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The Significance of Baroque Gothic Architecture in the Czech Republic

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Abstract

The publication analyses selected works of one of the most important representatives of Baroque Gothic. Jan Blazej Santini Aischl represents an important personality in the world of architecture from the early 18th century. Architect Jan Blazej Santini Aischl got to the reconstruction now very prized buildings due to their devastation during the war period and the turbulent political situation. Publications so analyses the reconstruction of two monasteries, recognized as one of the most important and belong to the largest in the Czech Republic. This is a reconstruction of the Cistercian monastery church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Sedlec near Kutna Hora, and the reconstruction of a Benedictine monastery church in Kladruba. Jan Blazej Santini Aichel allowed to return and fame already surpassed the simplicity of its specific Gothic architectural style. It was also a kind of demonstration of religious orders, whose wishes fulfilled. Their compromise so created structures that combine elements of Baroque with Gothic elements. This combination, which Santini applied to the reconstructed construction, then used also in the construction of completely new buildings. **An example is presented in the publication Church of St John Nepomuk at Zelena hora.** It was originally a place of pilgrimage with world standards that represents sample construction, demonstrating the unique architectural style of Jan Blazej Santini Aischl.

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1. Introduction

Jan Blazej Santini Aichel was important architectural representative acting on the territory of Bohemia. In addition to architecture he was also an important mathematician with Italian roots. Prerogative of his work was not only the construction of new architecturally exceptional buildings, but also repair existing buildings. Quite unique synthesis of Baroque and Gothic, which represents a unique architectural style. He came from Prague, but worked mainly in Central Bohemia and East Bohemia with the exception of Zdar nad Sazavou which is located in the Region Vysocina.

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In its beginnings it was the renovation of existing buildings to which successfully continues with the implementation of a completely new projects. Jan Blazej Santini Aischl reconstructed and implemented dozens of buildings during its existence. The history of Prague's architecture is studied in many publications [19] [21].

The publication contains three representatives of its major buildings, these being two renovations and one new building. This is a reconstruction of the Cistercian monastery church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Sedlec near Kutna Hora, reconstruction of a Benedictine monastery church in Kladruby and the construction of a completely new pilgrimage church of St. John Nepomuk at Zelena hora. Santini interconnected Gothic and Baroque style but his work is also characterized by a number of other features described below. Gothic Baroque deals with a number of authors [4] [10] [15] and [17]. Buildings of this range are faced with a number of structural problems such as aggression groundwater [7] and others [16].

2. Implementation of Baroque Gothic in existing and new buildings

Basic principles of Santini works were applied not only to the following structures (Fig.1), but to many other, which in the publication are not listed. His buildings are characterized by a specific play with light as well as a significant reduction in the rich ornamentation. In parts not used rich frescoes decorating, magnificent decor and monstrosity, as is typical of Baroque buildings.



Fig. 1 Major renovations and new construction of architect Jan Blazej Santini Aichel [1] [6] [12] [22]

The symbolism plays a big role in Santini's buildings. It is presented with geometric designs. It was very typical for the former church. It is a triangular shapes, a star, etc. that included symbolic numbers. For example, it was a figure no. 3 representing the holy trinity or no. 5 i.e. the five wounds of Christ. Number six featured the Marian link and many others. Circle shapes used in his drawings dominant [9] [11].

Typical was also the use of so-called Czech vaults. It is a dome over a square floor plan. Its center is located in the middle of the floor plan. It includes a segmental sail vault situated above a rectangular layout.

Gothic brought simplicity and Baroque is characterized by its opulence and embellishments. This created an acceptable compromise between opulence to garishness and simplicity to excessive coldness buildings connected in the Baroque Gothic. Gothic Baroque is understood in a number of buildings as well as the return and departure from saturation of the Baroque, representing a rich stucco decoration and luxury. It is therefore not surprising that the Gothic survived until the 18th century. The architecture of these buildings is the subject of study [2] [5] [13] and [14].

Santini had success not only in the case of religious buildings. He also created many buildings on order of aristocratic families for example Waldsteins or Kinsky family.

2.1. Cathedral of the Assumption of Virgin Mary and St. John Baptist in Sedlec near Kutna Hora

Cathedral of the Assumption of Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist is located in Sedlec near Kutna Hora (Fig. 2), east of Prague. Construction of the cathedral began after the year 1282, by an unknown master [12]. Silver mining accounted economic development, which enabled the construction of the cathedral. It was originally a Gothic cathedral. This building was the first opportunity for self-realization of the young architect Jan Blazej Santini Aichel. The importance of this cathedral evidenced by the fact that it was listed on the UNESCO World Heritage in 1995. It is the oldest Cistercian monastery in the Czech Republic. The original Romanesque church was destroyed in the 13th century. The significance of the cathedral is also listed in the [8] [18].

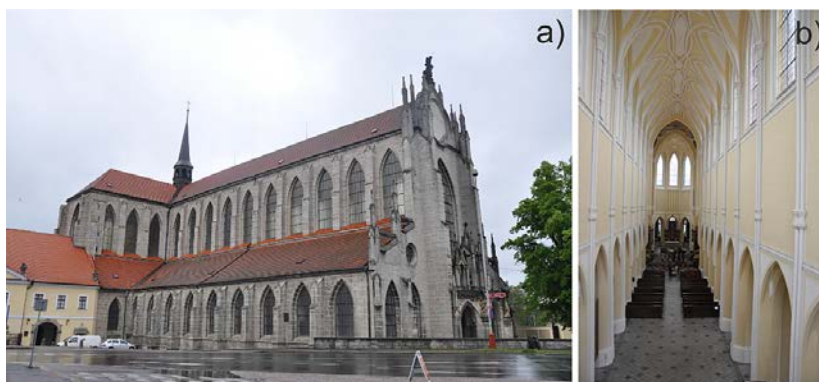


Fig. 2 Cathedral of the Assumption of Virgin Mary and St. John Baptist in Sedlec near Kutna Hora: a) Interior, b) Exterior (Photo by author)

Today's form of Gothic cathedral is a five-aisled basilica with a three-nave transept. The length of the temple is 87 meters. The main nave is significantly dominant compared to lateral naves. In comparison with other cathedrals not been constructed outer supporting system, triforium or double tower frontage. Support system is ingeniously hidden. During the Hussite wars the monastery was considerably damaged. Santini reconstructed the monastery in style, Gothic Baroque around the year 1702. Due to the fact that the reconstruction took place under the leadership of his predecessor before starting work with Santini, he added, only a portion still not renovated and added some new features. It was a change of the western facade of the temple. He also added long rests on the corner, ending with pinnacles. Above Gothic window below the top of the peak located four-leaf. The entrance portal was accompanied by a portico with three canopies. Santini used a completely unique building element known as the segmental sail vault. It was used on the clerestory chapel aisles of the church and also in the area of the crossing of the transept and nave. Building a self-supporting spiral staircase was quite another unusual feature. Further inside was decorated barrel vault of the main nave circling stucco ribs. Conoid in structures are discussed in [20].

2.2. Benedictine monastery church in Kladruba

Benedictine monastery church in Kladruba (Fig. 3) was founded in 1115. The church was originally built in the Romanesque style, and he was later rebuilt using Gothic elements in the first half of the 13th century. It was a three-aisled basilica with two towers on the east and three apses. The church suffered major damage during the Hussite conquest in 1421, fire and also a period of the Thirty Years War. The temple is unique for its size. It is the third largest church in the Czech Republic, while temple in Sedlec is the second largest. The church belongs among the important works of Santini, which was rebuilt in the Gothic Baroque style. Reconstruction began in 1712 and lasted until 1726 [6].

The total length of the church is 93 meters and an internal height of the dome is almost 40 meters. Eight-pointed star on the floor of the church is located at the crossing of the nave and represents a symbol, typical of Santini's work. It was also installed a set of altars and numerous wooden statues of larger than life choir stalls and the installation of statues in a mausoleum. Crossing of naves was roofed by a massive dome, which at that time was very unusual. It grew up instead of two eastern towers. There was a connection trifoliate conclusion and shortening the nave of 66 meters. There was also built a circular staircase leading to the attic of temple. It was also exposed to the transept. In the exterior dominates almost hundred-meter main nave. The monastery is interwoven with Marian symbols. Many changes occurred also in the church after the death of Santini. Monastery in Kladruba has not yet been inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List, but became a national cultural monument. A very important part of the monastery is also a new convent of Kilian Ignac Dientzenhofer. Since its inception, it was the richest monastery in Bohemia.

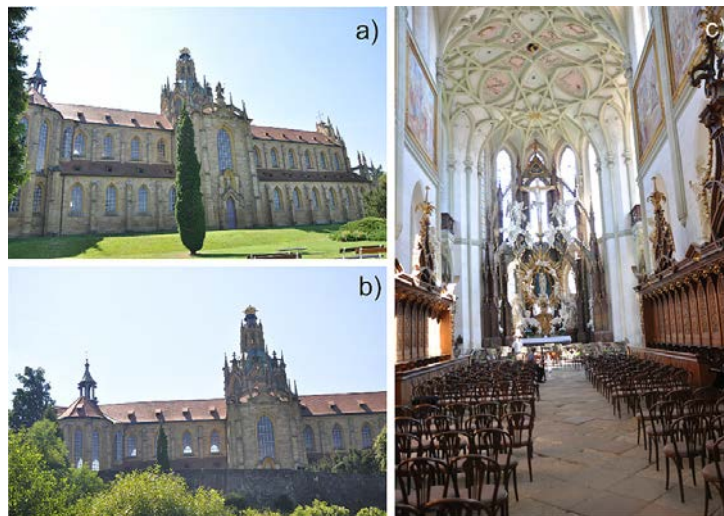


Fig. 3 Benedictine monastery church in Kladruba: a) Exterior, b) Exterior, b) Interior (Photo by author)

2.3. Church of St. John Nepomuk at Zelena Hora

Pilgrimage Church of St. John Nepomuk was built between 1719 to 1722 at Zelena Hora near Zdar nad Sazavou. This is the most important and most complex construction project of Santini. This is evidenced also by the fact that the building was registered on the UNESCO World Heritage List in 1994 [22]. It was built according to the pattern of his previous works which was reconstructed in the style of Baroque Gothic. The impetus for the construction was celebration of St. John of Nepomuk. Geometry of the entire construction is based on the shape of a circle and its ground plan shows the five-pointed star. It is a unique building not only in the Czech Republic but of the world. The chapel is surrounded by cloisters with five gates and five chapels. Ambit is a typical feature of Baroque pilgrimage places, serving as a shelter for pilgrims and for prayers. The church is the subject of many studies, such as [3].

The entire structure symbolically represents no. 5, and it also occurs the no. 3, 10 and other, related religious symbols also to the person of St. John Nepomuk. Santini's sense of symbolism and iconography is more than obvious.

After circuit church rotates five chapels with triangular floor plan and five chapels with oval shape. The church itself is centralized with a strong verticality that bound eyes towards heaven.



Fig. 4 Church of St. John Nepomuk at Zelena Hora: a) Exterior, b) Exterior, b) Interior (Photo by author)

The inner space of the chapel is covered by a dome with lunettes carried by ten pillars. The upper part of the church consists of two superposed galleries. In the church we see sophisticated play of light, it is called the sacral light. Into the side of the church penetrates abundant light, while the central part of the church depends on the amount of light coming from the right part of the clerestory. The main altar reaches up to the second gallery. On the first floor there are bleachers, corresponding to the ground floor. On the second floor is a gallery.

The originality of the whole building is already apparent at first glance, with its wealth of shapes, originality of Santini's approach and displayed symbolism.

3. Conclusion

Creation of Jan Blazej Santini Aischl belongs to important buildings from the early 18th century. The significance of his work is reflected in a number of architectural gems, especially in Central Bohemia and Western Bohemia. Its architectural style was influenced by a number of events. Reconstruction of existing buildings which was his first project is probably among crucial for its future work. Due to the requirements for their reconstruction was to create a completely unique building style Gothic Baroque. Gothic Baroque brought a whole new dimension. This was due to a combination of baroque, oversaturated its pretentious and rich decoration in combination with the simplicity and smooth shapes of Gothic. Thus a more sober architectural style, which represented a kind of return to the simplicity and became a monument or a celebration of the Gothic period.

Kutna Hora. It is the second largest temple in the Czech Republic and one of the first works to which the architect participated. He began reconstruction in 1702. It is the oldest Cistercian monastery in the Czech Republic. Silver mining has become crucial of the economic potential of the construction of the monastery. Due to the fact that the monastery has been partially restored, Santini had to settle for only a partial repairs. Santini took buttresses ending with pinnacles and changed west facade. The entrance Gothic window had installed a so-called four-leaf. On the construction was also used so-called segmental sail vault. It was applied to the clerestory chapel but also in the aisles and at the crossing between the transept and nave. A significant new element was the construction of a self-supporting spiral staircase or the use of semi-circular vault of the main nave decorated with swirling of stucco ribs. The building is since 1995 under the protection of UNESCO.

Benedictine monastery church in Kladrby is its later work in which also participated in the framework of reconstruction. It is the third largest monastery after monastery in Sedlec. Santini worked here from 1712 to 1726. It was originally a Romanesque basilica, as in the case of Sedlec. Santini designed a set of altars and wooden statues, larger than life and choir stalls. Unlike the previous building, he could realize considerable here. This is evidenced by

the construction of a massive dome. Dome had at that time quite unusual size and replaced the original tower. Also, there were built circular staircase, there was built transept and trifoliate endings in the eastern part of the monastery. He was not listed among UNESCO, although the significance of this cathedral is at least the same as if the cathedral in Sedlec. It is a National monument.

Santini could fully realize until the construction of entirely new buildings. Church at Zelena Hora was based on the celebration of John Nepomuk in the years 1719 to 1722 which was entirely under the direction of Santini. He applied his distinctive style into this new building due to its previous experience with a combination of elements of Baroque and Gothic. The building represents a completely representative sample Santini's style. The construction includes the entire set of symbols and icons, secondly implemented in parts of the church, but also in the cloister, bordering the church. It is obvious that the author based on circles, especially when looking at the plan of the whole area. He often worked with the number three represents the Trinity, with number five involving five wounds of Jesus Christ or five stars that appeared over the dead body of John Nepomuk. Or number six indicating Marian symbol and many others. The Church of St. John Nepomuk became important on a global scale. All three works of Jan Blazej Santini Aichel became an inspiration and model building architecture but the greatest recognition came at the time at present.

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