

Origins of architectural traditions of Pre-Romanesque central-plan churches in Bohemia. Case study: St. Peter and Paul Rotunda at Budeč.

Abstract

The submitted thesis opens a formerly discussed, but lately neglected question of the origins of architectural traditions of Pre-Romanesque central-plan churches in Bohemia. Compared to the earlier studies, this thesis approaches the problem more systematically and comprehensively, and with regards to the outcomes of recent research of individual central-plan churches.

The submitted thesis has two main chapters. The first chapter deals with the Pre-Romanesque central-plan churches in general. It is based on a catalogue of 115 central-plan churches of 8th – 11th centuries and from regions traditionally regarded as the areas influencing the earliest church architecture in Bohemia: the „West“ East-Frankish Empire, the „East“ Dalmatia and the „South“ Italy; for comparison, the neighbouring areas of the Great Moravia, Hungary and Poland are also included. By individual churches, information about physical appearance, surrounding settlement, function, context of the church foundation etc. are compiled. Analysis of all the collected data shows that the Pre-Romanesque central-plan churches in Bohemia show similarities to the churches in the peripheries of East-Frankish Empire: they were mostly founded at regional centres, hillforts, or ducal courts in territories just converted to Christianity. These churches were subsidiary church buildings with the functions of funerary, reliquary or memorial chapels.

The second chapter presents the case study of St. Peter and Paul Rotunda at Budeč, one of the earliest churches in Bohemia founded at the turn of 9th/ 10th centuries. The study deals not only with the rotunda, but also with another church at Budeč dedicated to Virgin Mary and investigates surroundings of both the churches. The major contribution is revision of the selected archive documentation from past excavations and carrying out a modern geodetic documentation of the churches. The revision leads to discussion upon some generally accepted interpretations, incl. the presumed hierarchy of the Budeč churches. In conclusions, Budeč is presented not only as a significant administrative centre of the emerging Přemyslid state, but particularly as a missionary centre (likely with connections to Bavaria) and as a support point of Christianisation of Bohemia; as such, Budeč corresponds to the model implied in the conclusions of the first chapter. Finally, tasks for future research on Budeč are defined: primarily a complete revision and digitalisation of the archive archaeological documentation, which is a key step forwards further processing of all the archive data and forward better understanding of the site.