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AN UNKNOWN LATE PŘEMYSLID REBUILDING OF THE PRESBYTERY OF ST. FRANCIS CHURCH IN ST. AGNES MONASTERY IN PRAGUE

The Discovery of a Timber Reinforcement from after 1303 and Its Parallels

FILIP FACINCANI

The paper deals with the unknown building phase of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis in the St. Agnes Monastery, dated by dendrochronology to the first years "after 1303". It shows that after a local fire the top of the outer wall was raised and a timber reinforcement added, the remains of which are still evident in the attic. This phase of construction has not yet been recognised and it is identified and described here for the first time.

NEZNÁMÁ POZDNĚ PŘEMYSLOVSKÁ PŘESTAVBA PRESBYTÁŘE KOSTELA SV. FRANTIŠKA V ANEŽSKÉM KLÁŠTEŘE V PRAZE : K NÁLEZU TRÁMOVÉ VÝZTUHY Z DOBY PO ROCE 1303 A JEJÍM PARALELÁM

Příspěvek se zabývá stavební etapou presbytáře kostela sv. Františka v Anežském klášteře, dendrochronologickým průzkumem datovanou do prvních let po roce 1300. Dokládá, že po lokálním požáru byla navýšena koruna zdiva a doplněna ztužující trámovou konstrukcí, jejíž pozůstatky jsou stále zřetelné v podkroví. Tato stavební etapa dosud nebyla rozpoznána, je identifikována poprvé.

Key word — Prague-Old Town – St. Agnes Monastery – St. Francis Church – timber reinforcement – Wenceslaus II.
Klíčová slova — Praha-Staré Město – Anežský klášter – kostel sv. Františka – trámová ztužující konstrukce – Václav II.

Its cultural and architectural significance make the grounds of the St. Agnes Monastery (Fig. **1**), founded in 1231, one of the most important early Gothic monuments in Bohemia. Its uniqueness and state of preservation, as well as its role as a royal burial ground, have resulted in the site being the subject of numerous art-historical and archaeological surveys, and a monograph, as well as featuring in all previous synthetic studies on early Gothic architecture in Bohemia. A summary of the entire research to date is beyond the limits of this paper, which aims instead to highlight an unrecognized building phase of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis, dated by dendrochronology to the last years of the reign of king Wenceslas II. (*1271–†1305).[1]

The complicated building history of the St. Agnes Monastery has been discussed in numerous studies to date (Fig. **2**). Many authors have dealt with the time of the construction of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis, formerly considered to be the church of St. Barbara (Mocker's sketch 1882 in APH SDA; Ekert 1884, 437), of which the studies of Zdenka Münzerová (1932), Václav Mencl (1933), Josef Cibulka (1938), Jiřina Joachimová (1964; 1966) and Petr Heřman (1986) are the most important and relevant. Helena Soukupová's monumental monograph (1989; 2011) provided the definitive account of the complete building for its period. An aspect that has not been studied, however, is the construction phase that took place in the intermezzo between the construction of the church of the Holy Saviour (after 1261) and the subsequent Luxemburg rebuildings in the 14th century.

St. Agnes Monastery in 13th century

The construction of the monastery complex began at the very beginning of 1230s. The first phase was finished by 1234, composed of the nave of St. Francis' church and the eastern wing of the convent. These buildings are defined by the use of Romanesque marlstone ashlars and, in the case of the convent wing, of brick. During the second building phase (c. 1238–1245) the convent, the cloister and the presbytery of the church of St. Francis were fully completed, using up to date Gothic rough masonry.

1 This study used the Czech Medieval Sources online database provided by the LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ research infrastructure <https://lindat.cz> supported by the Ministry of Education of the Czech Republic (project no. LM2023062) and the Bibliography of the History of the Czech Lands database provided by the LINDAT/CLARIAH-CZ research infrastructure (project no. LM2023062).

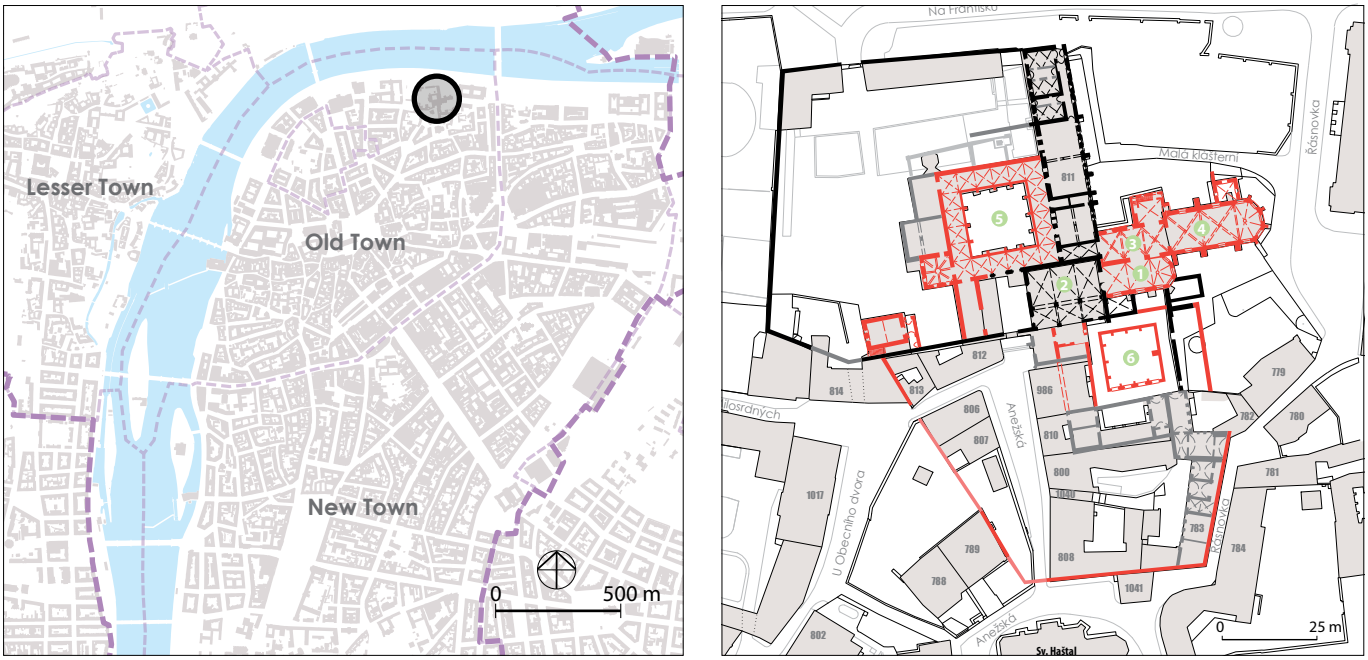


Fig. 1. Location of the monastery of St. Francis, later known as the St. Agnes Monastery, in the Old Town of Prague. A double monastery of an Order of Saint Clare and an Order of Friars Minor, founded by the Bohemian princess Agnes of Bohemia (*between 1205 and 1211 – †2 March 1282), who became its abbess (inserted from sources NPÚ ÚOP in Prague by S. Babušková, 2024).

Fig. 2. St. Agnes Monastery. Key medieval buildings in the area on today's cadastral map. The first building phase in **black** (1231–1234), the second building phase in **red** (1238–1245, after 1261). **1** – the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis; **2** - the nave of the Church of St. Francis; **3** – the Chapel of the Virgin Mary; **4** – the Church of the Holy Saviour; **5** – the cloister of the Poor Clares, **6** – the cloister of the Franciscans (according Soukupová 2011, 24–25).

There was a double monastery constituted on this site until 1245 — composed of the principal monastery for nuns of the Order of Poor Clare with a church of St. Francis, and Minorite monastery for men, joined slightly later to the same church. Both communities gathered for services here. The church of St. Francis also served as a royal burial place for a while, with king Wenceslas I buried here in 1253. After 1261 the church of the Holy Saviour was atypically added to the eastern boundary of the monastery buildings, serving as new royal mausoleum, founded by Přemysl Otakar II, St. Agnes´ nephew. It is a single space chapel with a polygonal apse reflecting French architecture of the period of Louis IX. The core of the monastery was therefore certainly finished before 1278 when Přemysl died.

Opinions on the time of the construction of the presbytery of St. Francis are more or less unanimous. Since the 1930s its foundation has been placed in the years 1238–1245 (Birnbaum 1931, 108; Münzerová 1932, 16; Joachimová 1964, 98; Soukupová 1989, 113), although with alternative dates also suggested (Mencl 1933, 50; Líbal 1948; Líbal/Hyzler/Lancinger 1964). The dating is based on two deeds from 1245, relating to the sale of the Preštice district and establishing that year as the *terminus ante quem* for the completion of the whole building phase, including the construction of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis. There is an apparent contradiction between these two documents, one describes the monastery as unbuilt and the other as finished, but this was convincingly explained by V. Birnbaum (1931), whose widely accepted interpretation was followed by J. Joachimová (1964).

The completion of the presbytery of St. Francis around the mid 1240s is also supported by other information — in July 1245, king Wenceslas I donated altar vessels (?) to the monastery, which can be assumed to have been used here. Moreover, Wenceslas was crowned here for a second time in 1249 after the suppression of his son's rebellion (FRB II, 305–307) and finally buried here in 1253. The completion must therefore have occurred no later than 1253. From the morphological point of view, the vaults of the western arm of the cloister, dating from the 1230s–40s, are closest to those of the presbytery (Soukupová 2011, 114). Further structural changes were recorded in the presbytery of St. Francis at a later date, in the last third of the 14th century, most notably represented by the southern portal connecting the presbytery with the cloister of the Minorite convent.

Rebuilding after 1303

DESCRIPTION

The evidence remaining in the external walls of the presbytery of St. Francis has been affected by subsequent reworking, reducing the legibility of the distinct building phases. The attic level therefore is key to understanding the nature of the rebuilding. Here, a previously unknown

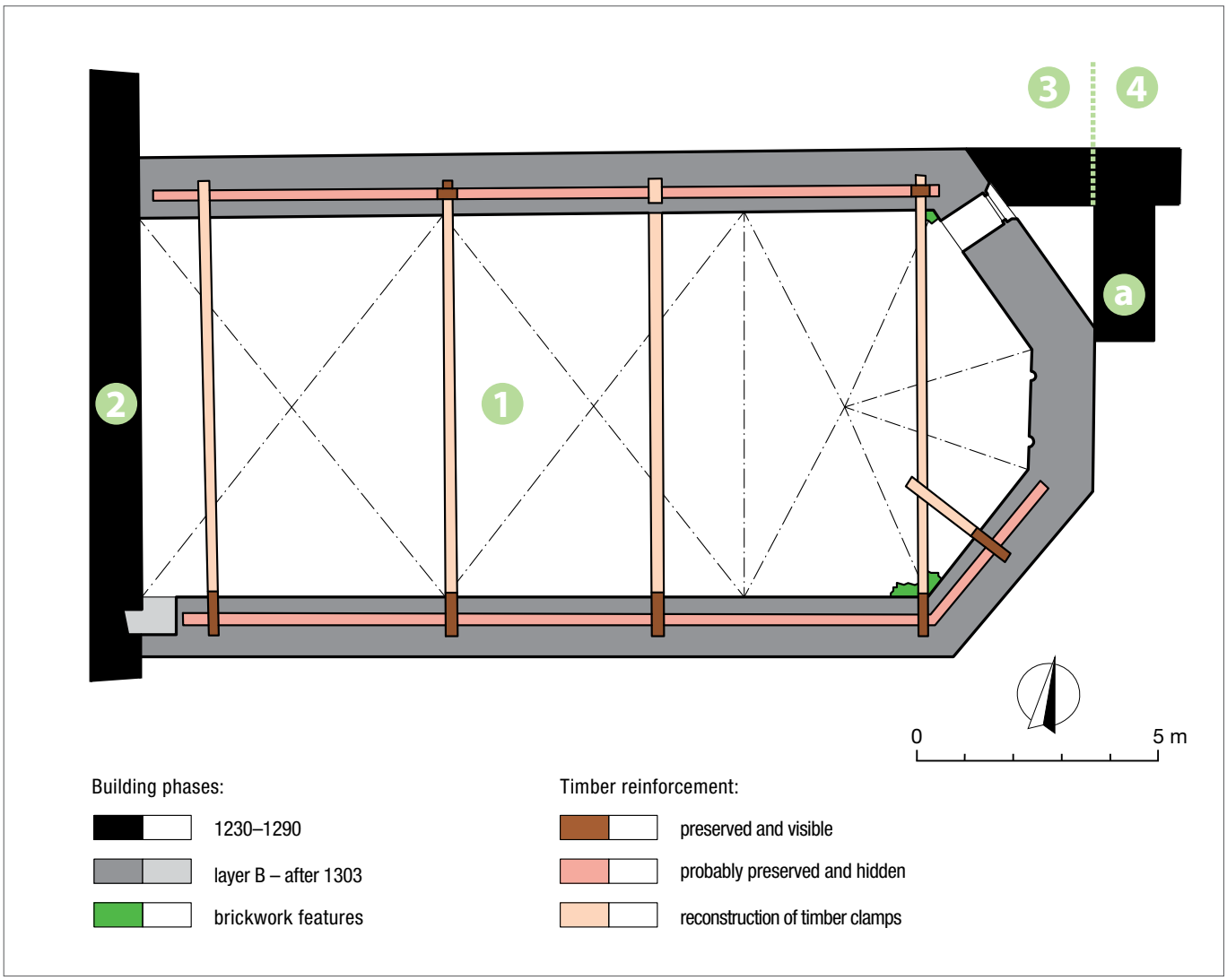


Fig. 3. St. Agnes Monastery, presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. The plan of the attic at the level of phase ***B*** with the timber reinforcement in its current state (**dark brown**) and its reconstruction (**beige**): **a** – south–western buttress of the Church of the Holy Saviour; **1** – attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis; **2** – gable of the nave of the Church of St. Francis; **3** – the Chapel of the Virgin Mary; **4** – the Church of the Holy Saviour (survey and drawing by the author, 2024).

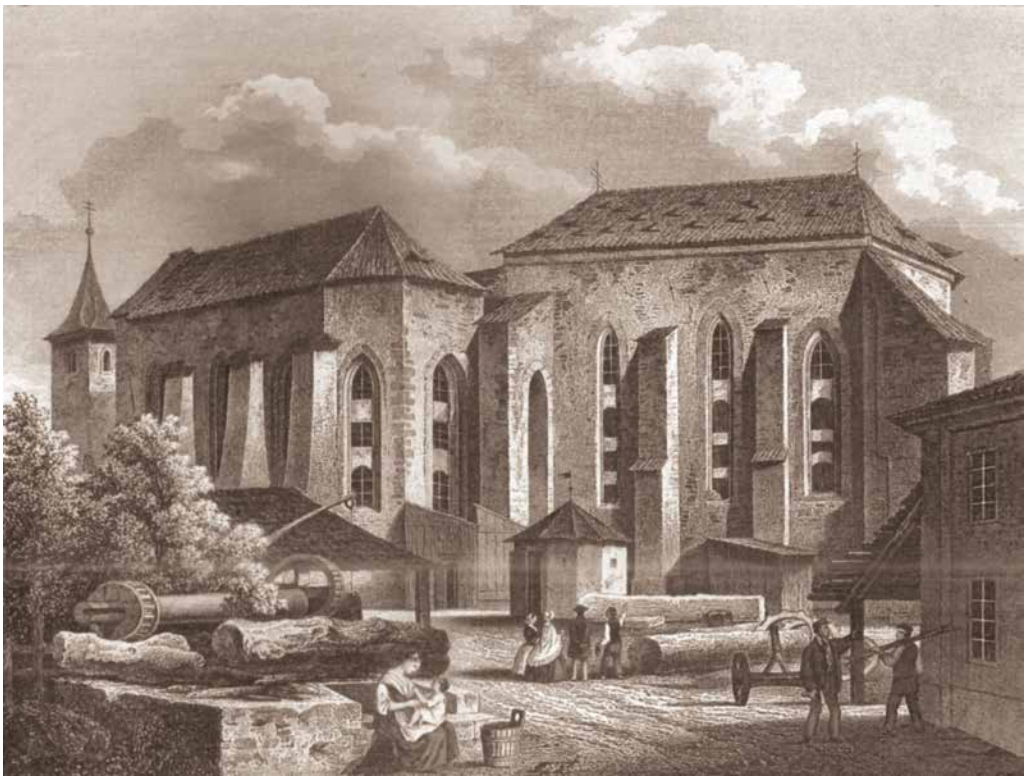


Fig. 4. Vilém Kandler, *s. d.*: St. Agnes Monastery. View from the southeast of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis (**left**) and the Church of the Holy Saviour (**right**), published in Mikovec/Zap 1865, between 130–131.

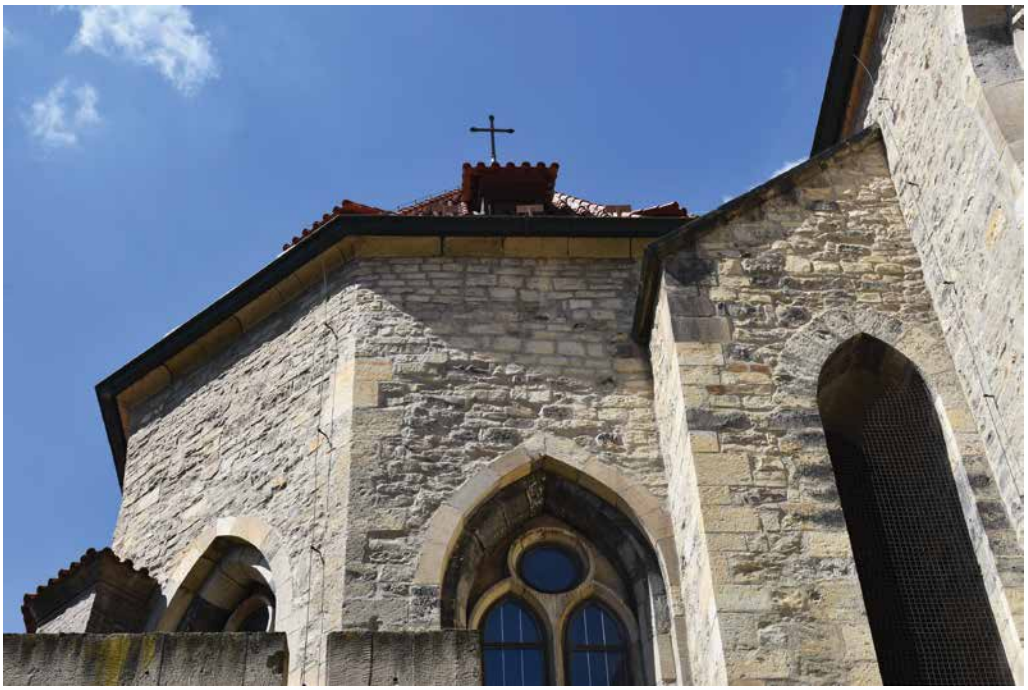


Fig. 5. St. Agnes Monastery. View from the east of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis (**left**), showing the break between the first building phase (1238–1245) and the post-1300 one, evident not only in the structure of the masonry, but also defined by the ashlar quoins (see Detail). The northern part of the presbytery is covered by the buttress of the Church of the Holy Saviour (photo by the author, 2024).

building phase can be recognized, which has been dated by dendrochronology to shortly after 1300. The reconstruction consisted of raising the top of the outer wall and reinforcing the new section with a timber chainage (Fig. **3**). The frame of this construction is still hidden in the masonry and therefore it is largely preserved today. Although the tie beams, that formerly crossed the space of the attic, have been cut out, their heads are still in situ. The raising of the outer wall was followed by the construction of the roof trusses, these are no longer preserved.

This building campaign is recorded in an engraving of the presbytery of the church of St.Francis and the church of the Holy Saviour by Vilém Kandler, published in 1865 (Mikovec/Zap 1865). On St. Francis' presbytery apse, there is an ashlar quoins ending relatively deep below the cornice (Fig. **4**). It is this point that directly captures the transition between the earlier building phase (before 1245) and the post-1300 one. In the right sunlight, this horizontal break is still evident today on the southern wall of the presbytery (Figs **5**, **6**).

Fig. 6. St. Agnes Monastery, presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. View from the south showing the break between the first building phase and the post-1300 one. Above the window reveals a horizontal break (highlighted in **yellow**) between the older masonry and the layer ***B*** masonry containing timber reinforcement (photo by the author, 2024).

In the first building phase (1238–1245) of the presbytery its whole structure was built and the vault was raised as well. The material of the vault cannot be determined today since, as part of an earlier reconstruction, the reverse of the vault was reinforced with wire netting and covered with mortar, preventing even a visual inspection. The top of the outer wall is made of rough limestone around the entire perimeter, which contrasts with the carefully squared blocks of the eastern gable of the nave, to which the presbytery was added (Fig. **7**). Three horizontal phases or layers can be identified in the masonry above the vault, which are clearly evidence of several temporally distant building campaigns and which cannot be regarded as traces of a technological break (Fig. **8**). The two lower layers, named layer ***A*** and layer ***B***, are crucial for reading the earliest construction history (Figs **9**, **10**), while the upper layer ***C***, consisting of two courses of marlstone blockwork, probably belongs to the most recent reconstruction, when the present roof trusses were fitted in 1932.

Fig. 7. St. Agnes Monastery, presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. View of the south–west corner of the attic at the junction of the southern outer wall of the presbytery made of roughly shaped stone and the eastern gable of the nave of the church of St. Francis made of regular stone blocks from the 1230s (photo by the author, 2024).

Fig. 8. St. Agnes Monastery, attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis.The face of the south outer wall above the vaults with the cut-off remnant of the timber clamp (photo unedited).

The lower ***layer A*** preceded the construction of the vault and thus ends slightly above its top (Figs **11**, **12**). The surface of its stone blocks is coloured dark grey to black, but where the stone has degraded, its pink colour is evident (Fig. **13**), indicating that the layer A has been exposed to fire.[2] The same damage can be seen on the adjacent face of the east gable of the St. Francis nave, built during the very first building phase (before 1234) and facing the presbytery attic.

There are three roughly square putlog holes in the layer A. The northern one runs through the width of the masonry into the attic of Virgin Mary's Chapel and is completely made in brick (Figs **14A**, **C**). The other two holes found in the apse are made both in brick and stone and now filled in. Similar square putlog holes are documented for the earliest phase of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis by historical photographs from the course of the 1940 survey conducted by Ivan Borkovský (Soukupová 2011, 89, Fig. 90). The bricks of the northern putlog hole are

2 Thanks to RNDr. Jan Zavřel for the consultation.

Fig. 9. The same view as in Fig. **7** with the interface between phases ***A***, ***B*** and ***C*** marked (photo und designation by the author, 2024).

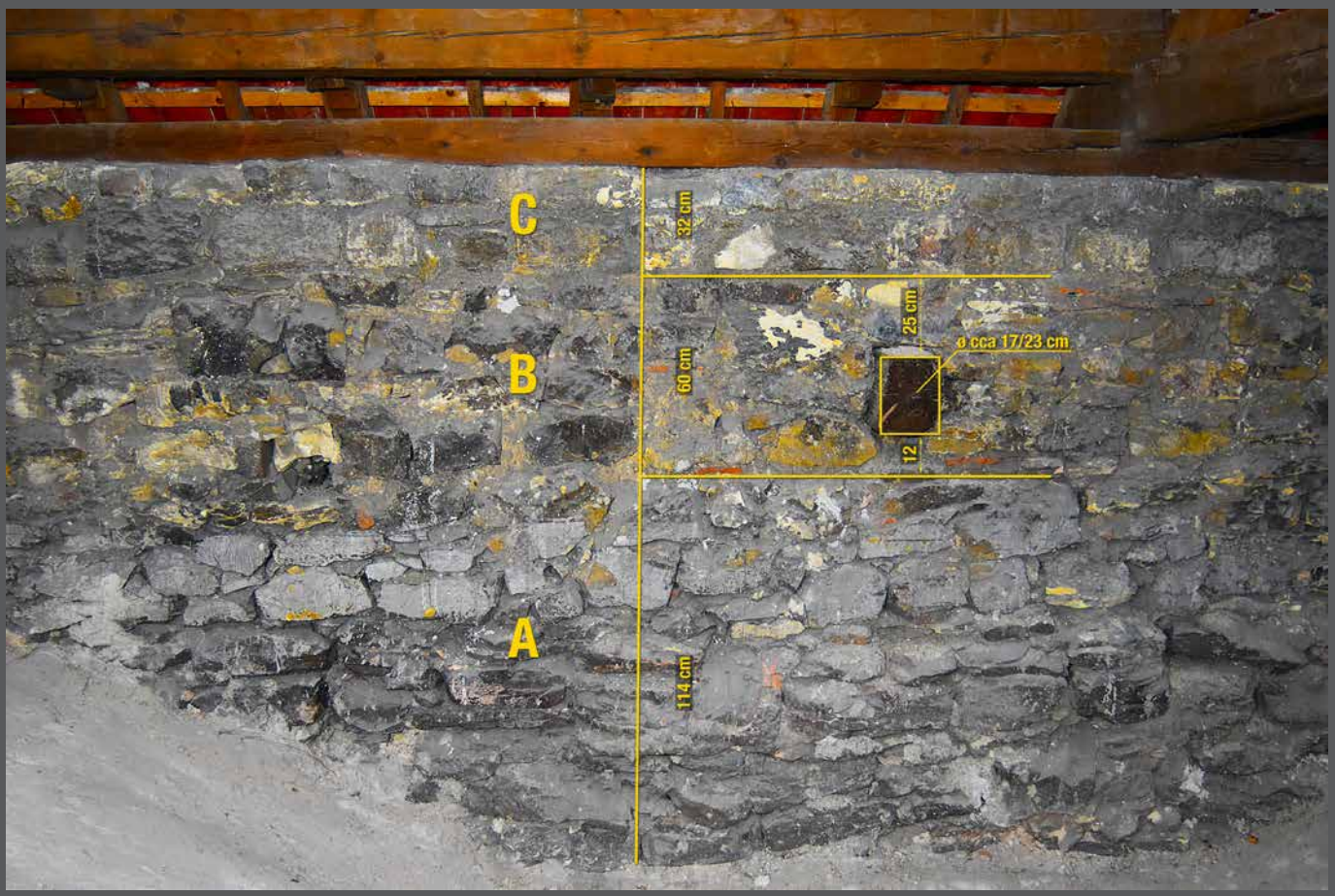


Fig. 10. The same view as in Fig. **8**, the increased colour contrast highlights the interface between layers ***A*** (114 cm from the vault's trough), ***B*** (60 cm) and ***C*** (32 cm) and the height position of the timber clamp (c. 17 × 23 cm) in the masonry of layer ***B***. The dark colouration and pinkish colour of the stone used in layer ***A*** and the yellowish colour of the stone used in layer ***B*** are evident (photo by the author, 2024).

Fig. 11. St. Agnes Monastery, attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. The top of the vault and the layer ***A*** from the first building phase (1238–1245), the bedding joint of layer ***B*** from the reconstruction of the timber reinforcement from after 1300 marked in **yellow** (photo by the author, 2024).

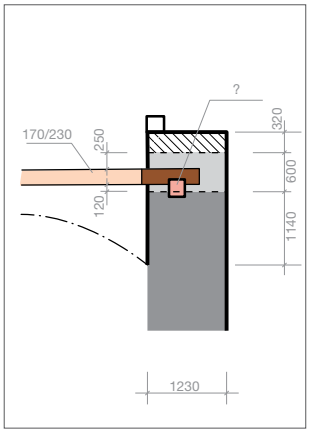


Fig. 12. St. Agnes Monastery. Cross section through the southern outer wall of the attic of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis, diagram of height parameters above the top of the the vault (**in black**). Timber structure laid on the crown of layer ***A*** (**deep grey**); (according to the author's instructions S. Babušková, 2024).

a different size (31 × 16 × 8 cm) from those recorded in the eastern wing of the convent built during the first construction phase. However, they seem to be consistent with the size of brick (32 × 15.5 × 8.5 cm) found during the archaeological survey south of the presbytery of St. Francis (Borkovský 1956, 201–202), where the site of the monastic workshop is assumed to have been before the construction of the Minorite convent (Borkovský 1956, 201; Joachimová 1966, 197).

A shapeless brickwork feature is evident to the south of the polygonal apse of the presbytery, tied into layer A, and sited above the reverse of the vault (Fig. **3:** green).[3] To the east of this there is a flat unworked stone projecting into the space. A similar, although smaller, brick feature is present on the opposite side. The deliberate inclusion of several pieces of stone facing into the attic space and serving either to support the temporary wooden structure or the roof trusses is already known from the second half of the 13th century in Bohemia, from the Dominican monastery church in České Budějovice (Kovář/Lavička 2017, 33, Fig. 21); from the Church of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary in Kostelec nad Vltavou (Adámek/Varhaník 2000, 211); or from the Church of St. Catherine in Chomutov (Pachner 2019, 86). However, the Prague example does not correspond to this technological solution and I do not dare to interpret.[4]

The nature of the masonry changes above layer A. Subsequent ***layer B*** is separated from it by a distinctive bedding joint, defining the begenning of the reconstruction after 1300 (Figs **9**, **10**). It is also made of roughly worked marlstone blocks, but this time these are more precisely finished. The classic yellow colour of the marlstone proves that the layer A has been affected by fire – but the layer B has not. The bedding joint between these two layers was filled with fragments of floor and roof tiles all around the outside, probably recycled remains of the original roofing. It is in layer B that several fragments of the unrecorded timber reinforcement can be found, preserved in situ. In the southern wall five headers of cut massive beams are preserved and facing inwards (Fig. **3**), which correspond to the either empty or later filled sockets in the northern wall. This indicates that the timbers were first cut on the south side and removed from the north sockets at the time of dismantling (probably after 1689). In two of these northern sockets, moreover, there is a visible section of a continuous internal beam, running along the course of the outer wall and functioning as a *de facto* wall plate (Figs **14A**, **B**, **D**). From these preserved fragments, it is evident that the tie beams were jointed to the continuous internal beam and thus these wooden fragments are remnants of the timber reinforcement.

There is also a pair of sockets within the polygonal apse, this time consisting of wooden logs with a diameter of approximately 15 cm (Figs **15**, **16**). It is clear from the masonry that the logs were added to the top of the masonry of layer A and walled up by the masonry of layer B, i.e. they are contemporary with the latter. However, the logs were at an angle of approximately 20° with the face of the masonry above, which thereby precludes their being applied in a timber reinforcement itself (see below).

3 All the photographic evidence distorts the form of the described feature. It is therefore only schematically indicated in the ground plan (in green).

4 The only preserved example of such a projecting stone is in the attic of the presbytery of St. Francis. In other cases, there is evidence of several regularly spaced pieces, serving as a supports for a temporary or permanent wooden structure.

TIMBER REINFORCEMENT

Since the presbytery of St. Francis was added to the older nave, the timber reinforcement could not be fully continuous (generally Líbal/Muk 1984, 244; Škabrada 2003, 40). The top of the masonry was obviously strengthened in the transverse direction by a quartet of beams tied into continuous beams embedded in the outer wall and with an average cross-section of 17 × 23 cm. In the polygonal apse itself, the timber structure was designed asymmetrically (Fig. **3**) In the south-eastern bay, the head of the tie beam is clearly visible, located at the same level as the beams in the longitudinal part of the presbytery. It certainly fulfilled the same function as a timber clamp. However, in the opposite north-eastern bay of the apse there is no remnant of a beam and the masonry structure here is intact — it is clear that no timber was ever placed here. Thus, the reinforcement of the apse was not of a regular pattern, but asymmetrical, set only in places along the south-eastern section. This particular design can, however, be explained by the presence of a buttress at the south–west corner of the church of the Holy Saviour (Fig. **5**; from 1261; Soukupová 2016, 60–61), in place before the presbytery of St. Francis was rebuilt. At the time of the reinforcement setting, the buttress acted as sufficient support so that the timber work was not necessary here. In contrast, the opposite south-eastern bay faced an open space and required this kind of timber bracing.

Fig. 13. St. Agnes Monastery, attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. The pinkish colour of the stone blocks in layer ***A*** shows that this layer was damaged by fire (photo by the author, 2024).

Timber reinforcement has been recorded in Czech territories, mainly on later castles (Gabriel/Peřina 2011) or city fortifications (Razím 2022, 347). However, examples from Romanesque sacred architecture are also known, for example, from Drchlava (Peřina 2015, 88–89) or Svojšín (Hauserová et al. 2011, 17) among others. Of course, this technological solution has a much older origin, and the transverse reinforcement of walls with burnt olive stakes is already mentioned by Vitruvius (2001, 50).

In general, timber reinforcement can be divided into temporary and permanent. Temporary timber reinforcement was used, for example, in the construction of the crossing and eastern transepts of Lincoln Cathedral (before 1200).[5] The timbers were inserted into the mass of the piers to secure them until the arches were fitted and piers adequately loaded. Most of the timbers were cut away after completion, but some of these are still preserved in situ today. Permanent reinforcement was placed in both the foundations[6] and masonry above ground, either in a continuous frame (sometimes interconnected with vertical elements) or in unconnected sections. As such, however, they were not visible in the space between the reinforced walls and their presence was only revealed by the later destruction of the masonry itself.

The Prague example is somewhat different and is de facto designed as a base for a roof, with beams running through the space between the reinforced outer walls. Even this spatial solution has a few known parallels in Czech architecture. Closely similar timber reinforcement has been recorded in the tower of the church in Albrechtice nad Vltavou (Škabrada/Smetánka 1977, 239;

5 I thank Prof Jennifer S. Alexander, University of Warwick, for bringing this case to my attention. Temporary timber reinforcement was also used in the late 14th century at Threave Castle, Kirkcudbrightshire. Evidence of their temporary function is that they passed through window openings. They were cut off after the building was completed (see Wilcox 1981, 21). J. Fitchen (1981, 275–276) also comments on this, using Westminster Abbey as an example, in reference to W. R. Lethaby (1906).

6 Negative imprints of timber reinforcement in the foundation masonry have been found, for example, during archaeological investigations at York Minster (Phillips 1985, 195). For others see R. P. Wilcox (1981).

Fig. 14. St. Agnes Monastery, attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. The face of the northern outer wall of the longitudinal part above the vault.

A – brick putlog hole for scaffolding timber in the vault (layer ***A***), empty socket for timber clamp in layer ***B*** with clear section of continuous timber;

B – the westernmost of the sockets with a visible fragment of continuous timber (photo by author, 2024);

C -–brick putlog hole for scaffold timber;

D – the easternmost of the sockets in the northern outer wall of the longitudinal part of the presbytery (photo by author, 2024).

Fig. 15. St. Agnes Monastery, attic of the presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. One of the two sockets of wooden logs in the axial field of the polygon of the presbytery (photo by the author, 2024).

Sommer 1999, 73–74; Škabrada 2003, 40), where floor joists were fitted to the beams in the outer walls in the last third of 12th century (Fig. **17A**). A similar solution was also found during the demolition of the late Gothic bell tower of the old church in Kladno (Sommer 1999, 75). Another example of a structurally analogous solution is the timber reinforcement of the Gutštejn Castle tower, dated by dendrochronology to the very start of the 1420s (Sokol 2012; Razím 2013) and a similar solution has been recorded in the castle tower behind house no. 361 in Znojmo (Razím 2010). At Gutštejn, a double wooden chainage was made from trees felled at the turn of 1421/1422 (Razím 2013, 220) and served not only as a reinforcement, but probably also as a platform for placing and operating heavy armaments. The same dual function is also assumed for the Znojmo example, dated to around 1513, by V. Razím (2010, 52–54). The Prague example is connected with these findings not only by its structural similarity, but also by its dual or secondary function as a working platform. The structural essence of all the mentioned examples is the tying of the tie beams into a longitudinal beam, walled in the thickness of the outer wall, which thus makes the structure a solid frame. In England, similarly conceived timber reinforcement has been recorded in St Ethelbert's Gate at Norwich (c. 1090, Fig. **17B**); in the great bastion of Rochester Castle (c. 1126); in the tower of Bridgnorth Castle (c. 1170); and in France in the cylindrical tower of Coucy-le-Château Castle (c. 1240; to all Wilcox 1981, 7, 15–20). In these examples the timber chainage also served as a substructure for the floor.

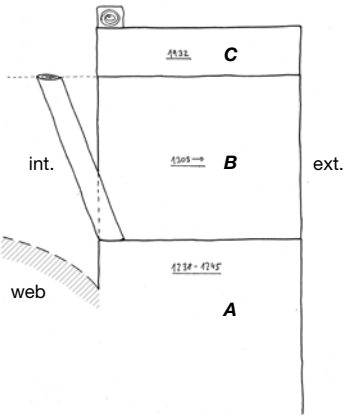


Fig. 16. St. Agnes Monastery, presbytery of the Church of St. Francis, schematic cross section of the outer wall at the axis of the central bay with a projection of one of the wooden logs. The height ratios between the layers (***A***, ***B***, ***C***) in the centre bay are different from those of the longitudinal part of the presbytery. One of the reasons for this may have been the setting and the need to anchor the lewis (drawing by F. Facincani, 2024).

It is important to note that in all the cited cases, this type of reinforcement was largely used in towers that had to resist either the recoil of massive armaments and assault, or carry a bell.[7] In both cases these were structures that had to withstand regular shocks and therefore buildings that were expected to absorb repeated and above-average loads and vibrations. The Prague example does not seem to fit into this homogeneous group of buildings in terms of its function, until we accept the use of this particular reinforcement as an indication that the presbytery may have been supplemented by a bell turret.[8] This hypothesis is indirectly supported by the form of the chainage plan itself. Although it does not respect the layout of the vaults, it is axially symmetrical. The two central beams have the smallest space between them and they are located directly on the transverse axis of the building, where the bell turret can be assumed to be placed.

The primary function of the reinforcement in the St. Agnes monastery was static, as evidenced by the absence of the beam clamp in the north-eastern section of the apse. However, this does not exclude a double or secondary function of the structure. It could have served as a working platform used during the installation of the new roof trusses. It is important to note that the reconstruction took place at a time when the vault of the presbytery had already been constructed (before 1245) and therefore any removal of building materials and structural elements must

7 On the use of this type of reinforcement especially in the upper parts of church towers see Sommer 1999, 73.
8 The idea of the bell turret was brought to me by Mgr. Miroslav Kovář, Ph.D.

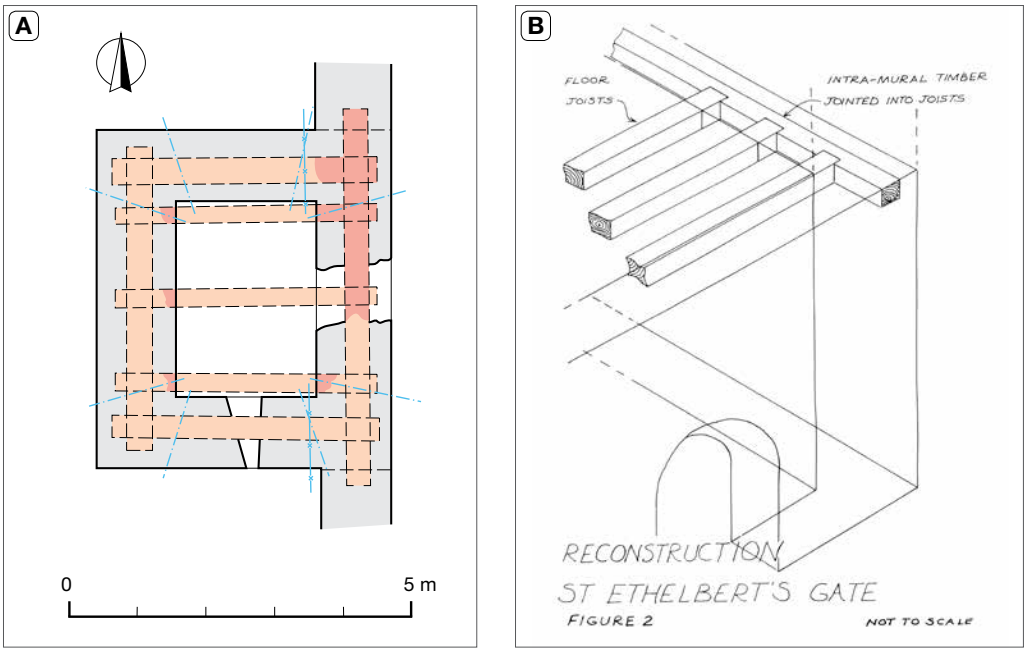


Fig. 17. Parallels to this structural type of timber reinforcement.

A – Albrechtice nad Vltavou, Church of St. Peter and Paul, Písek district, 3rd quarter of the 12th century. Timbers in the outer walls of the tower and floor joists mounted on them (taken from Sommer 1999, 74, graphic design by S. Babušková, 2024);

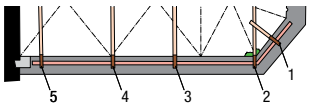
B – Norwich, St Ethelbert's Gate, c. 1090 (taken from Wilcox 1981, 7).

have taken place from the exterior of the building, after 1300. A pair of sockets for wooden logs (Fig. **16**), located in layer B of the apse's axial bay, may be related to such a process. While these logs could not have been applied directly to the reinforcement, their setting is contemporary with it. Thus, they may be the remains of a platform of a smaller crane (lewis) analogous to the location and function of the crane dormers, an example of which is known from the Church of the Assumption in Chrudim (Bláha 2001, 70, Fig. 4).[9] At the time of construction, the opposite-positioned wooden logs would be probably also tied in from the exterior, the face of which was, however, remodelled by later interventions. Similarly, this pair of logs may have served as inner supports for the edge of the platform, which lacked sufficient support in these locations due to the absence of beam clamps in this section. Thus, the timber reinforcement served not only for static securing, but also could have been a substructure for a continuous working platform (see Fitchen 1981, 306).

The medieval roof trusses were probably destroyed by the fire of the Old Town of Prague in 1689 and was replaced by the Baroque roof trusses drawn in Josef Mocker's sketchbook (Fig. **18**), which corresponds in its design to the turn of the 17th and 18th centuries. It is not without interest that, according to Mocker's sketch, the queen posts of the Baroque roof truss were placed directly above the tie beams of the medieval chainage, possibly dismantled during this reconstruction.

Dendrochronological dating

The preserved heads of the tie beams were subjected to a dendrochronological survey carried out in June 2024 by Tomáš Kyncl (2024; Tab. **1**). The five rectangular pine tie beams, walled in the southern outer wall (2–5) and in the south-eastern bay of the apse (1), were examined. This resulted in the following dates: the 1st beam from the east (1302/1303), the 2nd beam from the east (1298+) and the 4th beam from the east (1262+).



Tab. 1. Reduced Table with dendrochronology results (taken from Kyncl 2024).

Nr. of beams	Tree species	Nr. of rings	date of felling
1	pine	45	—
2	pine	95	1302/1303
3	pine	112	1298+
4	pine	54	—
5	pine	67	1262+

9 For drawing attention on the stone consoles occuring in the attic of a church in Cheb (Pachner 2019) and a manipulation dormer in Chrudim (Bláha 2001) I would like to thank Ing. Jiří Bláha, Ph.D.

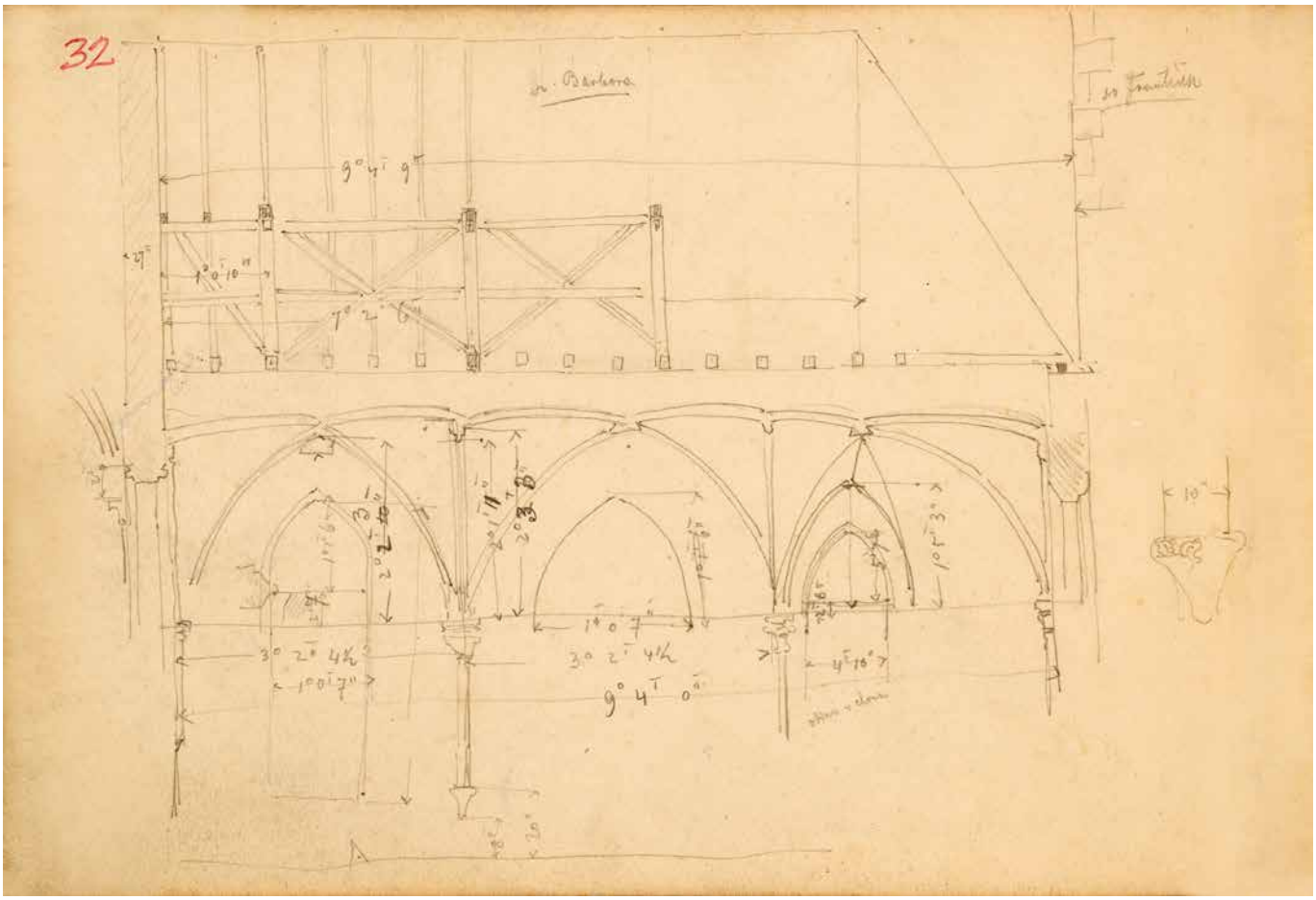


Fig. 18. St. Agnes Monastery, presbytery of the Church of St. Francis. Cross section through the presbytery from Josef Mocker's sketchbook from the year 1882, showing the original Baroque roof truss (deposited in: Prague Castle Archives, "Jednota pro dostavění chrámu sv. Víta", written part, sg. SK-2/XI, inv. no. 11, fol. 32; photo by O. Přibyl).

Fire or flood before 1343?

The nature of the lower layer A suggests that the building was exposed to fire before the reconstruction at the very start of the 14th century. In view of the newly obtained dating of the reconstruction, it is possible to relate two known events to this date — namely the fire of the Old Town of Prague in 1291 and the sudden disaster before 1343. The latter was considered by D. Líbal (Líbal/Hyzler/Lancinger 1964, 58) as the impulse for the massive reconstruction of the monastery during the 14th century. The relevance of the former cannot be ruled out, although it seems unlikely that the reconstruction of such an exposed site would have taken place with a delay of ten years. The later date needs to be subjected to a more detailed analysis, and this shows that it does not refer to the St. Agnes monastery at all.

In 1842, František Palacký (1842, 250) published a transcription of documents from the form collection of the Upper Austrian Cistercian monastery of Wilhering (*Das Formelbuch des Stiftes Wilhering*), dating back to the second half of the 14th century. In the first section, he included a part of the transcription that reads: "Cum monasterium sancti C. sororum poenitentium apud Pragam sit per vetustatem a casu fortuito omnimode dirutum ac etiam demolitum; – nostra diocesis per guerras et alias multiplices oppressiones, quae a multis retroactis temporibus hucusque ingruunt et adhuc proh dolor invalescunt, adeo est destructa, quod constructioni monasterii jam dicti sororibus praefatis ecclesiae pauperum sufficere nequeunt etc." This source was taken up by Zdenka Münzerová in her study of the St. Agnes Monastery (Münzerová 1932, 8–9) and applied to the ruined (*demolitum*) monastery of St. Claire, following the example of Václav Vladivoj Tomek (1866, 200 in reference to Palacký 1842, 250), who added the note "read: sanctae Clarae" to the section of text "monasterium sancti C. sororum".

The document, published by Palacký, contains a request for donations for the damaged monastery, addressed by Bishop John to Bishop John. This information was related to Bishop Jan IV of Dražice, whose death († 1343) thus became the *terminus ante quem* date for dating both the document and the supposed disaster (e.g. Soukupová 2011, 228). D. Líbal saw the fire as an impulse for the rebuilding of the monastery. On the contrary, H. Soukupová related this reference

to the flood of 1st February 1342, during which Judith's Bridge was destroyed (Soukupová 1989, 194, 387; Soukupová 2011, 228).

I believe that these conclusions can be challenged. In fact, the reference is evidently a transcription of an older document from the office of Bishop Tobias of Benešov (formerly of Bechyně), addressed to Bishop Henry of Regensburg, probably written between 1288–1290 and initially published by Jan B. Novák (1903, 195): "Reverendo in Christo patri domino H[enrico] dei gracia Ratisponensi episcopo Th[obias] eadem gracia Pragensis episcopus salutem et sinceram in domino caritatem. Cum monasterium sancti Galli sororum penitencium apud Pragam nostre dyocesis sit per vetustatem a casu fortuito omnimode dirutum ac etiam demolitum [...] Sed quia nostra dyocesis per guerras et alias multiplices oppressiones, que a multis retroactis temporibus hucusque viguerunt et adhuc proch dolor invalescunt, adeo est destructa, quod ad construccionem monasterii iamdicti sororibus prefatis elemosine pauperum sufficere nequeunt..." (on the documents from the office of Bishop Tobias of Benešov, see most recently Führer 2019 or Trojan 2023).

From a comparison of the two documents it is clear that the transcription, attributed to Bishop John IV of Dražice, took most of the wording from the older source. Minor differences are in personal and place names, inserted additions and in the transcription. The main problem is that V. V. Tomek read "sancti C." as "sanctae Clarae", although this was just a unifying abbreviation to make the form as universal as possible. Additionally, the strange addressing by Bishop John to Bishop John (in the original wording by Bishop Tobias to Bishop Henry) can be explained in the same way. As we can see from the Tobias´ charter, the key reference is to the Magdalenite monastery of St. Gall (sancti Galli) in Prague. The turning point was thus Tomek's misinterpretation, which became the starting point for further research. Moreover, the connection of the written source to the convent of the Magdalenites is also established by the formulation, in both documents, *sororum penitencium*, which can be related to the name of the order itself (*Sorores Pœnitentes Beatæ Mariæ Magdalenæ*), as it wasn´t common to address nuns from the Order of Poor Clare in such a way.[10] I believe, therefore, that the mention of a ruined monastery before 1343 must be rejected for the monastery of St. Agnes. On the contrary, Tobias' charter has already been correctly related to the convent of Magdalenites at the church of St. Gall (Vlček/Sommer/Foltýn 1997, 533; Trojan 2023, 48), first mentioned in 1282 (Ekert 1884, 413), and therefore also the charter published by Palacký.[11]

ROBERTUS, CARPENTARIUS NOSTER AND A MATTER OF AUTHORSHIP

It is tempting to deal with the scholarly tendency of authorial attribution, which in this case and mainly for 13th century may seem as a strongly uncritical and unfulfilling endeavour.

And yet — the rebuilding of St. Francis' presbytery must have been carried out in close project cooperation between the master mason and the master carpenter. The nature of the timber reinforcement suggests that it must have been designed by a carpenter who had used a similar solution before, or at least had sufficient experience to construct it for the first time. This is particularly evidenced by the economically advantageous omission of the beam clamp in the north-eastern bay of the apse – on the contrary, any oversized structural measures would have spoken more for a less experienced craftsman.[12]

The written sources for the Middle Ages rarely allow us to reach a convincing authorial attribution, or even an outline of a personal reconstruction of the royal building organization, which can be assumed at the court of Wenceslas II at least. However, such a royal building organization is well and almost continuously documented for the English royal court in the 13th century.[13] Here we find Nicholas de Andeli, master carpenter to King John (*Magister Nicholaus Carpentarius domini Regis*), recorded in rolls between 1207–1215 (Brown 1955, 372), Alexander, who became

10 For drawing attention on this I would like to thank Mgr. Pavel Soukup, Ph.D.

11 For consulting this chapter I thank Mgr. Stanislav Hlaváč.

12 I consider the omission of the timber clamp in the north-eastern bay of the apse to be evidence of the carpenter's ability to estimate the degree of sufficient security. However, it could also be seen as an underestimation of the situation, which would in turn demonstrate his inexperience. A similar situation is encountered, for example, on the construction of the Church of St Peter and Paul in Svojšín. According to the authors, "A striking feature of the construction handwriting of the master builder of the church in Svojšín […] is the uncritical trust in the load-bearing capacity of the stone, especially when it is subjected to bending and shearing" (Hauserová et al. 2011, 14–15).

13 On this topic selectively see J. H. Harvey (1948; 1987), A. J. Taylor (1950), E. A. Gee (1954), H. Braun (1985), in broader context M. Warnke (1985) or more precisely D. S. Leach (2017).

carpenter to King Henry III in 1256 (the king's carpenter, Salzman 1997, 51; Madeline 2012; Leach 2017, 189–190) or Thomas de Houghton, the king's carpenter active since 1290 (Taylor 1950). The consolidation of the position of the *king's chief carpenter* occurred in 1256 in the person of Master Alexander (Leach 2017, 189). A better source for royal master carpenters is John Harvey, English Mediaeval Architects, a biographical dictionary down to 1550 (Harvey 1987), in which he lists royal carpenters from 1233 onwards. From the French environment of the first third of the 14th century we know a nameless chief carpenter at the court of the Countess of Artois (*charpentier Madame*, Small 1989, 374), and from Poland in the early 15th century we know Jaroš the carpenter of Władysław II. Jagiełło (*Jarosch Carpentarius noster*).[14]

The king's carpenters were the originators of key royal building projects and their direct involvement in royal commissions must be assumed (Madeline 2012), even of a very different nature (Taylor 1950). However, it has to be also noted, that the term carpentarius regis did not always refer to an official function as such (in the sense of the office of *king's chief carpenter*), but may have served to identify more broadly the craftsmen working in the king's interest (known is a notation about *duo carpentarii regis*, Heywood 1818, 122). Thus, for example, in the mid 1240s the Sheriff of York was commissioned to assess options for fortifying the York castle, and he was to be assisted by Simon the carpenter and Henry the stonemason, who were sent by the king with other skilled craftsmen (Lethaby 1906, 151). The notation *duo carpentarii regis* could be perhaps understood in such way.

The key figure for our considerations and the Czech environment is Robert the carpenter, who was under service to Wenceslas II (*carpentarius noster*) and received from him the homestead in Hořovice, Bohemia (*villa Horawa*; RBM II, 1028; to identify it with Hořovice Vítovský 2004, 551). However, Kateřina Charvátová (2007, 242) misinterpreted his function and presented him as an architect.

Robert's name as such is already attracting attention, it suggests a Western European, i.e. English or French, rather than Central European origin,[15] although Josef Neuwirth (1888, 323–324) naturally assumed his German origin. If he is indeed identical with the carpenter Rupert, active in the Břevnov monastery, he probably entered the king's service after 1296 (for identification see Neuwirth 1888, 323–324; Vítovský 2004, 551). The tasks of the king's carpenter — whether Robert's or another's — would thus probably have included not only a key participation in the royal Cistercian monastery at Zbraslav (*Aula Regia*, since 1292), but quite possibly also the rebuilding of one of the older dynastic burial grounds, i. e. the church of St. Francis in St. Agnes monastery.

If Robert was still in office in 1303, it is suggested that it would have been him, by the nature of his office, who would have been entrusted with the reconstruction of the presbytery of the church of St. Francis. In close collaboration with the master mason, a project would have been drawn up to raise the building, to set a timber reinforcement, and finally to construct a new roof trusses.

Conclusion

The presented findings and their analysis prove that the presbytery of the church of St. Francis underwent a reconstruction shortly after 1300. The impulse for these repairs was probably a local fire. It is likely that the original roof burned at that time. As part of the subsequent reconstruction, the top of the masonry was raised and a timber reinforcement was installed, which primarily served a static function, but could also have served as a substructure for the working platform used during the construction of the roof in the area above the vault.

The asymmetrical solution of the timber reinforcement was modelled by the specific local situation – the north–eastern bay of the polygonal apse was already reinforced by the south–western buttress of the church of the Holy Saviour at the time of reconstruction and therefore the installation of the beam clamp was not necessary here. For this reason, the end itself was secured only in the north-west and south-east direction. This detail also well documents the economics and logic of the construction, as well as the experience of the master carpenter who designed the structure. Although the burial function of the Church of St.Francis was transferred to the church of the Holy Saviour before 1278 and subsequently to the monastery church at Zbraslav for the ruling dynasty, this space still held a quite exceptional position, notwithstanding Wenceslas'

14 Transription (1785) of a charter from 1410, deposited in the National Museum in Kraków, available in MNK Naruszewicz 10.
15 On the example of the name of Robert the Englishman, Bishop of Olomouc see Eva Svobodová (2018, 58).

positive attitude towards the Minorite and Claretian[16] monasteries (Soukupová 2011, 209, 217). As late as 1296, Wenceslas' sister Agnes (not St. Agnes) was buried in the church of St. Francis (Zbraslavská kronika, 104). It seems logical, therefore, that repairs to it, as soon as possible, must have been a priority. An analogous situation has recently been recorded in No. 553 in the Sixtus House block in Prague's Old Town in Celetná Street (Bartoš 2022).[17] The pine timbers used for the construction of the wooden ceiling fell down at the turn of 1301/1302. L. Bartoš assumes that the impulse for its use was not the fire of the Old Town of Prague in 1291, but a local fire around 1300 whose traces are visible. The prestigious address of the building in the immediate vicinity of Old Town Square prevents the author from accepting that the reconstruction only started after a ten year break (Bartoš 2022, 81). Nevertheless, it must at least be admitted that the presbytery of St. Francis' Church could have already been damaged by the fire in 1291, provisionally roofed and repaired only when time, personnel or financial conditions allowed it. However, I consider this scenario less likely.

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16 The term Claretian is common in the English language. On the legitimate use of the archaic adjective *klariský* used in the Czech version of the text, see the dissertation of Jarmila Kašpárková (2014, 12, note 20).

17 Thanks to Ing. Tomáš Kyncl, Ph.D. for bringing this research to my attention.

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RESUMÉ

NEZNÁMÁ POZDNĚ PŘEMYSLOVSKÁ PŘESTAVBA PRESBYTÁŘE KOSTELA SV. FRANTIŠKA V ANEŽSKÉM KLÁŠTEŘE V PRAZE : K NÁLEZU TRÁMOVÉ VÝZTUHY Z DOBY PO ROCE 1303 A JEJÍM PARALELÁM

V rámci stavebněhistorického průzkumu byla rozpoznána dosud neznámá stavební etapa presbytáře kostela sv. Františka v Anežském klášteře (obr. **1**, **2**). Spočívala v navýšení koruny zdiva o zdivo ***B*** (obr. **6**, **9**, **10**) a vezdění ztužující trámové konstrukce (obr. **3**), hypoteticky sloužící i jako základ manipulační platformy pro konstrukci nového krovu. Do nadezdívky byla v podélné části závěru vetknuta čtveřice příčných trámových kleštin, v síle obvodového zdiva svázaných s průběžným trámem ve funkci pozednice (obr. **12**, **14A**, **14B**, **14D**). Zpevnění vlastního polygonu závěru bylo řešeno asymetricky, došlo pouze k provázání jeho jihovýchodní výseče. V severovýchodní výseči dřevěná kleština zavázána nebyla, neboť tato část závěru byla již dříve zpevněna jihozápadním opěrákem sousedního kostela Nejsv. Salvátora (obr. **3**, **4**, **5**), jehož výstavba proběhla ještě před opravou závěru sv. Františka. Shromážděné konstrukční analogie ve věžových stavbách (např. obr. **17A**, **17B**) dovolují uvažovat, že trámový rošt mohl být užit pro osazení sanktusníkové věže.

Ohořelé zdivo vrstvy ***A*** z let 1238–1245 (obr. **9**, **10**, **13**) pod dřevěnou konstrukcí dokládá, že impulzem k této přestavbě byl dosud neznámý lokální požár, k němuž došlo pravděpodobně krátce po roce 1300 (případně již 1291), jak dokládá dendrochronologicky určený rok smýcení stromu pro trámovou kleštinu 1302/1303. K nálezové situaci je možné vztáhnout jen dvě pramenně doložené události, a to požár Starého Města v roce 1291 či neštěstí neznámého charakteru, které mělo proběhnout před rokem 1343. Význam objektu téměř vylučuje, aby oprava proběhla až deset let po požáru Starého Města z roku 1291, který je proto jako impulz k přestavbě odmítnut. Kritická revize druhého z pramenů, vročeného do doby před rokem 1343, který se stal oporou pro běžně přijímanou tezi o tehdejším poničení kláštera, přesvědčivě zjistila, že s Anežským klášterem nijak nesouvisí. Impulzem k přestavbě presbytáře kostela sv. Františka byl tedy pramenně nezachycený lokální požár, který postihl část města snad v roce 1301 nebo 1302.

V rámci studie a na základě zahraničních paralel je předložena myšlenka, že projekt na přestavbu královského pohřebiště mohl být svěřen řemeslníkovi zastávajícímu v té době funkci královského tesaře – v tomto konkrétním případě by šlo o tesaře Roberta, jenž byl pravděpodobně od roku 1296 v královych službách.

Přínosem příspěvku je nejen obohacení našich znalostí o stavebním vývoji jedné z nejpřednějších staveb rané gotiky v Čechách, o chronologické upřesnění písemnými prameny nepodchyceného požáru na Starém Městě pražském, ale i zmapování dalšího a dobře rekonstruovatelného příkladu dřevěné ztužující konstrukce z doby krátce po roce 1300.

Obr. 1. Lokalizace kláštera sv. Františka, později známého jako Anežský klášter, na Starém Městě pražském. Dvojklášter ženského řádu klarisek a mužského řádu menších bratří, založený českou princeznou Anežkou Přemyslovnou (* mezi 1205 a 1211 – † 2. 3. 1282), která se stala jeho abatyší (do podkladu NPÚ ÚOP v Praze zobrazila S. Babušková, 2024).

Obr. 2. Anežský klášter. Klíčové středověké objekty v areálu na dnešní katastrální mapě. **Černě** – první stavební etapa (1231–1234), **červeně** – druhá stavební etapa (1238–1245, po 1261). **1** – presbytář kostela sv. Františka; **2** – loď kostela sv. Františka; **3** – kaple Panny Marie; **4** – kostel Nejsv. Salvátora; **5** – ambit klarisek, **6** – ambit františkánů minoritů (podle Soukupová 2011, 24–25).

Obr. 3. Anežský klášter, presbytář kostela sv. Františka. Půdorys podkroví v úrovni fáze ***B*** s trámovou ztužující konstrukcí v současném stavu a její rekonstrukce: **a** – jihozápadní opěrný pilíř kostela Nejsv. Salvátora; **1** – podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka; **2** – štít lodi kostela sv. Františka; **3** – prostor kaple Panny Marie; **4** – prostor kostela Nejsv. Salvátora (zaměření a kresba autor, 2024).

Obr. 4. Vilém Kandler, *s. d.*: Anežský klášter. Pohled od jihovýchodu na presbytář kostela sv. Františka (**vlevo**) a kostel Nejsv. Salvátora (**vpravo**), publikovaný v Mikovec/Zap 1865, mezi 130–131.

Obr. 5. Anežský klášter. Pohled od východu na presbytář kostela sv. Františka (**vlevo**) na předěl mezi starším zdivem (1238–1245) a navýšením z doby po roce 1300, zřetelný nejen ve struktuře zdiva, ale rovněž určený svrchní hranicí nárožního armování (*cf*. detail). Severní část presbytáře zakryta opěrákem kostela Nejsv. Salvátora (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 6. Anežský klášter, presbytář kostela sv. Františka. Pohled od jihu na předěl mezi starším zdivem a navýšením z doby po roce 1300. Nad záklenky oken viditelná horizontální spára (**žlutě** zvýrazněno) mezi starším zdivem a zdivem fáze ***B*** obsahujícím dřevěnou ztužovací konstrukci (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 7. Anežský klášter, presbytář kostela sv. Františka. Pohled do jihozápadního kouta podkroví na styk jižní obvodové zdi presbytáře z lomového kamene a východního štítu lodě kostela sv. Františka z pravidelných kvádříků z 30. let 13. století (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 8. Anežský klášter, podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka. Líc jižní obvodové zdi nad rubem klenby s odříznutým zbytkem trámu ztužující konstrukce (foto autor, 2024; neupraveno).

Obr. 9. Záběr z obr. **7** s vyznačením rozhraní mezi fázemi ***A***, ***B*** a ***C*** (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 10. Záběr z obr. **8**, zvýšený barevný kontrast zvýrazňuje rozhraní mezi fázemi ***A*** (114 cm od úžlabí klenby), ***B*** (60 cm) a ***C*** (32 cm) a výškovou pozici trámové kleštiny (cca 17 × 23 cm) ve zdivu ***B***. Zřetelné je tmavé zbarvení a narůžovělá barva opuky užité ve vrstvě ***A*** a nažloutlá barva opuky užité ve vrstvě ***B*** (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 11. Anežský klášter, podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka. Vrchol klenby a zdivo ***A*** z první stavební fáze (1238–1245), **žlutě** ložná spára zdiva ***B*** z přestavby krovu po roce 1300 (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 12. Anežský klášter. Řez jižním obvodovým zdivem podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka, schéma výškových parametrů nad vrcholem rubu klenby (**červchovaně**). Na korunu zdiva ***A*** (**sytě šedě**) položena trámová konstrukce (podle pokynů autora S. Babušková, 2024).

Obr. 13. Anežský klášter, podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka. Narůžovělá barva opuky ve vrstvě ***A*** dokládá, že tato vrstva byla vystavena ohni (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 14. Anežský klášter, podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka. Líc severní obvodové zdi podélné části závěru nad rubem klenby. **A** – v úžlabí klenby (vrstva ***A***) zřetelná cihelná kapsa po trámku lešení, ve vrstvě ***B*** prázdná kapsa pro trámovou kleštinu se zřetelným úsekem průběžného trámu v hloubce zdiva; **B** – západní z kapes po trámové kleštině se zřetelným fragmentem průběžného trámu; **C** – cihelná kapsa pro trámek lešení; **D** – nejvýchodnější z kapes po trámové kleštině v severní obvodové zdi podélné části závěru (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 15. Anežský klášter, podkroví presbytáře kostela sv. Františka. Jedna ze dvou kapes po dřevěné kulatině v osovém poli polygonu závěru (foto autor, 2024).

Obr. 16. Anežský klášter, presbytář kostela sv. Františka. Schematický řez obvodovým zdivem při ose středního pole s promítnutím jedné z dřevěných kulatin. Výškové poměry mezi jednotlivými vrstvami (***A***, ***B***, ***C***) jsou v osovém poli odlišné od hodnot podélné části presbytáře. Jedním z důvodů mohlo být právě osazení a potřeba ukotvení manipulačního zařízení (kresba autor, 2024).

Obr. 17. Analogie k zazděné trámové konstrukci. **A** – Albrechtice nad Vltavou, kostel sv. Petra a Pavla, okr. Písek, 3. čtvrtina 12. století. Trámy v obvodových zdech věže a na ně osazené nosné trámy podlahy (převzato ze Sommer 1999, 74, grafická úprava S. Babušková, 2024); **B** – Norwich, brána sv. Ethelberta, kolem 1090 (převzato z Wilcox 1981, 7).

Obr. 18. Anežský klášter, presbytář kostela sv. Františka. Řez presbytářem ze skicáře Josefa Mockera (1882) se zachycením původního barokního krovu (uloženo: Archiv Pražského hradu, fond Jednota pro dostavění chrámu sv. Víta, písemná část, sign. SK-2/XI, inv. č. 11, fol. 32; foto O. Přibyl).

Tab. 1. Redukovaná tabulka s výsledky dendrochronologického průzkumu (data převzata z Kyncl 2024).

Plný text příspěvku v českém jazyce je dostupný na web stránce časopisu:
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