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Sborník prací Filozofické fakulty brněnské univerzity. F, Řada uměnovědná. 1964, vol. 13, iss. F8, pp. [19]-26

Stable URL (handle): <https://hdl.handle.net/11222.digilib/111004>

Access Date: 19. 02. 2024

Version: 20220831

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BÍŇA AND VÉRTESSZENTKERESZT

(Contribution to the problem of the area of rhineland classicism in Czechoslovakia)

In his commentary attached to E. Kluckhohn's inaugural dissertation W. Paatz¹ fixed for the 12th century Germany four main areas of the influence of the Upper Italian ornamentation, placing them north of the Alps. In the present survey I shall try to outline problems of another area, which is upon the whole geographically identical with Czechoslovakian territory. A firm foundation of the study of antiquating sculptor workshop in our country was laid by V. Richter,² whose enumeration of Corinthian and Composite capitals will be supplemented herewith by corresponding works of Bíňa in Slovakia and of Vertesszentkereszt in Hungary.

The architectural ornamentation of the Praemonstrate church in Bíňa was first studied by L. Gál, who believed the Composite capitals to have been made to the pattern of French models, while the cubiform capitals with palmette-decorated sides he ascribed to German influence.³ V. Mencl⁴ points to the southern origin of the acanthus leaves of antiquated capitals without however, answering the question which way these forms penetrated to Slovakia. Of late it was K. Vaculík who treated the figural sculpture of the church on a wider scale; here, besides the hunting scene, alluded to by L. Gál, we should like to point to the caryatid of the west portal, a classicist motif reminding us of the repertory of Worms-Regensburg sculptors' workshops.

Besides the inner pair of capitals of the west portal (a), whose style betrays in its Romanesque adaptation already a departure from the plasticity of the original Roman-Hellenistic forms, we find in Bíňa also a Composite capital with acanthuses reproducing tongue-shaped leaves that are not sufficiently worked out. Further there can be seen in the space under the tower a cubiform capital with palmette-decorated sides (c). The vivifying vegetational element of the cubiform capital is a feature of the German Romanesque development. Finally in the nave and the west portal there is a graspable early Gothic bud-shaped capital, associated with stylized palmettes as well as with those of classical formation (d).⁵ The capitals of this Praemonstrate church, taken together, present a mixture of orna-

mental types, representing different stages in the history of the style. We are on the border between Romanesque and Gothic architecture, the latter asserting itself first of all in ornamentation. It is in our country a typical phenomenon of the era when the Romanesque structure of buildings starts displaying for the first time signs of the new world view. The Composite capital of the portal presents two rows of acanthuses. The torus-shaped volute stalks in the side axes bear volute tendrils, enriched in their upper parts with small acanthus leaves pointing upwards. This tendril was not depicted on the above-mentioned capital with tongue-shaped leaves, where the volutes resembled much more the original form. The style of the capital may be denoted as glyptic even though this example does not represent the ultimate limit of this in reality Romanesque transformation. The individual character of the massive acanthuses begins to fade. The classical principle of tectonic construction, which was revived for a short time in the ornamental sculpture of Stauf cathedrals, is replaced here by something new. The single floral motifs were worked in the basic mass by a glyptic process of detaching material, contrary to the tectonic method of work. The acanthus leaves are framed in the mass, adjoining each other and forming together a kind of hermetic incasement of the core which is completely covered by them. The well worked out surface articulation is based on the principle of optical contrast. The reduced ground-plan type excepting, the architecture of the church in Biňa displays essentially Rhineland features through the mediation of the Bamberg milieu. This view finds support in the two-towered west façade, in the polygonal apses with conchae, as well as in the pear-shaped profile of the ribs. As to fixing the date of the building we have but one historical record at our disposal.⁶ In the charter of the Praemonstrate church in Šahy that "comes" Ondřej (Andrew) founded the Biňa monastery before setting out with King Andrew II on a crusade to Palestine (1217—1218). When taking into account the relations to German Romanesque architecture as well as co-operation with Vértesszentkereszt workshop we may fix a rather early date of building — about the beginning of the second quarter of the 13th century.

The Benedictine convent in Vértesszentkereszt⁷ was founded in the 12th century, and the monasterial church, now in ruins, was built according to Révhelyi somewhere about 1220—1231. The architectural ornamentation includes figural, zoomorphic, and vegetable motifs. L. Gál associates the ornamentation with the building and believes that both were 12th century products, assuming French influence upon the decoration. Only two bell-shaped capitals with pronounced Corinthian composition he ascribes to oriental influence.⁸ E. Révhelyi explains the antiquating ornamentation by pointing out its dependence on Byzantine-Oriental traditions, and similarly in the architectural structure he sees a French re-interpretation of Byzantine-Oriental impulses.

Rév helyi's references to Oriental influence on Hungarian ornamentation, which

resulted from a fuse of civilizations, find in the case of Vértesszentkereszt support mainly in the superiority of cultural and historical standpoints to those pertaining to the analysis of the style. Within the numerous group of Corinthian and Composite capitals we may distinguish three shades of style according to the manner of work. The first-group Composite capital, now placed in a park in Csákvár, still displays its classical tectonic character with intensive optical effects.⁹ The capital from the park in Tata is glyptic work, for the acanthuses are transformed into blocks of leaves strongly bending forward.¹⁰ The third group is represented by a capital of the vault springer in the west wall, still in situ.¹¹ Here the classical way of construction has evidently been abandoned altogether. The acanthuses, wrongly combined with palmette tendrils look like kneaded of a thick doughy mass. The bizarre articulation of the leaf surface is supplemented with circular engravings in annular frames. In the antiquating category we should include also a Corinthian composition whose acanthus leaves are worked without surface articulation in the form of tongue-shaped leaves.

The architectural ornamentation of the Bíňa Praemonstrate edifice manifests relations to the abbatial church in Vértesszentkereszt, now only in fragments. The occurrence of composite capitals in both buildings alone points to the existence of interrelation of the two workshops. The impressive capital from the Csákvár park is closely related to the capitals of the west portal in Bíňa, even though the glyptic transformation seems to have progressed somewhat further in the Slovak case. Also the antique composition scheme can be demonstrated in both buildings, the articulated acanthus being replaced by a simple tongue-shaped leaf. And finally we find in both places also the early Gothic bud-shaped capital. On the top of it, however, Vértesszentkereszt, strongly accentuates the figural and zoomorphic component of Lombardian-Rhineland origin, which in Bíňa, with the exception of the mentioned hunting scene and the supporting figure found no wider application. Even if we cannot declare the decoration of the two churches to have originated entirely from the same source, yet we may assume that the same sculptors participated in the ornamentation, this hypothesis being corroborated by typological exclusivity and also by the comparative vicinity of the two places. An important sign of the Rhineland provenience is the trefoil plan of the church gallery. The trefoil plan used to be joined to the transept and the nave with side aisles in western basilicas as early as in the pre-Romanesque era. Towards the end of the 12th and in the beginning of the 13th century this style was propagated in Low Rhineland and adjoining Netherlands by an architectural school.¹² This school asserted its influence also in remote places and its eastern promontory, so to say, is our Danubian example, whose head may be compared with that of the church in Klosterrath.¹³ The only difference concerns the proportions of the north and the south conchas, while in Vértesszentkereszt the scheme is enlarged by the apses of the transept.

I believe the antiquating capitals in Bíňa and Vértesszentkereszt to be related to analogical cases in Bohemia and Moravia. The following cases come into consideration:

a) The Praemonstrate monastery in Doksany¹⁴ is a filiation of Dunnewald in Low Rhineland. The threepartite nave of the basilica, constructed in the beginning of the 13th century, has a cross-form ground plan. The transept was originally vaulted with cupolas like in the Praemonstrate church in Knechtsteden. The east part of the edifice is apparently related to the step-form enclosures of the Cluny reform. In various parts of the building composite capitals are found. On the capitals of the crypt the acanthus is still placed tectonically in front of the bell-shaped core, but it is already ponderous according to northern fashion, this being manifest specially in the strong outward inclination of the upper part of the leaves.

b) V. Mencl pointed out the Corinthian capital of the crypt in the capitular church of Stará Boleslav.¹⁵ The acanthus is here consistently transformed in the glyptic fashion. The vertically grooved tops of the acanthuses fuse in one with the rest of the leaf mass. This, as well as the surface articulation, reminds us of the Olomouc capitals. Considering the aspects of the style and the present secondary application of the capital we may place the date of origin in the 1st third of the 13th century.

c) To the older two storied chapel in Zábοřί on the Elbe was apparently later added a narthex, whose portal and composite vaulting shaft capitals belong to our area. The composite capitals of the portal, on the other hand, approach more closely the ancient models, even if both are affected by Romanesque transformation. In the case of the vaulting shaft capitals the polygonal treatment of the upper parts is already combined with the rhythmical alternation of concavely recessed and plane sides. The surface finish presents an optically graduated relief. Apart from the antiquating trend, an indication of the Rhineland influence may be seen also in the relief on the portal of the narthex, depicting animals biting each other with human figures in between; this element is based on the composition principle of a continuous relief scene, finding its counterpart in Grossenlinden in Hessen.¹⁶ The antiquating work in Zábοřί — in spite of differing views found in literature — induces us to place it in the 1st third of the 13th century.

d) A reliable date is available for the Corinthian and Composite capitals of the bishop's palace in Olomouc, as it was erected soon after the fire that consumed the inner part of the castle in 1204.¹⁷ The glyptic transformation of the antique types increased here the pronouncement and graspability of the acanthus leaves.¹⁸

The starting point of the presented suggestion that there may have existed an itinerant workshop, which created the handicraft work in question throughout the Czechoslovak area, is the exclusiveness of the relatively pure type of the antique capital. Morphological investigation into individual formations based on the

identity of the capital type, of ornamentation themes, and of the method of working out the ornament — i.e. on the identity of structure — lives on hypotheses. The typological stability of the antique style finds its contrast in Transalpine individualism, finishing each capital in a somewhat different way.¹⁹ Many a time we may notice in the same building considerable differences in the antiquating procedure (Záboří, Doksany, Vértesszentkereszt), and we can hardly imagine another sculptor producing each of these somewhat different pieces of work. The capitals and the other decorative components represented as a rule the so called "apres la pose" decoration. The ornamenting sculptors migrated from one building site to another, and their number depended on the extent of the task. Upon the whole we need not think that the activity of such an antiquating workshop was everytime restricted to one stage of the building only. Yet the origin of the above-mentioned buildings was surely not such a complicated enterprise, as to make us enlarge upon this problem. The progress of such antiquating workshop, even if not always straight from place to place, is essentially analogical with the wandering of the later Normandian workshops. The activity of this itinerant workshop, when considering the chronological estimates of the buildings in question, may be put into the 1st third of the 13th century.

To demonstrate the travel of the ornamental sculptors, 3 cases will be selected from a large number of evidence, which certainly deviate from the Lombardian-Bavarian route.

1. The stage of style of the capital in BiĀa, Vértesszentkereszt, Olomouc, and Stará Boleslav corresponds to that of the Low Rhineland samples in Utrecht and Siegburg, where the glyptic transformation of the tectonic Roman-Hellenistic prototypes was accomplished;²⁰ they revived for a certain time in the crystallically pure form in the structural ornamentation of the imperial cathedrals. Basing on these analogies, one may suggest that it was Lower Rhineland that sent the ornamental sculptors to our country at the beginning of the 13th century.

2. V. Richter pointed to a convincing correspondence between the egg-shaped motif on the arch round the hexagonal windows of the Speyer cathedral crypt and the same motif on the moulding of the saddle of the window in Olomouc. The same is found on the saddle of the capital of the southern side aisle of the Lund cathedral.²¹ Rhineland is to be taken for the basis of style for Lund as well as for Olomouc, which is also a part of the suggested area. Considering the time, the question cannot be explained so that the Speyer workshop was simply dis-united, but that the Hellenistic forms were living in the Rhineland milieu up to about 1200.

3. The same Rhineland influence is found in the trefoil plan of the Vértesszentkereszt abbey which is accentuated by the occurrence of the antiquating capitals of the Ilbenstadt and Siegburg types in the same building.

Highly indicative of the direction in which the Rhineland ornamentation pene-

trated to our territory are the capitals of the Bamberg cathedral crypt presenting the Speyer acanthus in a more developed form.²²

The problem of the Romanesque Protorenaissance and its occurrence along the Rhine is dealt with extensively in literature. The works of R. Kautzsch, R. Hamann, H. A. Diepen and M. Aubert represent considerable contributions to the development of the question. Recently the relations between the German and the Italian architecture and ornamentation in the Romanesque period have been outlined by E. Kluckhohn and W. Paatz.²³ Italy sends sculptur workshops northwards in temporarily differentiated sequences. Kluckhohn denoted Speyer as the first hit (after 1083) and mentioned the Upper Italian parallels of the Speyer capitals in the anteroom of the Casale Monferato cathedral and on the portal of the church of Sta Maria Maggiore in Vercelli. Of course, it has to be noticed that the nearest now known Upper Italian occurrences, according to Kluckhohn's conception the style bases of the Rhineland classicist capitals, seem to be higher developed, as far as this development is understood as a way to its own Romanesque, i.e. glyptic transformation.

The sense of the Rhineland classicism in Henry IV's time has to be comprehended as a representation of the state. On penetrating into the milieu the imperial symbolism gets lost and only the form remains which undergoes the stylistic transformations. The second item holds good also for our countries. As it was shown in our examples, the glyptic reworking of the tectonic structure makes itself manifest in connection with the application of the optical principle. The contrast optical effect of these Proto-Renaissance forms, referring to the very core of the capital or merely to the surface finish of the acanthus leaves, is a matter of the later style period. Opticism, rhythmization, and the formation of configurations which are taken from the original contexts — this is the extreme boundary of the development of the Corinthian and Composite capitals in the Romanesque period.²⁴

Translated by S. Kostomlatský

NOTES

¹ W. Paatz, Nachwort zu der Abhandlung von E. Kluckhohn, Marburger Jahrbuch XVI, 1955, 115.

² Raněstředověká Olomouc, Praha 1959, 92—104.

³ L'architecture religieuse en Hongrie du XIe au XIIIe siècles, Paris 1929, 245 f.

⁴ Stredoveká architektúra na Slovensku I, Praha—Prešov 1937, 265.

⁵ L. c. T. XLIV/64-a, T. XLV/65-b, T. XLIII/63-c, T. XLVII/68-d.

⁶ Fejér, Codex hungaricus V/2, 138.

⁷ L. Gál, l. c. 79 f., E. Révhelyi, L'église de Vértesszentkereszt et ses rapports avec l'architecture hongroise de l'époque arpadienne, Acta historiae artium V, 1958, 41—70.

⁸ L. c. 89, fig. 46. E. Révhelyi showed that L. Gál's reference to the connection between the use of acanthus leaves on the bell-shaped core of the given capital and the "eye motive" of the oriental art-handicraft is based on an incorrect reproduction by Nác.

- ⁹ L. G á l, l. c. 88, fig. 45. In the lapidary of Esztergom, we find a Composite capital from the destroyed episcopal church in Esztergom, the capital being closely related to the above-mentioned capital of Vértesszentkereszt as well as to that of the portal in Bíňa. Dercsényi dezső, *A honfoglalás és az államalapítás korának művészete, A magyarországi művészet története* p. 24, fig. 12.
- ¹⁰ E. R é v h e l y i, l. c. 63, fig. 31.
- ¹¹ L. c. 63, fig. 29.
- ¹² A. W. C l a p h a m, *Romanesque architecture in Western Europe*, Oxford 1936, 174 f.
- ¹³ H. A. D i e p e n, *Die romanische Bauornamentik in Klosterrath*, Haag 1931, T. XII/3, 4.
- ¹⁴ D. L í b a l, *Románský kostel klášteera premonstrátek v Doksanech*, ZPP VI, 1942, 61 f. V. R i c h t e r, l. c. 100.
- ¹⁵ Zbytky nejstaršího kostela ve Staré Boleslavi, ZPP VII, 1947, 47. Mencl places the origin of the capital in the 11th century which seems to be too early in spite of the fact that theoretically it may be associated with any wave of the antiquating influence in the Romanesque era.
- ¹⁶ R. H a m a n n, *Deutsche und französische Kunst im Mittelalter I*, Marburg 1923, fig. 9, 10.
- ¹⁷ V. R i c h t e r, *O vzniku města Olomouce*, ČSPS LX, 1952, 85 f., id., *Raněstředověká Olomouc*, l. c. 92.
- ¹⁸ Here may be mentioned the reduced Corinthian capital of the Velehrad monastery. Considering rather less pronounced character of the example and the origin of the construction detail in the first stage of the Romanesque Velehrad, I have likewise derived this capital from the Bavarian milieu — here as well as in other places. Cf. J. B u r e š, *Účast wormsko-řezenského okruhu na stavbě románského Velehradu*, *Sborník prací filosofické fakulty university v Brně*, 1961, F 5, 157 f.
- ¹⁹ H. W e i g e r t, *Das Kapitell in der Baukunst des Mittelalters*, *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* V, 1936, 122.
- ²⁰ H. A. D i e p e n, l. c. 107 f. T. LXX/I, 2, LXXX/I. V. R i c h t e r, *Raněstředověká Olomouc*, l. c. 103. P. K l o p f e r, *Bauwerk als Bildwerk*, *Zeitschrift f. Estetik* 1937, 97 f. V. B i r n b a u m, *Ravennská architektura 1/2*, Praha 1921, 10—11.
- ²¹ R. M o l l e r - R a c k e, *Studien zur Bauskulptur um 1100 am Ober- und Mittelrhein*, *Oberrheinische Kunst* X, 1942, 59, fig. 18. V. R i c h t e r, l. c. T 10, H. A. D i e p e n, l. c. T. LXXX/2.
- ²² R. H a m a n n, l. c. 11, 83, fig. 137.
- ²³ E. K l u c k h o h n, *Die Bedeutung Italiens für die romanische Baukunst und Bauornamentik in Deutschland*, *Marburger Jahrbuch* 16, 1955, W. P a a t z, l. c.
- ²⁴ Technical difficulties prevented us from furnishing the paper with reproductions.

BÍŇA A VÉRTÉSSZENTKERESZT

(K otázce okruhu porýnského klasicismu v Československu)

Příspěvek se zabývá otázkou výskytu korintských a kompositních hlavic z románské doby na území Československa. Běží o Doksany, Starou Boleslav, Záboří a Olomouc v historických zemích, Bíňu na Slovensku a konečně o Vértesszentkereszt a Ostřihom v Maďarsku. Na hlavicích těchto staveb možno demonstrovat cestu od římsko-hellenistických tektonických prototypů k vlastnímu románskému glyptickému přetvoření. Slohový stupeň hlavic v Bíně, Vértesszentkeresztu, Olomouce a Staré Boleslavi, dále vejcovcový motiv římsy sedla olomouckého okna a konečně trojkonchová dispozice závěru ve Vértesszentkeresztu dokládají provenienci z oblasti

středního a dolního Rýna. Odtud se odebral na naše území někdy po roce 1200 antikisující ateliér, pravděpodobně cestou přes Bamberg. Přehledné pojednání klasicistních prací u nás je doplněním Kluckhohnovy a Paatzovy poslední klasifikace příbuzných prací na území románského Německa. Takto vymezený československý okruh antikisujících hlavic nachází se v analogickém postavení k porýnské oblasti jako okruh skandinávský. Toliko pronikání ornamentálních sochařů na sever je staršího data. Opticismus, rytmizace a tvoření nových, z původních kontextů vydělených seskupení, znamenají poslední meze vývoje antikisujících hlavic. Vznik těchto prací možno položit vzhledem k obvyklému datování příslušných staveb do první třetiny 13. století.