



MAGNA CURIA (BETHLEN CASTLE), today Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilization in Deva

Around 17th century

Residence of the captain of the fortress (1581-1595) and the supreme captain of the Transylvanian army (1594-95), Francisc Geszti. It is first mentioned in a document on the tombstone of Maria Sulyok (who died in 1590), mother of the captain of the fortress, Francisc Geszti.

After 1615, renovations were carried out by Prince Gabriel Bethlen, led by architect Giacomo Resti da Verna, who expanded and transformed the castle into a Renaissance style (guarded by corner towers, characterized by triangular pediment windows and crenelated attics).

After 1640, the castle became the property of Prince Gheorghe Rákóczi I, who continued the transformations and extensions of the castle.

For a time, the estate was occupied by General Ștefan Steinville, commander of the Habsburg army in Transylvania, then by Count Giulio Visconti, prefect of the court of Empress Maria Elisabeta Cristina.

In 1743, the estate came into the possession of the governor of Transylvania, Ioan Haller (1692-1755). The new owner began an extensive Baroque modernization of the castle, hiring the well-known builder Konrad Hammer. Begun in the Renaissance, the concern for symmetry continued during Konrad Hammer's interventions in the 18th century. The plans of the fortress from 1713 and 1751 reveal the shape of the castle before and after the Baroque interventions. Noteworthy is the south-western turret, added during Hammer's reconstruction, which completes the southern façade, giving it the representative, symmetrical character of the main façade.

After 1872, the building served as the headquarters of the Hunedoara County, and since 1934, the castle has housed the County Museum.

Both on the ground floor and the first floor, the rooms are arranged in a row. Unlike the ground floor rooms, which are vaulted with semi-cylindrical vaults with and without penetrations, on the upper floor only the rooms located on the eastern and western sides of the castle are vaulted.

The exterior design is the result of 18th-century transformations. The main façade was treated in a colossal style, divided into approximately equal segments by flattened pilasters without bases, but with capitals detached at the level of the already well-flared cornice. The composition of the façade also includes the large roof, worked at the level of the loggias with friezes and dormers characteristic of French classicism, an image popularized by the architect François Mansart.

Today it houses the prestigious Museum of Dacian and Roman Civilization in Deva.