

is not quite clear, the only assumption available being that the house was situated in close vicinity of the building site of the Cathedral.⁷⁴ As long as we do not know anything more definite about Seyfrid, we may consider just as probable the assumption that he was the economic manager of the project.⁷⁵ If his participation in the architectural management of St. Stephen's project in the sixties is open to discussion, the hypothesis that the Klosterneuburg master mentioned by Ebendorfer is already identical with the ducal architect of the nineties, master Michael, whose name can be found as late as in 1402 in the account books of the Klosterneuburg monastery, appears the more probable one. Just as Emperor Charles IV discovered in 1353 master Peter Parler in the Swabian town Gmünd employed in a subordinate function in the building project of the Church of the Holy Cross, even so could Duke Rudolf uplift the young Michael, who after having completed his training in the West began to work as a stonemason of the conventual lodge in Klosterneuburg.⁷⁶

Master Michael transformed the architectural Rayonnant ideas into his own characteristic style, resulting from his capacity to synthesize traditions and from his own rich invention. In his work it is necessary first of all to point out impulses which he found in the late Cistercian tradition supplied by the construction of the choir in Heiligenkreuz, whose elements were appreciated as effective in the first Gothic stage of St. Stephen's building already.⁷⁷ In the first place it is the in the Heiligenkreuz choir (prior to 1295) successfully employed dematerialization of the spacial barrier by means of using two wide windows in a single bay which represents by its deliberate removal of the up-till-then conventional wide wall stripes surrounding the traceried windows a resolute introduction of radiating Gothic architecture. Also the characteristic knee-like curved shafts may in principle be connected with Cistercian architecture. If it is true that the individualism of the classical phase of the Gothic consists in distinct separation of the single members, further development of the Rayonnant style leads essentially to an abatement of the plastic perception and to a unification of thus transformed details of the fasciculate piers.⁷⁸ Nevertheless, the great works of culminating Gothic of the 14th century have

preserved from the heritage of antiquity at least the basic components of the "column" in addition to its uprightness and verticality, which is its answer to the question of weight and support. In St. Stephen's Lodge the master of the ducal chapels conceived an original solution when he made the fragile colonnette depart from the traditional vertical position diverting its shaft into free space, whereupon the shaft gets a knee-like curve in order to carry on a level protruding from the pier its capital supporting a statue surmounted by a canopy.⁸⁰ His inspiration for this knee-like curving of the shaft we may see in the tradition of the Cistercian knee-like corbels,⁸¹ which had penetrated into the Danubian area, as it is documented e. g. by the Franciscan sanctuary in Bratislava, consecrated in 1297. The fluted bases employed by Chnab have their native

17. Soběslav — interior of the double-naved St. Vitus' Hospital Church, built about 1400. According to D. Líbal.

