

ABSTRACT

The romanesque rotunda of the St. Catherine in Znojmo is one of the most important monument in Czech Republic and Central Europe. From 1962 it's registered as National Cultural Monument. Its unique murals with uncommon content have been subject of discussions of many specialists for almost two centuries and still haven't been satisfactorily explained.

Over the past centuries the colour of the paintings have lost its brightness, but individual elements of the Romanesque style still remain legible. Its verticalism and linearism is related to the European expression of Byzantine – like linear style from around 1100 A.D. Paintings with closest relations to this style were found in Salzburg and Prüfening near Regensburg in second third of the 12th century.

The decoration of the rotunda can be divided into two parts. The first is ecclesiastical, the second secular. In the ecclesiastical part belongs christological cycle in the nave of the rotunda (Annunciation of Our Lady, Visitation, Nativity and Annunciation of Shepherds in combination with Joseph's Dream, Adoration of the Magi, Killing of the Innocents and Flight to Egypt), paintings in apse (Majestas Domini in Deesis and figures of 12 apostels in arches) and in cupola (the quartet of Cherubs and evangelists inspired with their symbols and the Holy Spirit). The ecclesiastical part of the decoration is based on contemporary examples. Close analogies for compositions of scenes in paintings can be found in large area of european monument and book art. However, such models did not exist for the secular part.

In the secular part are depicted scenes refering to ploughman Přemysl, mythical founder of Czech monarch dynasty of Přemislide. These scenes don't have any similar patterns throughout the world, but the dynasty line of Přemislide has.

After comparison of European examples of political genealogies with scheme in

Znojmo it

was pointed out that the character of paintings in Znojmo is representative and it presents ideas of succession and memoria, which puts together living persons with dead.

Concept of paintings in rotunda is reflection of benefactor's aspiration to prague throne. Donator of the cycle of murals was Konrad I. from Znojmo. All decorations of St.

Catherine rotunda were made in Konrad's castle in Znojmo probably in late thirties of the 12th century.

Keywords:

Rotunda of the St. Catherine in Znojmo – wall paintings – Romanesque period – Přemysliden – 12th century