

The introductory chapter fills a completely blank space concerning the history, organisation and spirituality of the Order of the Discalced Augustinians in the Czech context. The existing literature has so far only briefly outlined this topic; however, it cannot be explored with no knowledge of the 20<sup>th</sup>-century professional Italian research works or the preserved resources produced by the General Curia in Rome and the 18<sup>th</sup> century literature of the Order.

The thesis also provides a general overview of the activities of the Czech monasteries of the Discalced Augustinians in the period context, also reflecting the influence of the Order on the spiritual and cultural life of the laymen, an influence which, as regards the monastery in Lnare, extends into the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The extant resources have helped to describe relations between the members of the Order and the outside world, be it the links to the local clergy or laymen, especially burghers and nobility or its dependants. The relationship between the families who financed the foundation of the two latest monasteries (Lnare and Lysa nad Labem) and the monastic community is the focus of specific attention. The monastery benefactors who financed specific artworks were also recruited from these contacts. In return, they could hope to be remembered in the monks' prayers to save their souls, unless this was determined as part of the stipend agreement, for instance.

The role of the Discalced Augustinians in commissioning these works of art, never described in the Czech context before, is very closely related to this. As a mendicant order, the Discalced Augustinians were unable to fund all works of art from their own resources. Although ownership as such was not banned for the community, they were limited by the spirituality of the Order, the essence of the discalced reformed branches and the constitutions based on them. This is why it was so important for them to maintain good relations with benefactors, as mentioned above. The constructional development of the premises of the related monasteries was selected to illustrate this approach. This paper also outlines the approach of the contractor, who was absolutely clear as regards the appearance of the newly created pieces of architecture, or closely related fresco decorations and

prestigious series of large paintings. An overview of the artists who worked for the Order is also included. The paper does not provide descriptions of the monastery and church furnishings so as not to detract from the unifying and summarising overall view of the Discalced Augustinians in commissioning works of art.