

South Bohemian sacral architecture of the late Gothic 1450 – 1550 in the Rosenberg domain

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A group of late-Gothic churches, which keeps attracting our attention, was built in the Rosenberg domain during the reign of the Jagiellon dynasty. Limited archival material, results of dendrochronologic analyses and preserved buildings suggest that it was mainly building maintenance that was in progress in the Rosenberg domain in the second half of the 15th century. In the early 1480s the building of the new pilgrimage church in Kájov (1471/1474-1485) was coming to its end. And it was only then that big town parish churches in Trhové Sviny, Dolní Dvořiště, Hořice na Šumavě, Chvalšiny and Nové Hrady started being rebuilt or constructed anew almost simultaneously. Around 1485 almost twenty religious buildings were being built in the Rosenberg domain. They reflect the increasing economic prosperity and self-confidence of the town and village municipalities, corporations as well as individuals manifesting their wealth, success and strength. From a formal and ideological point of view it is possible to trace down a group of related buildings directly in this initial phase. They were probably designed by a single architect who is referred to as Master of Hořice presbytery. However, around 1495 we can notice an obvious twist and new morphology in several buildings proving that the above mentioned Master had either died or for some reason left the Rosenberg domain. His position was taken over by the chief Rosenberg stonemason Hanns Getzinger of Haslach who stayed in this job for the following three decades.

Between 1490 and 1500 a remarkably intensive building activity was in progress in the Rosenberg domain; 40 churches and their parts, a quarter of which were big and really important projects, were built simultaneously. The layout with two naves started to occur again in Krumlov and Kaplice regions under the influence of Kájov church. Also, parsonages were remodeled, town houses were reconstructed and extended, town fortifications were reinforced. By the end of the 15th century costly reconstruction of large farmsteads can be found in the country. This only proves the truthfulness of the words of the monarch Petr IV of Rosenberg from 1497: “... *in our domain in monasteries, churches, castles as well as cities and towns many buildings are erected every day...*”. Getzinger tried to establish an independent stonemasons' guild with the monarch's permission in the residential town of Český Krumlov in 1497. The guild followed the tradition and rules of the builders fellowship

with St. Stephan's Cathedral in Passau. The Rubik family of stonemasons from Český Krumlov, who worked at the South Bohemian building sites, originally came from the town of Haslach, which then belonged to the Rosenberg domain, and it may well be that this is where more stonemasons came from than we can reliably prove today. These brief reports and the morphology of the buildings confirm that the vast majority of the stonemasons, who are nameless to us today, trained probably directly at the cathedral guild, came to our country from the Passau area in particular at the end of the 15th century.

Around 1500 settlements as well as the countryside changed dramatically. Not only were churches and houses modernized, not only became the churches incredibly tall and huge, but mostly an unusual element spread – high towers for new bells which could not be hung in flèches or log belfries in the church roof truss any more. Until the last quarter of the 15th century a brick church tower could be found only in the churches in Bavorov, Cetviny, Český Krumlov, Horní Stropnice, Miličín, Trhové Sviny, Soběslav, Třeboň. The face of the church with two towers remained unfinished in Prachatice. From the end of the 15th century new bell towers started rising by the village churches and so new vertical elements and prominent landmarks, which the medieval man in the Rosenberg domain had been encountering very rarely (Blansko, Boršov nad Vltavou, Český Krumlov – Minorite Monastery, Dubné, Frymburk, Horní Planá, Chvalšiny, Kájov, Kaplice, Ktiš, Malonty, Mladošovice, Nové Hrady, Přední Výtoň, Rychnov n. Malší, Soběslav, Velešín, Vimperk, Záblatí), appeared in the countryside.

In the first decade of the 16th century the intensity of the building activity subsides. Big church buildings were finished while new projects were launched only occasionally. The related morphology of the portals and the vaults proves that an unknown stonemason was in charge of the rebuilding of a group of churches (Dolní Dvořiště, Rožmberk nad Vltavou, Horní Dvořiště a Horní Stropnice) in that period. These churches were under the auspices of the Cistercian Monastery in Vyšší Brod.

In the second decade of the 16th century we can see the realization of the flying ribs of Hanns Getzinger (Chvalšiny, Rožmberk) and buildings inspired by his work and designed at the turn of the century (Zátoň, Staré Město pod Landštejnem, Sv. Tomáš, Rychnov nad Malší, St. Martin im Mühlkreis, Rychnov nad Malší). Apart from these progressive vault constructions we encounter a retrospective use of Parlét net vaults. Building activity had practically ceased at most churches in the central part of the domain in those days and rare new projects were likely to be seen in the high-lying areas of the Šumava.

Just as the church in Kájov dominates the imaginary beginning of the varied late-Gothic building activity in the Rosenberg domain the church in Frymburk (around 1500) heads its very end. From the morphological point of view the church in St. Veit im Mühlkreis in Upper Austria is a close analogy. A lot of resemblance can be found in the two-nave church in the village of Schenkenfelden. The stonemason signs in Frymburk may prove the presence of the stonemasons who worked at the building sites of the Krumlov region churches for many decades, but the range of shapes applied differs from the churches in the other parts of the Rosenberg domain significantly (the early Renaissance shaping of the base, which can also be seen in the monastery church in Schlägl, can serve as an example). The subsidiary linkage of the Frymburk church with Schlägl suggests that the monastery as a sponsor played a key role when the stonemason master was chosen. It was probably this master who led the renovation of the Premonstratensian Monastery church at the beginning of the 16th century and later worked at the building of several other churches nearby. In the 1520 he came to Frymburk to handle the building of the new parish church where the local stonemasons worked according to his original patterns, but also with the use of the “family” morphology.

In the second half of the 16th century only slight alterations to vestibules took place in the churches in the Rosenberg domain. Alternatively the insertion of groin vaults in the neighbouring spaces was carried out. Late-Gothic building tradition was subsiding in the Rosenberg south at the end of the 16th century. After almost ninety years from the launch in 1583 the Rosenberg citizens had the three naves of the Rožmberk nad Vltavou church vaulted. The completion of the church of Peter and Paul in Nové Hradky in 1590 was the very last execution of a building with Gothic reminiscences. The barrel vault construction in the nave was covered with a seemingly medieval net with star shaped figures, the stone ribs of which protrude from the vault supporting pillars born by consoles decorated with purely renaissance masks.