

The places of pilgrimage in the region of Pelhřimovsko in the light of chapter songs

The region of Pelhřimovsko, located in the south-western part of the Bohemian-Moravian Highlands is not perceived as an area of great religious belief nowadays. But in the early modern period as well as in the 19th century, the Catholic faith manifested its vitality also in the region.

One of the most visible demonstrations of re-catholization of the Pelhřimovsko region was the aggrandizement of the place of pilgrimage in Křemešník. The legends of the miracle water, as well as the story about the foundation of the church in the middle of deep forest, were presented, spread, and formed by chapter songs, brochures, and tiny printed material. During the first half of the 20th century, the famous place of religious pilgrimage became a popular tourist destination but the remembrance of the miraculous histories reminded very strong.

There were of course other places of pilgrimage in the wider surroundings, despite their fame did not reach the glory of the Holy Trinity in Křemešník. The cult of St. Ann in Úsobí near Humpolec and in Pohled near Havlíčkův Brod growing in the 19th century can be mentioned. The youngest place of Pilgrimage not far from Pelhřimov appeared in Chotoviny in 1868 because of the apparition of St. Virgin in a water well.

All above-mentioned centres of the religious cult were publicized by chapter songs surviving in museums collections in the region. The aim of the paper is to reconstruct the image of these places of pilgrimage, especially Křemešník, in chapter songs – both in their texts and graphics. The chapter songs will be perceived as a medium of collective memory and religious tradition and a tool of the official presentation of the object of the Catholic faith at the same time.

The sources for the proposed paper have derived from the three projects¹ documented chapter songs deposited in the museums' collections in the region: in Pelhřimov, Humpolec, Pacov, and Počátky. Tens of copies of chapter songs on the topic of the local places of pilgrimage are preserved and it is thus possible to reconstruct the development of their image in this part of the semi-vernacular culture.

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