows; the one above the priest portal is shorter. In the gable of the choir there is a cruciform opening in the extreme tip.

Nave: The ship has five arched original windows (140 x 65cm) with fieldstone sides on the north side . On the south wall there are three large, arched windows that have been enlarged in the 19th century⁴². Above the community portal on the south side there was an original window that was closed.

Tower: On ground level, one arched window exists in the south and north walls of the tower, both measure 75 cm in width. In the middle level there is a notch window on the west side. On the higher level of the bells there are two similar windows on the north and south sides, and three similar windows on the east and west sides (middle ones blocked to install tower clock on both sides). In the gable, there is also a small, upright rectangular opening.

4.1.6. Roofing

⁴¹ Streit um die Rettung der Kirche, Märkisches allgemein zeitung, 21/05/2018

⁴² Handbook of the German art monuments districts Berlin / GDR and Potsdam (Dehio / Potsdam) (1983), p.184

The tower has a transverse saddle roof, while the Nave and Choir have longitudinal saddle roofs. The Apse has a half conical roof. All roofs are covered with plain tiles.⁴³

Current roofing was done at the beginning of the 1990s with remnants of concrete blocks from GDR production. "Fired brick would definitely have been better," says pastor Jörg Frenzel. "In any case, the current roofing must urgently be removed and replaced."⁴⁴

4.1.7. Ceilings

The ship is flat-decked with exposed transoms and two longitudinal beams. The choir is also flat, but here only with transverse beams. The apse has a domed vault. the framework in the roof structure is made of well-preserved oak. Luckily, it has avoided damage that happened to most neighboring churches in the Thirty Years War.⁴⁵

4.2. Interior configuration

4.2.1. Interior style

The interior was renovated between 1960-1965 and walls were plastered.⁴⁶
The floors are paved with brick tiles.

Two semi-circular arches separate the spaces, one between the Apse and the Choir, and the other between the Choir and the Nave, traditionally called "triumphal arch". The arch between the Nave and the tower was closed during renovation.

To the west there is a wooden gallery standing on wooden columns, and dividing the vertical space.

The windows of the apse are partially blocked by the altar piece, making the choir area with its four windows the most illuminated part in the church.

The five original windows to the north of the ship are very high (4.0m sill), evenly distanced, but not centred to the wall. To the south of the ship, the original windows were enlarged and sloped wider to the inside and outside in the 19th century.

⁴³ <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 09/08/2020

⁴⁴ Rettung der Kirche Dahnsdorf beginnt jetzt. Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, 23.09.2019

⁴⁵ Rettung der kirche Dahnsdorf beginnt jetzt. Märkische Allgemeine Zeitung, 23.09.2019

⁴⁶ Pfeifer, 1997: Feldsteinkirchen im Fläming, pp.47 / 8

Tower: the window in the south side indicates that there was a room on the first-floor level of the tower.⁴⁷

Nowadays there are many signs of decay that can be seen inside the church and a new renovation project is being prepared by the Parish and the village community.

4.2.1. Interior furnishing

Apse: The altar is an early baroque⁴⁸ wooden altar with medallions on the side, in the middle there is a picture of the Last Supper. The altar table is a medieval field stone canteen. On the north side of the apse, the indistinct outline of a sacramental niche with a pointed end can be seen in the plaster.

Choir: The patronage stalls are on the north side of the choir. Also, there are box chairs for the Hufner (full farmers)⁴⁹ in the choir, and one parish chair with sliding lattice door, 17th century style, and a Chair with carved backrest, also from the 17th century.⁵⁰ Under the triumphal arch A heavy octagonal sandstone baptisery stands, belonging to the Gothic period (around 1400)⁵¹

Ship: The Dahnsdorf Church has a great rarity; a late 15th century triumphal cross group⁵², mounted on a beam across the triumphal arch, with the carved figures of st. Mary and st. John. On the south side of the ship at the triumphal arch is the pulpit with the pulpit staircase and sound cover, which has been redesigned in the 19th century with corner pillars and arabesque (tendrill-shaped) paintings and rests on a twisted column. The organ is on the west gallery with a simply designed brochure.

Tower: the tower carries two bronze bells, the larger one is one of the oldest in the Mark Brandenburg, cast around 1300.

5. Significance:

⁴⁷ <http://userpage.fu-berlin.de/engeser/potsdam-mittelmark/dahnsdorf/dahnsdorf.html>, 08/08/2020

⁴⁸ Pfannensteil, 1991, Feldsteinkirchen im Hohen Fläming - stone witnesses of Christian faith, pp.5-7

⁴⁹ Pfeifer, 1997, Feldsteinkirchen im Fläming, pp.47 / 8

⁵⁰ Handbook of the German art monuments districts Berlin / GDR and Potsdam (Dehio / Potsdam) (1983), p.184

⁵¹ Pfannensteil, 1991, Feldsteinkirchen im Hohen Fläming - stone witnesses of Christian faith, pp.5-7

⁵² Pfannensteil, 1991, Feldsteinkirchen im Hohen Fläming - stone witnesses of Christian faith, pp.5-7

We can compare the church with neighboring churches that follow the same prototype of a four parts building (Apse, choir, Ship, Tower) and belong to the same period of time, according to the history of the region. Such as:

- Dorfkirche Bergholz bei Bad Belzig. (Figure 7.1)
- Dorfkirche Borne. (Figure 7.2)
- Dorfkirche Grabow (Mühlenfließ). (Figure 7.3)

We can clearly differentiate several features:

- 1) The size of the tower is unusually big and high.
- 2) The choir is more elongated than the other churches.
- 3) Stone masonry is much more uniform and horizontally layered.
- 4) Some churches have a western entrance, but not Dahnsdorf church.

The tower of the church is clearly the most dominant feature of its form. It is almost as high as the defensive castle towers that the teutonic Knights were building at the same time in the lands they invaded in Prussia and Latvia.⁵³ About four storeys high, it is overlooking all the sides of the church. With its transverse setting, as if protecting the sides of the ship. The elongated choir with its stalls for high ranking noblemen and farmers can be understood as a setting for a panel of judges carrying on court sessions. And its stone masonry with small openings signifies a strong defensive structure.

Based on evidence discussed in sections 2.1. (History) & 3.4 (function), it can be concluded that:

the Dahnsdorf church was meant to represent the power of the rising Teutonic order of knights at that time. Its administrative and defensive functions are shown clearly through its form mixing a castle and a court with a church form. Many parts were added from all later periods, which can mean nothing but care and respect for the old church.

“What our history has handed down to us is worth preserving, has to be processed and made accessible to our descendants. The work of the order

⁵³ Turnbull & Dennis, 2011: Crusader Castles of the Teutonic Knights (2): The stone castles of Latvia and Estonia 1185–1560, bloomsberry publishing, p24

shows values such as helping, healing and defending, which are more relevant today than ever” says the spokeswoman for the Dahnsdorf community.⁵⁴

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7. Appendix (A): Photos

- 7.1. Dorfkirche Bergholz bei Bad Balzig. Eight kilometers to the west of Dahnsdorf, Photo from south side: fieldstone church, showing same four parts prototype of Dahnsdorf church, but less tower height, less choir length and similar portal configuration.
- 7.2. Dorfkirche Borne, 10.5 ilometers to the west of Dahnsdorf, photo from north east: Fieldstone church, carefully layered masonry, same four parts configuration, small square half-timbered tower and western portal.
- 7.3. Dorfkirche Grabow (mühlenfließ), five kilometers to the east of Dahnsdorf, photo from south east, Fieldstone church, same four parts prototype, recently repaired masonry and roof, square half-timbered bell tower, less choir and ship length but similar height.



Figure 7.1



Figure 7.2



Figure 7.3