**Romanesque architecture**

The Romanesque style prevailed in architecture and visual arts in the countries of Western, Southern and Central Europe in the 11th-13th centuries. century. Eastern Europe was influenced by the Byzantine style at the time.

In architecture, it was a gradually developing, more or less uniform tradition of constructing buildings and using materials within Europe and a given era. The term "Romanesque" includes an attempt to express the relationship of this building style to the building style of ancient Rome, by which it was largely inspired and shared some building elements with it.

The relative prevalence of the style and the mutual similarity of building structures across Europe was made possible by the relatively considerable mobility of the medieval people. Despite many modern ideas about life before the Industrial Revolution, not only nobility and knights, but also merchants, craftsmen, monks and missionaries traveled through Europe, spreading and sharing, among other things, the knowledge needed to construct buildings.

**Characteristic features of the style**

The development of Romanesque architecture and art was closely linked to the completion of the Christianization of Europe, as the new believers needed spaces where they could gather for liturgical ceremonies and sermons. Two basic types of churches were built - basilicas and rotundas. Both had their precedents in ancient architecture. The basilica was a rectangular building, the interior of which was divided longitudinally by a colonnade into three or more naves. It originally served as a marketplace or a courthouse. In the Christian temple, the main nave was considerably higher and wider. On the eastern side, it ended with a semicircular niche - the apse, in which the chancel was located. In the center of the chancel stood the altar where mass was celebrated. The interior of the basilica was illuminated by windows located in the upper part of the walls that defined the central nave. Towers used to be part of the building. Also the rotunda, a simple building with a circular plan with a conical roof, was already known in antiquity. The Romans used them mainly as tombs. Christians began to build them in places where they commemorated significant events in the lives of saints or their martyrdom. Rotundas used to have one or more apses. A typical Romanesque building is represented by Benedictine monasteries (for example, the famous abbey in Cluny), whose basilica used to be an integral part.

Secular buildings, especially castles, were also built in the Romanesque style. They served primarily as fortresses to defend against the enemy, so great care was taken in their defense system. It consisted of walls, moats and towers. Part of the castle was a residential palace. Monarchs or their administrators resided in it, later the nobility also began to establish fortified residences.

Stone began to be used for the construction of Romanesque churches and castles, while in some countries (including Bohemia and Moravia) buildings were mainly made of wood. Irregular and unevenly sized pieces of stone were joined together with more mortar. The walls used to be thorough, several meters wide. It is not surprising that the poorly articulated buildings had a massive and cumbersome impression. Among the typical features of the Romanesque style is the semicircular arch. We can find it at entrances and windows, but also as a barrel vault. It was used alongside flat beam ceilings to bridge the interior spaces. In addition, the builders already knew the cross vault (supported by two arches). The weight of the vaulted ceiling rested on the massive walls and columns, which were topped with decorative capitals. Heavy masonry did not allow wider door or window openings to be built. The windows of towers and large halls in castle palaces used to be grouped two to four next to each other, separated by columns. The entrances were decorated with artistic portals.

The interior of the churches was mostly plastered. The architecture was suitably complemented by sculptural decoration and wall paintings. They depicted scenes from the Bible or from the lives of the saints, bringing them closer to believers who could not read. Similar themes also appeared in the decoration of manuscripts. The painting decoration of books and bookplates, richly decorated with carved wood, precious metals and precious stones, belong just like jewelry to the typical manifestations of the Romanesque style in the field of arts and crafts.

The interior of the castles was still relatively simple back then. It consisted of basic pieces of furniture. An important thing was the chest, in which the necessary items, including clothes, were stored. It was also used for sitting or lying down. The bed, table, chair and stool had simple shapes. It was lit with candles or beams fixed in candlesticks. The main source of heat was an open fire in the fireplace.

**Romanesque architecture in Bohemia**

Romanesque architecture in the Czech Republic forms the first phase of the development of architecture in the Czech territory with preserved buildings. Only archaeological finds have survived from the previous, Great Moravian phase. In the period of the Romanesque style, the first stone buildings were built in the Czech Republic, mainly churches and monastery buildings, and towards the end of the period also the first castles and urban buildings (fortifications, houses). Buildings of Romanesque architecture were created on Czech territory from the end of the 9th century to the middle of the 13th century, when the Gothic style slowly began to gain ground.

First buildings (10th century)

At the end of the 9th century and in the 10th century, the first stone buildings were built in the Czech Republic, of which, with a few exceptions, only remnants have survived, often hidden under later reconstructions.

After the baptism of the Přemyslov prince Bořivoj (†889) in Moravia, the Přemyslovians built the first stone churches on their estates. At the same time, they continued to develop the architectural tradition of Great Moravian buildings - a rotunda with an apse was a common form. The oldest stone building in Bohemia was the church of St. Kliment in Levé Hradec, after the transfer of the seat of the Přemyslov family to the Prague Castle, then the Church of the Virgin Mary. Two more church buildings were then built at Prague Castle.

The first was the Basilica of St. Jiří, completed in 921, the first larger stone building in the castle. During Wenceslaus, the rotunda of St. It welcomes with four apses on a cross plan.

Outside Prague Castle, the first churches were built on the hillforts of Vyšehrad (not preserved - the rotunda of St. John the Evangelist,[1] the church of St. Kliment, the basilica of St. Lawrence), in Staré Plzeň (rotunda of St. Peter, still standing) and Stará Boleslav ( unpreserved church of St. Cosmas and Damian). The rotunda of St. also dates from this period. Peter and Paul on the hillfort in Budč, the oldest preserved building in the Czech territory (with a later added tower); close to this rotunda are the uncovered foundations of another building from the same period, the Church of the Virgin Mary.

The Slavníkovs also belonged to the important families of the 10th century (until the murder of the Přemyslovs in 995). Also at their seat in Libica, the first church was built sometime between 962-995; in contrast to the Przemysl territories, they did not take over Great Moravian influences, no rotunda is known from their territory.

In the years 973–976, a bishopric was established in Prague. The first bishop was Sas Dětmar I, thanks to whom the first German architectural influences came to the Czech environment. They manifested themselves during the modification of the church of St. Welcome to Prague Castle, which was elevated to a bishop's castle and also during the reconstruction of the Basilica of St. Jiří, where a house of Benedictine ladies was established for unmarried princely daughters.

Domestication of the style (11th century)

During the 11th century, the Romanesque style was domesticated in the Czech Republic. A significant step is the arrival of the Benedictines, the first monastic order on Czech territory. Mainly monumental buildings (basilis, monasteries) are created, which feature architectural innovations such as a crypt, a two-choir arrangement or a transept. At the end of the 11th century, the domestic architectural tradition gradually developed, and a new group of magnates became independent and built their own churches on the lent territories.

The first monasteries - Benedictines

Already at the end of the 10th century, representatives of the first monastic order, the Benedictines, came to the Czech principality. They built - often on the sites of abandoned Slavic forts - new monasteries, usually with a monumental monastery church in the form of a three-aisled basilica. The first monastery on Czech territory is the nunnery of St. George in Prague Castle, the oldest male monastery in Břevnov (founded in 993), from whose building the Romanesque crypt of the basilica (before 1045) has been preserved; as a second monastery, Ostrov u Davle was founded in 999 (today only the remains of the foundations). In 1032, Oldřich founded the Benedictine monastery in Sázava (a group of monks settled around the hermit, the future St. Prokop from 1009), whose ground plan (tetraconch, square with four apses) has been preserved from the first building. Other Benedictine monasteries were established in Opatovice nad Labem (promoted to an abbey in 1086), etc.

Benedictine monasteries were also established in Moravia; the first was the monastery in Rajhrad in 1048, followed by the monastery in Hradisk near Olomouc in 1078 and the monastery in Třebíč in 1101. However, no remains of the original simple monastic basilicas of this period have been preserved.

Buildings of Přemyslovci

Important buildings, some of which have survived to this day, were created by the Přemyslov family. At Prague Castle, during the reign of Břetislav I (1034–1055), the St. Vitus Rotunda was rebuilt, completed in 1039, and the castle was also fortified. The most important building, however, was the new building of the bishop's basilica of St. Vít, Václav and Vojtěch (predecessor of today's cathedral). Its construction began in 1060, it was consecrated during the reign of Prince Vratislav II. in 1096. It was a monumental three-nave basilica with two choirs (following the example of German buildings such as the Augsburg basilica) and an eastern transept. Ornamental motifs of Northern Italian origin appeared for the first time in the Czech Republic on the construction site. At the same time as the construction of the basilica, the bishop's palace was being rebuilt, parts of which have been preserved in the neighborhood of the cathedral to this day.

Prince Wroclaw II. moved to Vyšehrad due to frequent disagreements with his brother, Bishop Jaromír. Thanks to this, significant construction activity developed here - fortifications, a bridge and the reconstruction of the princely palace were built. Two Romanesque basilicas were also built; basilica of st. Peter and Paul gave way to later reconstructions, from the three-nave basilica of St. A small torso has survived of the Laurel (built according to Alsatian models).

Outside of Prague, Břetislav I founded the chapter in Boleslav, during which the three-aisled basilica of St. Wenceslas (consecrated in 1046). The church was later rebuilt, the Romanesque crypt was preserved outside the original plan (its older part is from the 11th century, glazed in four rows of four columns with cubic capitals). Prince Spytihnev II. (1055–1061) founded a chapter in Litoměřice in 1057, where the basilica of St. Štěpán (demolished during the Baroque reconstruction in the 17th century).

The rotunda of St. is one of the oldest monuments in Moravia. Kateřiny (originally the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary), built on the Přemyslovsk municipal castle in Znojmo; it was probably enriched with unique painting decoration at the end of the 11th century.

The first manor churches

From the second half of the 11th century, the core of the future nobility began to form from the group of magnates around the prince. Individual magnates obtain land from the king for lease, on which they build their palaces. Among the otherwise mostly wooden buildings, new stone churches stand out here. Large basilicas were built in some courtyards (Litomyšl, Prosek, Sázava - not preserved), but mostly these were small buildings that did not differ significantly from older churches; the only new element is the decoration of the Romanesque portals. Already from the 11th century, a tribune (according to German models, in a tower) often appears in the western part, where the family of the grand duke participated in religious services.

At that time, most of the small churches were built around Prague and in Central Bohemia. Examples include the rotunda of St. Longina na Rybníček (today Nové Město), the rotunda in Krušín (today Pankrác), the rotunda in Týnec nad Sázavou (near the preserved tower of the castle), churches in Hostivař, Dobřichov (the sacristy of today's church), Čáslav (the church of St. Michael, preserved as a sacristy) dean's church) etc.

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Peak phase (12th century)

The twelfth century is the peak period of the Romanesque style in the Czech lands. Above all, churches are being created, the network of which will continue to grow significantly (especially in central Bohemia). Furthermore, the number of magnates who, at the end of the 12th century, took over the lands granted under Prince Konrád (1092) into their ownership - a real nobility was created. Monumental buildings often grow in their backyards. The boom in construction activity occurred during the reign of King Vladislav II. (1140–1172) and his contemporaries, Bishop Daniel of Prague and Bishop Jindřich Zdík of Olomouc. New monastic and knightly orders were called to the Czech lands – Premonstratensians, Johannites and above all Cistercians, whose monasteries further enriched our architecture and also brought new models and ideas.

Buildings of the Přemyslov family (Soběslav, Vladislav II.) and bishops

The rebuilding of Prague Castle began under Soběslav (stone wall with towers, castle palace), but the greatest activity occurred under King Vladislav II. The castle palace was rebuilt according to the model of the German falcons, the basilica of St. George. Important buildings were also built outside Prague Castle, especially the first stone bridge in Prague, called after Vladislav's wife Juditin most, with the preserved Malostranská bridge tower (with a monumental Romanesque relief).

Exhibition episcopal residences were created in Moravia at that time. In Olomouc, Jindřich Zdík built a new three-nave basilica of St. Wenceslas (1100–1131), to which he transferred the seat from the (now defunct) church of St. Peter. The masonry of the basilica forms the basis of today's dome; parts of the bishop's palace with beautifully profiled group windows (Rhinen influence) have survived to this day. A similar dome at Brno Castle (today Petrov) later disappeared.

Monasteries, new monastic orders

At the beginning of the 12th century, the construction activities of the Benedictine order continued. In 1115, Prince Vladislav I founded a monastery in Kladruby; the construction of the monumental three-nave basilica of the Virgin Mary with a transept lasted until 1233 (it has survived to this day in a sensitive baroque arrangement by J. Santini). In Ostrov u Davle, after the fire in 1137, the construction of the monastery basilica, completed after 1180 (today only the foundations), is underway. The basilicas of other Benedictine monasteries in Teplice (female, founded 1158), Louňovice pod Blaníkem (founded 1159), Postoloprty and Vilémov (Havlíčkobrodsko, founded 1120) were completely destroyed during the Hussite wars.

During the reign of Vladislav II. new monastic orders were called to us. In 1140, a Premonstratensian monastery was founded in Strahov, Prague. A monumental three-nave basilica with a two-tower facade, a transept in the east and three apses was built here. The building was consecrated in 1182, a number of elements have been preserved in the Baroque reconstruction to this day. The church, built on the model of German Premonstratensian basilicas, became a model for a number of younger buildings. In the same year (1140) the Premonstratensian monastery in Doksany was founded. The construction of the local three-nave basilica showed Italian patterns for the first time (apses on the sides of the side nave, a tower or dome above the crossing, blind arcades as a division of the wall), and architectural sculpture was prominently used. The Doksan building smelter was of great importance in northwestern Bohemia, where the so-called #Doksan group of churches was created under its influence (see below). In 1148, the Premonstratensians were succeeded by the Benedictines (from 1139) in the monastery in Želiv, where they built a magnificent three-nave basilica (today a Gothic building, modified in the Baroque style by J. Santini).

A command of the Johannites was founded at the Judith bridge, where a three-nave basilica with a transept and three apses was built in 1165–1182.

In 1142, a Cistercian monastery was founded in Sedlec near Kutná Hora. The Romanesque basilica of this monastery was later destroyed (the current building is Gothic, with a Baroque reconstruction). In 1144, another Cistercian monastery was founded in Plasy, where a three-nave basilica was built between 1154 and 1204 (today the layout and masonry are preserved in the Baroque reconstruction). Only fragments of the building survived from the Cistercian monastery in Nepomuk (1142–1153).

None of the Moravian monastic buildings of the 12th century have survived - they were the basilicas in Třebíč, Hradisk near Olomouc (Premonstratensian from 1151, church of saints 1197), Dolní Kounice (Premonstratensian women's monastery, founded 1181) and Louce near Znojmo (Premonstratensian monastery, founded 1190).

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Village churches

In the 12th century, the number of churches increased significantly; there were several reasons. As part of the church reform, the territory of the kingdom was divided into individual parishes, in which parish churches were founded. The internal colonization of the country was also taking place, when hitherto barren territories were settled, new villages were planted, and cities were founded. In addition, there was the establishment of the nobility, which took over the hitherto lent property into its own ownership. This spurred brisk construction in many parts of the country.

Although most manor and village churches were small in size, in several places magnificent monumental buildings were built. An example is the perfectly preserved Romanesque basilica of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Tismice in the Kolín region from the end of the 12th century. It is a three-nave building with a two-tower facade and three apses in the east, the interior of which alternates pillars and columns (it was apparently influenced by the monastery church in Ostrov u Davle).

Among the small buildings, two distinct types of churches appear - central buildings (mostly rotundas with an apse and tower) and single-nave longitudinal buildings. The enrichment of these more or less older types was the architectural relief decoration, taken from large period buildings. She focused mainly on the columns under the tribune, the triumphal arch between the nave and the apse, the external relief division of the walls (lizens, arched frieze, blind arcades), the division of windows (larger and often grouped, in the towers usually into two rows of triple windows) and entrance portals.

Central buildings

Rotundas with an apse, characteristic of the Czech lands, are still being built, more recently enriched with a western prismatic or cylindrical tower, in which a tribune can be inserted. The turret above the rotunda is usually equipped with a lantern. The occurrence of rotundas in the territory of Bohemia and Moravia is a peculiarity of this environment, based on the oldest known rotundas on Great Moravian hillforts; the question is whether this is a continuity or a sign of renaissance.

The most famous preserved buildings of this type include the church of St. Jiří na Říp (with a cylindrical tower, consecrated in 1126), the church of St. Mary Magdalene in Přední Kopanín (with a prismatic tower), the rotunda of St. Crosses in the Old Town in Prague. Other preserved buildings – the church of St. Martin in Kostelec u Křížků (the rotunda with the apse is the presbytery of today's church), the church of St. Jiří in Hradešín (the rotunda today forms the western part of the nave), etc. In Moravia, rotundas are known in Podolí near Jemnica (the tower is preserved), Šebkovice, Velké Újezd (defunct), Štěpkov, Častohostice, Plavča, Žďárná near Boskovice.

An extraordinary and unique building is the church of St. Prokop in Záboří nad Labem. It is a Romanesque storey chapel, vaulted on both floors on four pillars, with a Romanesque vestibule and a unique portal, revealing French influences (it was additionally modified in the Baroque).

Two buildings with a non-traditional layout were also created in Moravia. Church of St. Peter and Paul in Řeznovice (near Ivančice) is built on a square plan with three semicircular apses and an octagonal tower above the nave, the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary in Černvír was also built on a square plan, with apses on the east and west.

Longitudinal structures

All longitudinal Romanesque churches have more or less the same layout – a semicircular or horseshoe-shaped apse adjoins the rectangular nave to the east and a prismatic tower to the west. The nave is flat-ceilinged, in the western part of the nave there is a tribune, vaulted by one or two fields of a cross vault without ribs for columns or pillars. Access to the tribune is either from the tower or via a staircase in the strength of the wall.

Well-preserved examples of this type of church from this period include, for example, the Church of the Virgin Mary in Mohelnice nad Jizerou, the Church of St. Peter in Poříčí nad Sázavou, church of St. Jakub in Jakub near Kutná Hora (with a unique relief decoration of the facade), the Church of the Annunciation of the Virgin Mary in Plaňany (with a Gothic presbytery); then the church of St. Martin in Prague-Řepy, church of St. Havel in Zbraslav (tower and adjacent part of the ship). Only small remains have been preserved from the churches in Vinoř (tower), etc.

In Moravia, churches of this type are preserved in Přibyslavice, Bořitov, Lukovany, Újezd u Černá Hora, Červená Lhota, Jakubov, Přeskačy, etc.

The first castles

Already at the beginning of the 12th century, the first castles began to be built on Czech territory. Our oldest castle is Přimda (commemorated in 1124), from which a massive prismatic tower has been preserved. Important undertakings included the construction of the bishop's castle in Roudnice nad Labem (after 1180 according to French models, with 7-8 cylindrical turrets around the perimeter; later completely rebuilt).

Stone houses

In the twelfth century, the first stone town houses were built in the Czech Republic. They usually have one to three rooms on the ground floor with a vault or ceiling, or vaulted with four bays on a central column. The upstairs rooms had flat ceilings, the front walls (to the street) were plain. Beautiful examples have been preserved in the Old Town of Prague (Andělská kolej no. 16 and Řetězová 222).

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Late style (late 12th century, first half of the 13th century)

At the end of the 12th century, there was a struggle for power in the Czech kingdom, there was a lack of strong personalities and thus new impulses in architecture. Prague is losing its dominant position, the center of gravity of new construction companies is shifting to the territory of the nobility and to the peripheral regions of the country. In addition, during the first half of the 13th century, a new, Gothic style is slowly gaining ground.

Monastery buildings

One of the most valuable Romanesque monuments is the basilica of the Premonstratensian monastery in Milevsko from 1184–1187; the triple nave is similar to its sister building in Strahov, only inside the pillars are replaced by columns. Despite later reconstructions, the church has preserved its Romanesque character. Only a few remains have been preserved from a number of other monasteries founded at the end of the 12th century (1182 – Johannite commanderies in Manětín and Kadan, before 1184 – Cistercian monastery in Munich Hradiště, before 1188 – Crusaders of the Holy Sepulcher in Prague and Světec).

On the contrary, the most important monastic buildings were built in Moravia during this period, which are still preserved to varying degrees. In the already mentioned monastery of Louka near Znojmo, a two-nave crypt was built under the basilica with irregularly shaped column capitals, and the apse of the basilica's chancel has also been partially preserved. In 1205, the Cistercian monastery in Velehrad was settled from the monastery in Plasy, where the construction of the church began in 1220. From the monumental Basilica of the Virgin Mary, the masonry and the apse at the end have been preserved to this day. During the construction of the monastery church, complete innovations for the Czech environment appeared, especially the six-part rib vault (in the presbytery and the arms of the transept). In late monastic buildings, dualism was even more pronounced - the simultaneous use of Romanesque and Gothic styles (see below).

Village churches

The manor church of St. belonged to the larger buildings of this period. Jiljí in Milevsko, from which the tower and the northern part of the nave are still preserved; the combined windows of the tower stand out for their very delicate and plastic decoration, similar to the chapel in the Cheb valley.

Otherwise, buildings of the previously mentioned types continue to be built, single-nave tribune churches predominate. Romanesque forms now appear mainly in the peripheral regions of the country, especially in northwestern and southern Bohemia, in central Bohemia the activity of the Doksan smelter is dying out. Elsewhere, they do not stand out either in number or in architectural concept. Preserved examples of buildings outside the mentioned areas include, for example, the church of St. Martin in the wall in Prague.

Churches of Central Bohemia, Doksan smelter

Already from the 12th century, individual buildings were created in the territory of Central Bohemia, created or influenced by the activities of the Doksan smelter. However, individual motifs do not develop, rather they live and disappear. The preserved churches in Poříčí nad Sázavou (with prismatic towers on the sides of the entrance like basilicas, supported by a crypt) and in Kondrac (with small cylindrical towers on the sides of the entrance, again following the pattern of basilicas) stand out as architecturally interesting solutions. Other important preserved buildings include the churches in Čečelice (with an interesting window column), Cítov (with blind arcades and a beautiful southern portal), Holubice (rotunda with apse), Kostomlatech pod Řípem (longitudinal with apse), Kyjích u Prahy (longitudinal, with a tower in the width of the nave), Čelákovice (longitudinal , with a portal), Žabonosech (front part of the nave with a tribune and a portal), Chřenovice (tower and nave with a portal), Hrusice (with a richly decorated portal) and others.

Churches of northwestern Bohemia

The churches of northwestern Bohemia form a numerous, artistically integrated group. The relief division of the surface of the outer walls and the massive development of the tribune are striking. Artistically, they follow the architecture of Saxony, Frank and, at that time, the Cheb of the Reich. The construction of the monastery church in Teplá (founded in 1193, consecrated in 1232), of which the eastern end and the two-tower facade have survived to this day, had a great influence on this group. This church featured a new layout for the first time in the Czech Republic – a hall (hall) with three naves, which differ from previous basilicas in that the main and side naves are the same height. In 1192, a Cistercian monastery was founded in Mašťov, which was moved to Osek due to its unfavorable location; a monumental basilica with pointed arcades was built here, preserved today in a Baroque reconstruction.

Of the small buildings in this area, the most important monuments (which are among the best-preserved Romanesque monuments ever) are the church of St. Nicholas in Vinci and the church of St. Nicholas in Potvorov. They have survived to this day in a practically unchanged form, with an interior richly decorated in relief, a prominent tribune and a beautiful entrance portal. Other preserved buildings in this area include the churches in Želkovice (rotunda with lantern), Kostomlaty pod Milešovka, Vroutek, Údlice (with a blind arcade on the apse) and others.

Churches of South Bohemia, Strakonice smelter

In the 13th century, South Bohemia came under the possession of Austrian and German families. Influences from the north (Milevsko, Strakonice) and from the south, from the regions of the holders, were evident on the buildings here. It was of great importance for the area where the Johannite command was founded in Strakonice, where a complex of buildings was built from 1225

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