

Abstract

The subject of this dissertation thesis is medieval architecture of mendicant orders in Silesia and focuses on convent churches of the Minorites and Dominicans. The chosen subject has not been hitherto treated in detail in specialized literature neither in Polish, German or Czech art history. Mendicant orders in Silesia are studied especially by historians who research into medieval history of these orders and, above all, the formation and development of order provinces.

The focal points of the thesis research concern preserved buildings of mendicant orders built in the period between the 13th and 14th centuries.

Every individual building is presented as a monograph in the form of an extended catalogue entry. The catalogue of medieval buildings of mendicant orders is the crucial part of this dissertation thesis. In this list, individual buildings are divided according to orders. First, we mention history of individual medieval towns and history of particular convent complexes. Further, we focus on the location of mendicant buildings within medieval urbanism of towns. Next, the formal analysis of each building follows defining the most important phases in building the convents, especially the medieval stage of building. Each entry contains an evaluation of cultural and historical importance of a particular building. The comprehensiveness of entries depends on the importance of each building, its present architectural condition, different quality and preserved technical condition of a building, accessibility of the treated building and an unbalanced state of present knowledge of a particular building connected with archaeological, preservation and building construction research. We also mention key literature with every building.

Each catalogue entry contains an illustrated supplement taken during the field research. Not only were individual buildings photographed, but in some cases they were also surveyed in space. Thus, the outputs of

some entries are projects for reconstruction of medieval stages of building using three-dimensional visualization.

The result of conducted research into Silesian medieval architecture of mendicant orders in Silesia is a synthesis of present state of knowledge and author's own documentation acquired during the field research. To understand the character and importance of mendicant architecture, it was
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necessary to explain the most important centres of Silesian medieval architectural production in a greater detail. Medieval architecture of mendicant orders was confronted with the preserved monument fund of other medieval architecture in the Silesian region, while our attention was paid mainly to brick architecture, which represents one of the special characteristics of Silesian medieval architecture.

When doing research into medieval architecture of mendicant orders in Silesia, it is necessary to commence with specific social conditions prevailing in medieval Silesia. We have also pursued history of both treated orders and their organization structure and rules. The problem of medieval history of Silesia itself is very heterogeneous and multilayered. Changing territories of individual Silesian principalities and the number of rulers reigning here is crucial for assessing medieval architecture. The establishment of mendicant convents and their support was primarily based on the will of the Silesian Piast princes. In fact, convents of mendicant orders could not exist in these surroundings without permanent support of patronage of the princes. Local social and economic conditions were very different from the situation in Western Europe where organization structure of mendicant orders was closely connected mainly with townsfolk. Churches of mendicant orders form a substantial part of medieval town urbanism. In Silesian medieval towns we can notice that churches of mendicant orders were established on the territory that belonged to a

prince. The location of mendicant convent premises close to residences of princes was almost a rule for medieval towns. Mendicant convents were gradually located in the most important towns of Silesian principalities since the mid-13th century. Towns in which churches of mendicant orders were situated served in most cases as residences of the Silesian Piasts who supported Minorites and Dominicans substantially. Besides the fact that mendicant convents presented important and intellectual centres of medieval Silesia, they were used as final resting places of the Silesian Piasts. Family mausoleums were founded both at Minorite and Dominican convent churches.

Architecture of mendicant orders does not form a homogenous unit.

Within the scope of the treated group of medieval buildings belonging to mendicant orders, we can notice differences both in a size of buildings and in a formal quality. In connection with a profession of evangelical poverty, churches were built in a simple, modest style, their functional character was

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accented. Nevertheless, some of the buildings are monumental at the same time. Mendicant churches in the Silesian region belong to a larger group of Silesian medieval architecture which is typical of combination of exposed brick walls and stone architectural details.

Mendicant architecture as a part of urban building can be compared with other urban development, mainly with parish churches. When comparing preserved buildings, we can find enough analogies not only with parish churches but also with churches of other orders. We can see fragmental similarities in process layout or using architectural details, which is related to the fact, that treated buildings were in a particular stage realized by the same building works. The study implies that Silesian medieval architecture of mendicant orders is rather diverse in using process layout, apportionment of material, character of using architectural

details which are in one case of high quality, in other cases below standard. Architecture of mendicant orders in Silesia reflected earlier architectural styles and at the same time, offered inspiration to new building realizations in their surroundings. Regarding formal and importance aspects, it played a significant role in the given region. In the scope of comparisons devoted to a large geographical circle in which we compare Czech, Moravian, Austrian and German mendicant buildings, some medieval buildings of mendicant orders in Silesia can be rightfully included in the group of important building realizations in a broad mid-European context.