

ABSTRACT

The Pilgrimage to Velehrad and its significance during the Modern Era of Czech History

The purpose of my thesis is to introduce pilgrimage as a phenomenon that can expose various discourses; strengthening and framing collective identity and manifesting various interest groups in the foreground of changeable historical contexts. To explain this religious tradition, I am using a concept of so called, 'social drama': Pilgrimage has a cohesive function as well as being a platform for social and political expression. With the help of archival sources, I focus on the pilgrimage to Velehrad in the period between the second half of the 19th Century and the latter period of the 20th. In the era of the Habsburg monarchy, we can see in Velehrad especially, a realization of the official state and church discourse in competition with nationally motivated tendencies for manifestation. During the First Czechoslovak Republic these events are used to present a newly Catholically based national identity under the influence of state and church. In the Communist era interest groups expressed their orientation against the state, but tendencies to manifest the ideology of the regime persisted unerringly in the background.