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Znojmo castle

Jihomoravské muzeum ve Znojmě
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ZNOJMO CASTLE



The rocky promontory looming high above the confluence of the Dyje River and the Granice Brook seems to have been an old occult place, and it was not until the late 11th century that Moravian duke Conrad I, later Duke of Bohemia, and his son Luitpold resolved to build a new military fortress here. Until then the Moravian Přemyslids had been using the old hill-fort at Hradiště (Mount St Hippolytus), opposite the Granice Valley. From the strategic point-of-view, this new castle was much better and more appropriate for defence of the merchant road leading from Austria via Cow Mountain and the Dyje River ford below the castle towards the north. Right in the middle of the castle, a respectable chapel (rotunda) of Virgin Mary and Saint Catherine was built. The castle became residence for Moravian margraves Conrad Otto and Vladislaus Henry who rebuilt the castle of stone and divided it by a deep ditch in two parts: the rear castle with the palace and palace chapel, and the front castle with military barracks and the Rotunda. The entrance to the castle was guarded by a mighty octagonal tower - the so called Robber Tower (collapsed 1892).

When King Ottokar I founded the royal city of Znojmo (1222/1226), the castle became a citadel with a strong garrison inside, commanded by the royal burgrave. The castle then witnessed many important visits and diplomatic negotiations between the Bohemian and Austrian rulers. At the time of the Hussite Wars, Znojmo Castle was in the hands of King (later Emperor) Sigismund who died here in 1437. From the second half of the 15th century, however, the importance of Znojmo Castle began to diminish. Kings often pawned it to country noblemen. The last shiny moment came in 1529-1530 when Mary of Habsburg, the Queen Dowager and Emperor Charles V's sister, dwelt here before moving to the Netherlands. In 1630 it was damaged by fire, and though partially repaired, it lacked consistent maintenance and fell into ruin.

By a decree of Emperor Joseph I in 1709, the rear part was lent as a fief to the Counts of Deblin, whereas the front part with the rotunda and stables was sold to Znojmo burghers, who founded a brewery here in 1720. The Deblins had the ruinous old castle palace demolished and built a new Baroque chateau in its stead (1711/1721) with a spacious *cour d'honneur* oriented towards the picturesque deep river canyon. The entrance hall of the chateau was decorated with frescoes by Johann Michael Fisée (1686 - 1732). They depict the Habsburg rulers from 15th century down to Charles VI. When Count Joseph of Deblin died in 1784 with no heir, the chateau returned into the hands of emperor. Furniture was sold in auction and the empty building served military purposes for the whole of the 19th century.

In 1910-1922 the entire chateau was adapted by the Znojmo city council for a museum. Production of beer in the front part of the castle had been gradually strangled until it was closed down.(2010).

Opening hours and more info: www.znojmuz.cz , znojmuz@znojmuz.cz.,

tel. +420 515 282 211, +420 515 222 311

Castle Administration: Jihomoravské muzeum ve Znojmě, Přemyslovců 8, 669 45

Znojmo – CZ



ZNOJMO CASTLE



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