

CIVVIH

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comité international des villes et villages historiques  
international committee on historic towns and villages

The International Conference

of the CIVVIH Sub Committee for Central and Eastern Europe

29<sup>th</sup> of June – 3<sup>rd</sup> of July, 2016 in Cesky Krumlov, Czech Republic

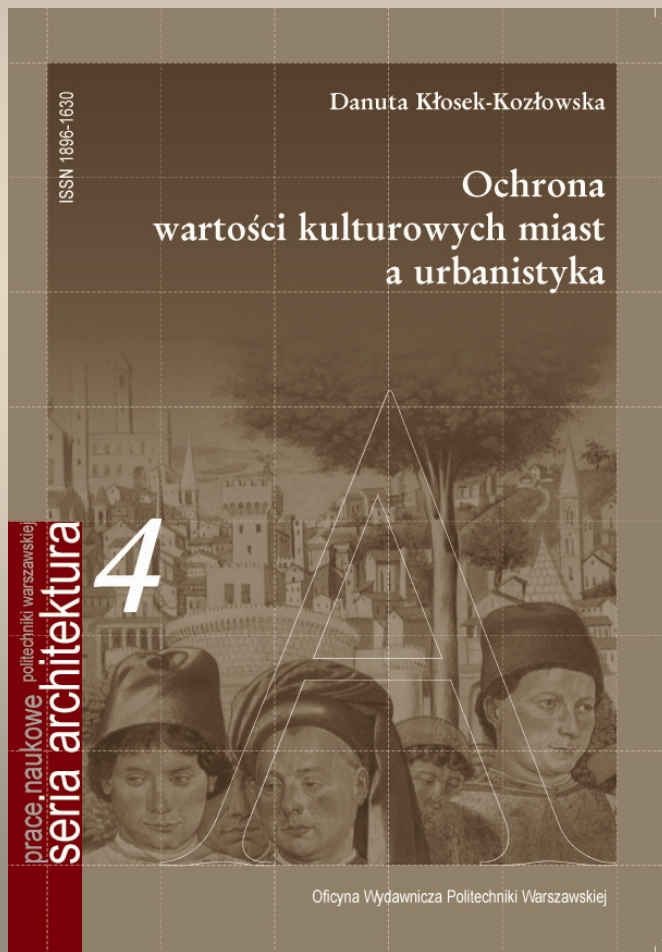
# *Heritage of the Towns - local and regional values. Slavonice*

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Historic Town and Villages CIVVIH - ICOMOS*

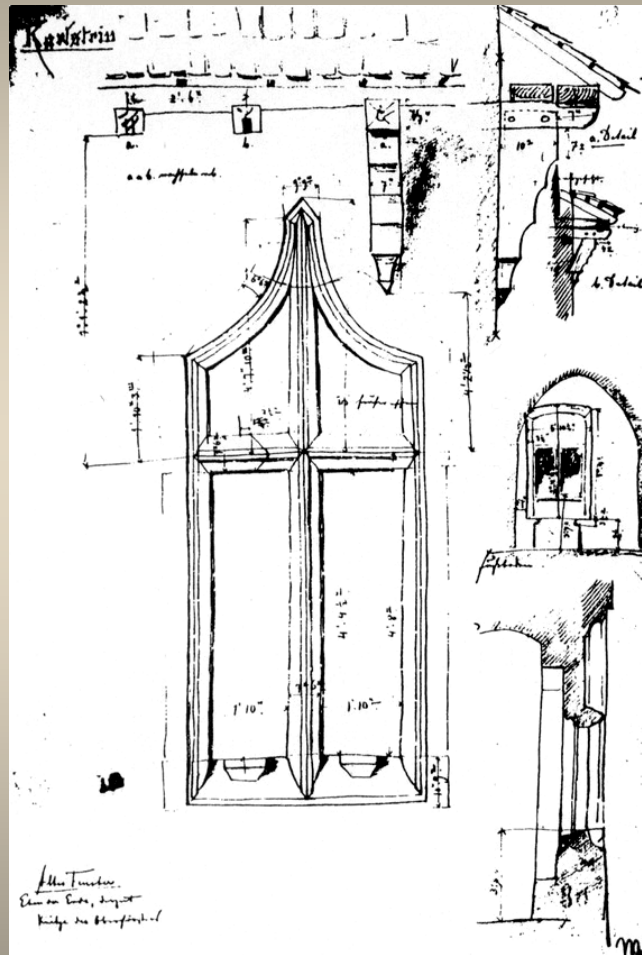
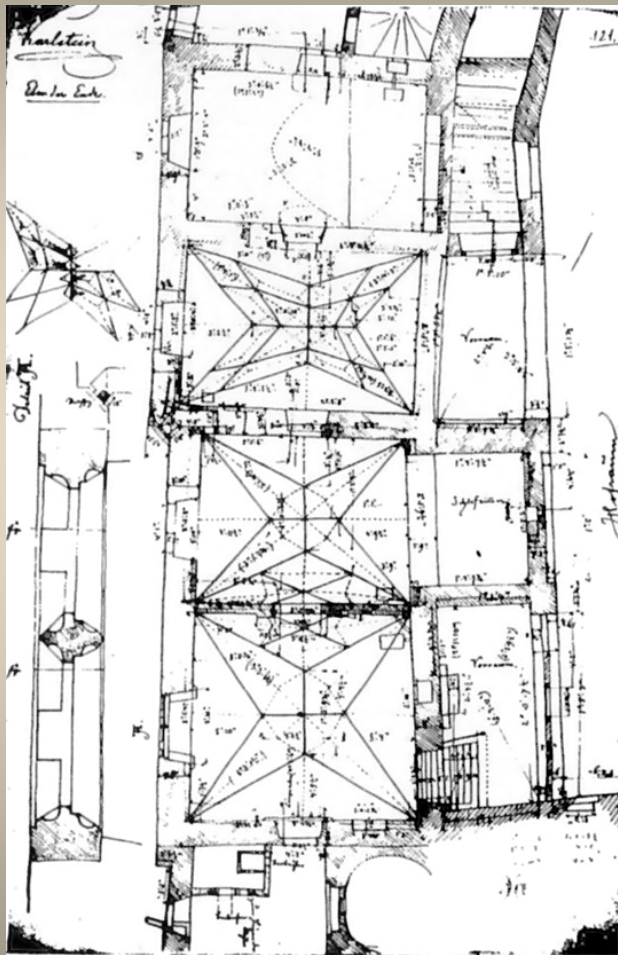
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Intense interest in “the autumn of the Middle Ages” (J. Huizinga) or “the spring of the Renaissance” (J. Burckhardt), particularly among German researchers (A. Schmarsow, P. Frankl, C. Gurlitt, E. Haenel, W.Niemayer), has led to recognizing **the Late Gothic** as an autonomous style with distinct artistic objectives and several local variants independent of French traditions, as **an important trend in the architecture of Northern, Central and Eastern Europe.**

The Late Gothic period is assumed to cover the years 1350-1550, when in southern Germany, England, Bohemia and Poland traditional basilicas were being replaced with hall churches.



Already in 1890 Cornelius Gurlitt, discussing Late Gothic phenomena in Germany and northern Europe, labelled them “Renaissance”. Hence, also Slovak and Czech researchers (Vaclav and Dobroslava Menclov, 1938), as well as some Polish ones, have classified this modern treatment of spatial forms as a phenomenon related to the Renaissance (J. Dutkiewicz, 1962), who calls those tendencies the “**northern proto-Renaissance**”

Josef Mocker, drawings - Karlstein, 1886

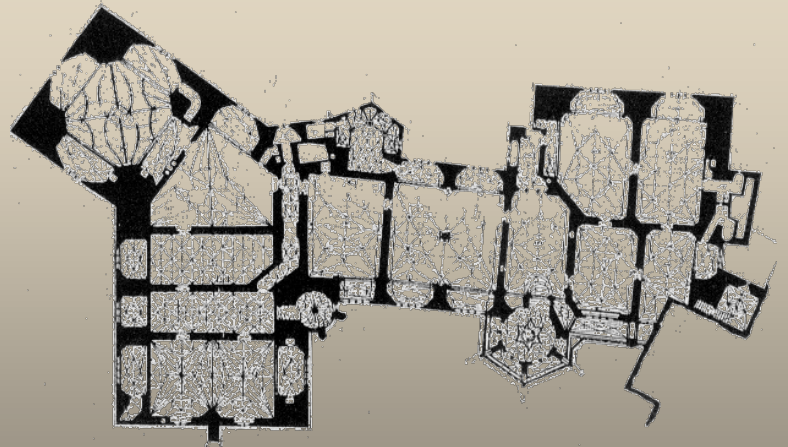
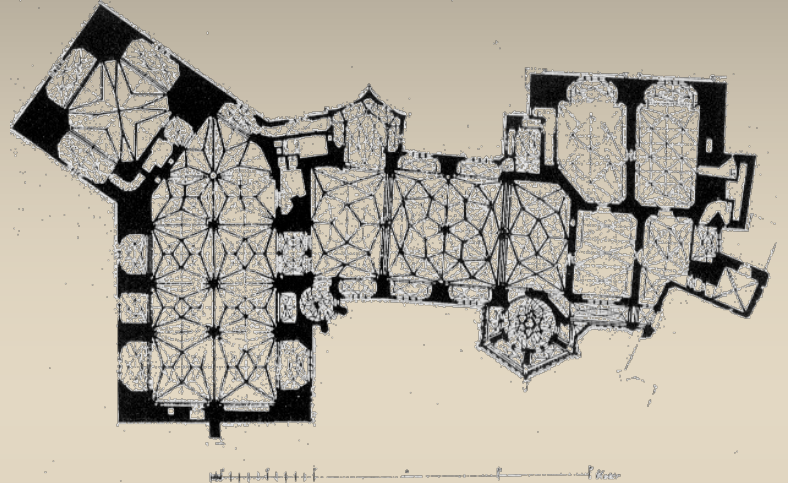
Gothic buildings fascinated nineteenth-century romantics, painters, also researchers and architects, who studied Gothic details and forms to develop their professional skills.

## The space

The most salient feature of the Late Gothic was a change in the **understanding of space** - of its shaping and sense. It was manifested in a search for **spatial unity and monumentality**, characteristic also of parallel developments in Italian architecture, and evident for instance in the works of Giotto and Brunelleschi in Florence.

In the Late Gothic period **space is no longer divided**.

Fragmented spaces become a **unity thanks to the introduction of geometrically-cut net and cellular diamond vaults**



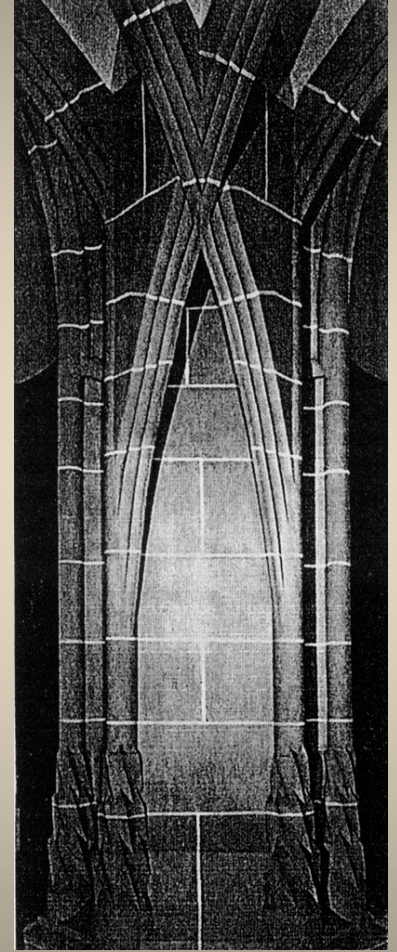
*Cornelius Gurlitt (1850-1937), an outstanding historian of art and conservator of Saxonian monuments:,  
**Albrechtsburg Castle in Meissen (Germany)***





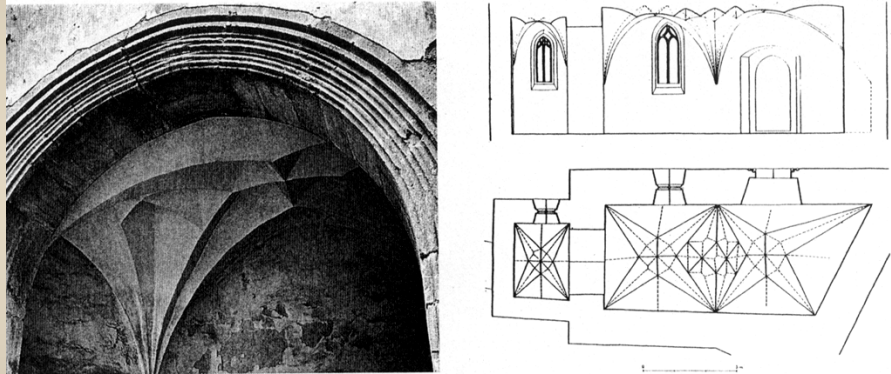
Cellular diamond vaults, introduced by Master Arnold of Westphalia in 1471 in all the interiors of the Castle in Meissen, (including a spiral staircase and wall-niches: see foto) were soon copied in various public buildings and main urban structures, but they were not immediately transferred into church architecture in this European Region.

This points to the fact that the Late Gothic was closely connected with **the culture of towns and burghers**, a class, which at that time had already developed refined tastes and high expectations concerning the quality of life. The new technique of net construction and cellular diamond vault proved to be particularly **useful in modernising** various small architectural structures and houses interiors.

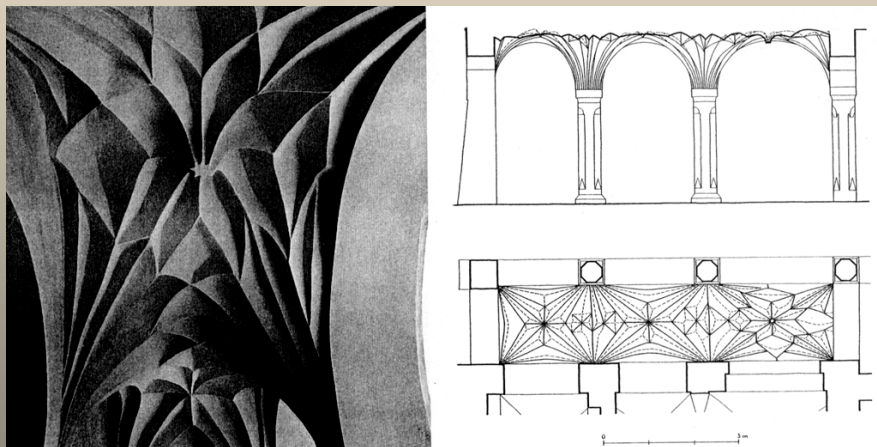


The net construction and cellular diamond vault was easy to apply especially in small existing interiors of irregular shape, to which the intricate network of ribs and cells gave spatial unity and clarity. In accordance with the needs of the epoch it also created a new spatial quality and modern artistic expression, introducing to public and private interiors alike new aesthetic effects

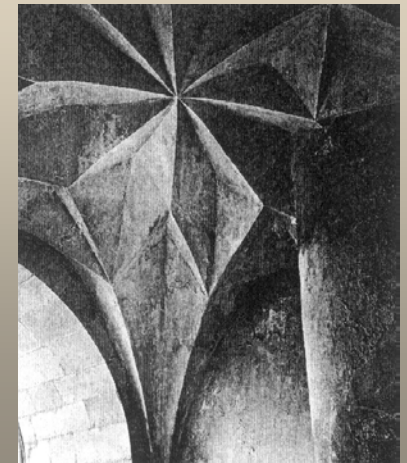
*Kuneticka Hora (Czech Rep.)*



*Wittenberg (Germany) – The castle*

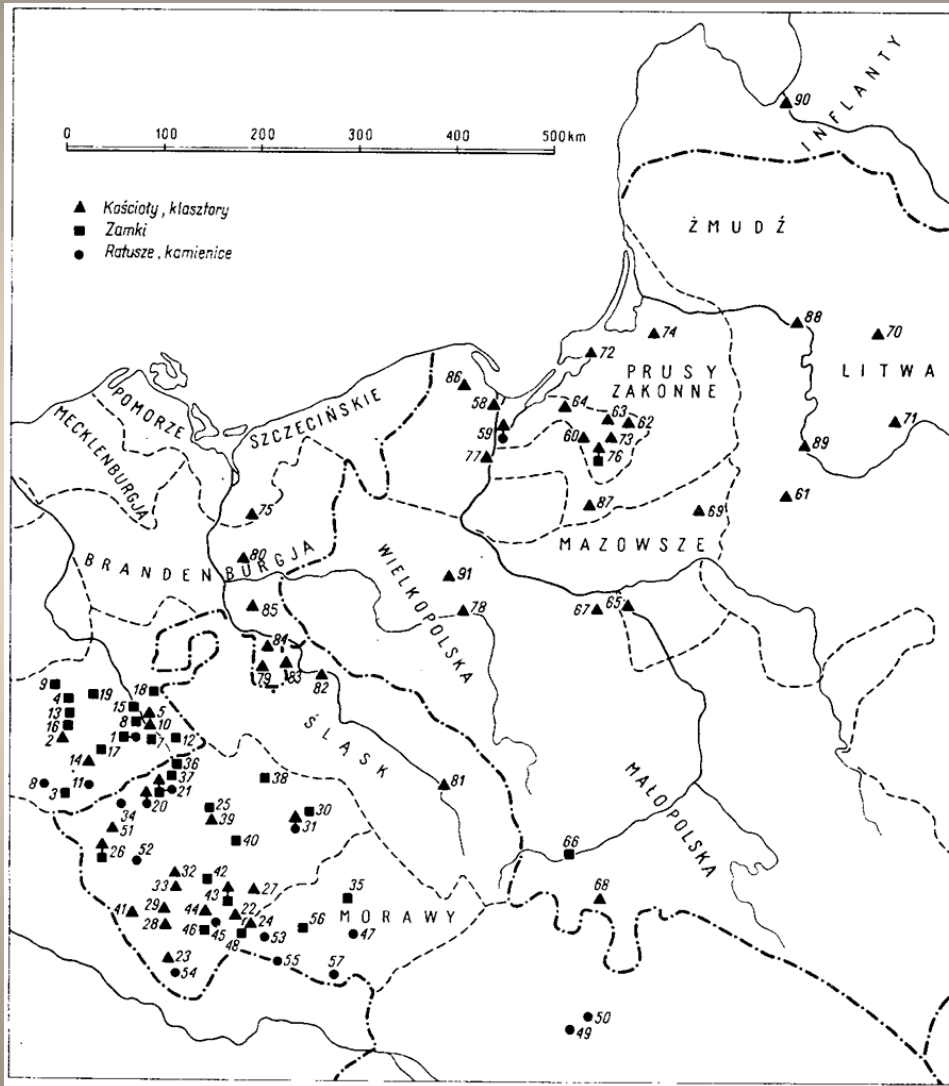


*Jindrichuv (Czech Rep.) – arcades to the Market Square*



*Chomutov (Czech Rep.)*





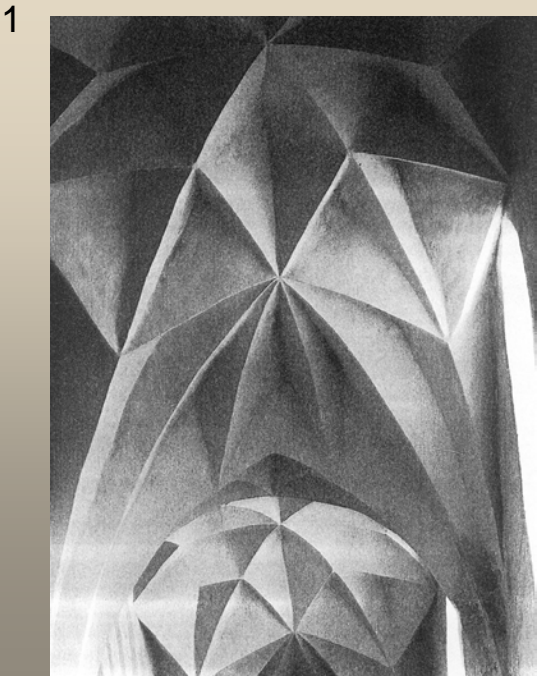
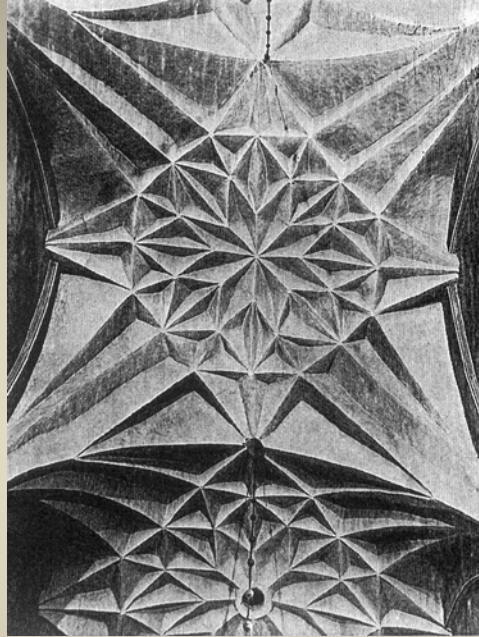
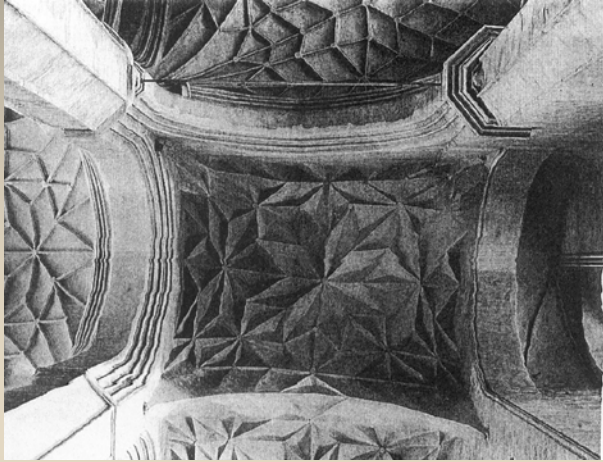
## Cellular diamond vaults can be found in Europe in three partially overlapping territories:

- 1) present southern Germany and Austria
- 2) in Bohemia and Poland
- 3) in a narrow area along the Oder River culturally connected with the New March (Germany) and in the eastern part of the Baltic coast – with the former Ducal Prussia.

All examples share diamond-shaped vault cells, while other features, e.g. details of construction, technique or material, vary from region to region.

This kind of construction and decoration were used in Upper Saxony in Germany and in countries to the East and South from the end of 15th century and all the 16th

**Germany, Czech and Poland about 1500. Diamond cellular vaults**  
 elaborated by M. Radova (Bohemia and Moravy), M. Brykowska (Poland and Saksony)



**Polish examples** of diamond-shaped vault cells are found almost exclusively in religious architecture – in churches. Only few examples can be find in secular architecture – in nobles palaces

**1- Gdansk, St Virgin Mary church**

**2- Kętrzyn, St George church**

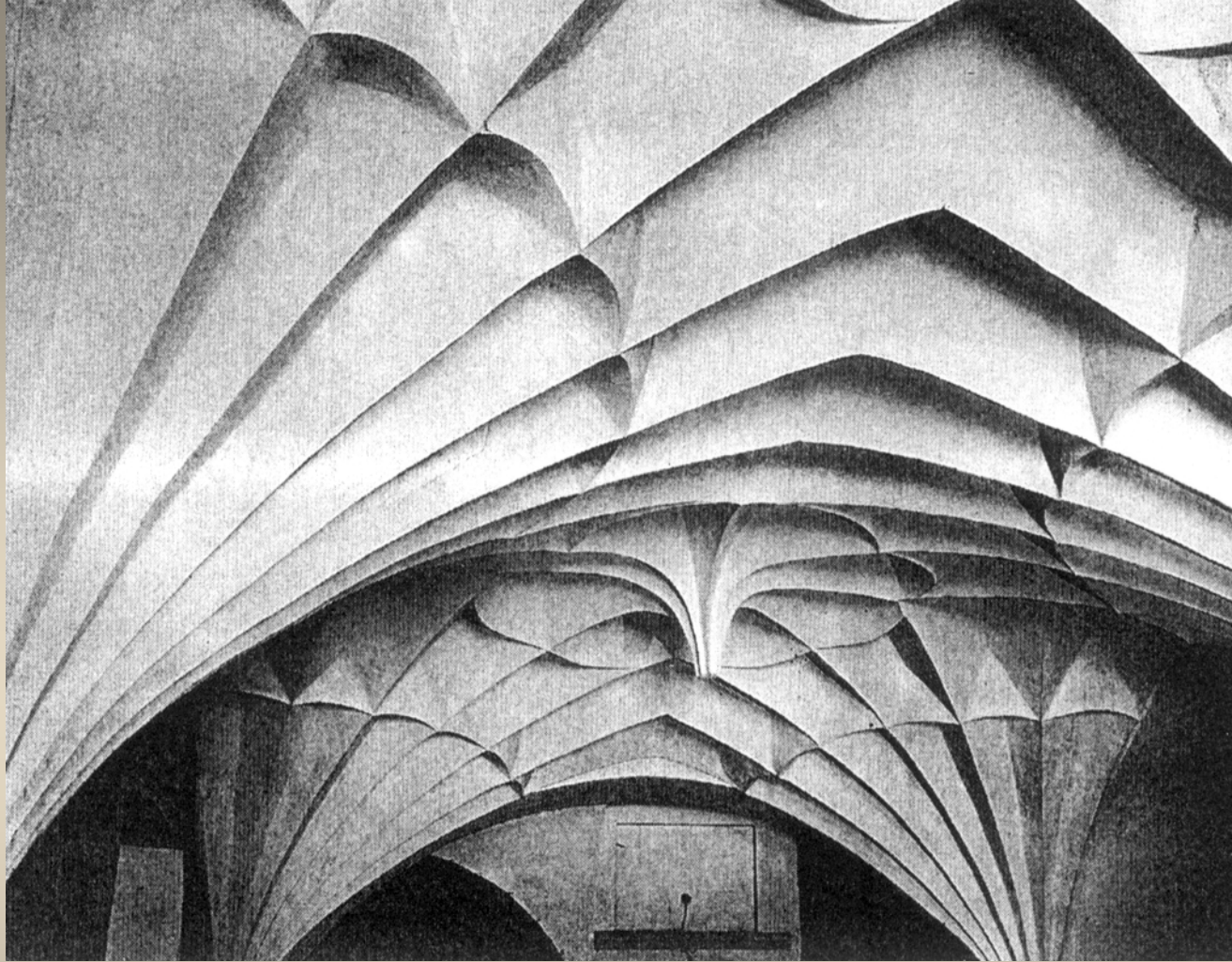
**3- Dobre Miasto, Collegium**

**4- Morağ, St St.,Peter and Paul church**

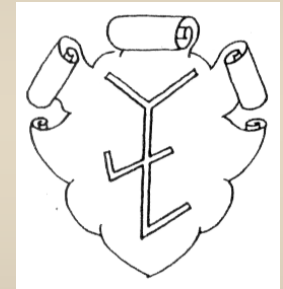
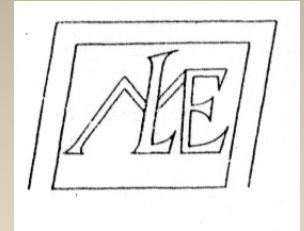


The most spectacular results of the import of cellular diamond vaults can be found in western Bohemia. The idea, transferred from Saxony by Bernardine monks, **was creatively adopted by Bohemian master-builders and architects**, who used it to produce absolutely exceptional shapes of vaults and spatial arrangements when modernizing buildings in Bohemian towns.

**This exceptional heritage create distinguished feature an outstanding universal value of cultural landscape of Central Europe, which is also unique in the world.**



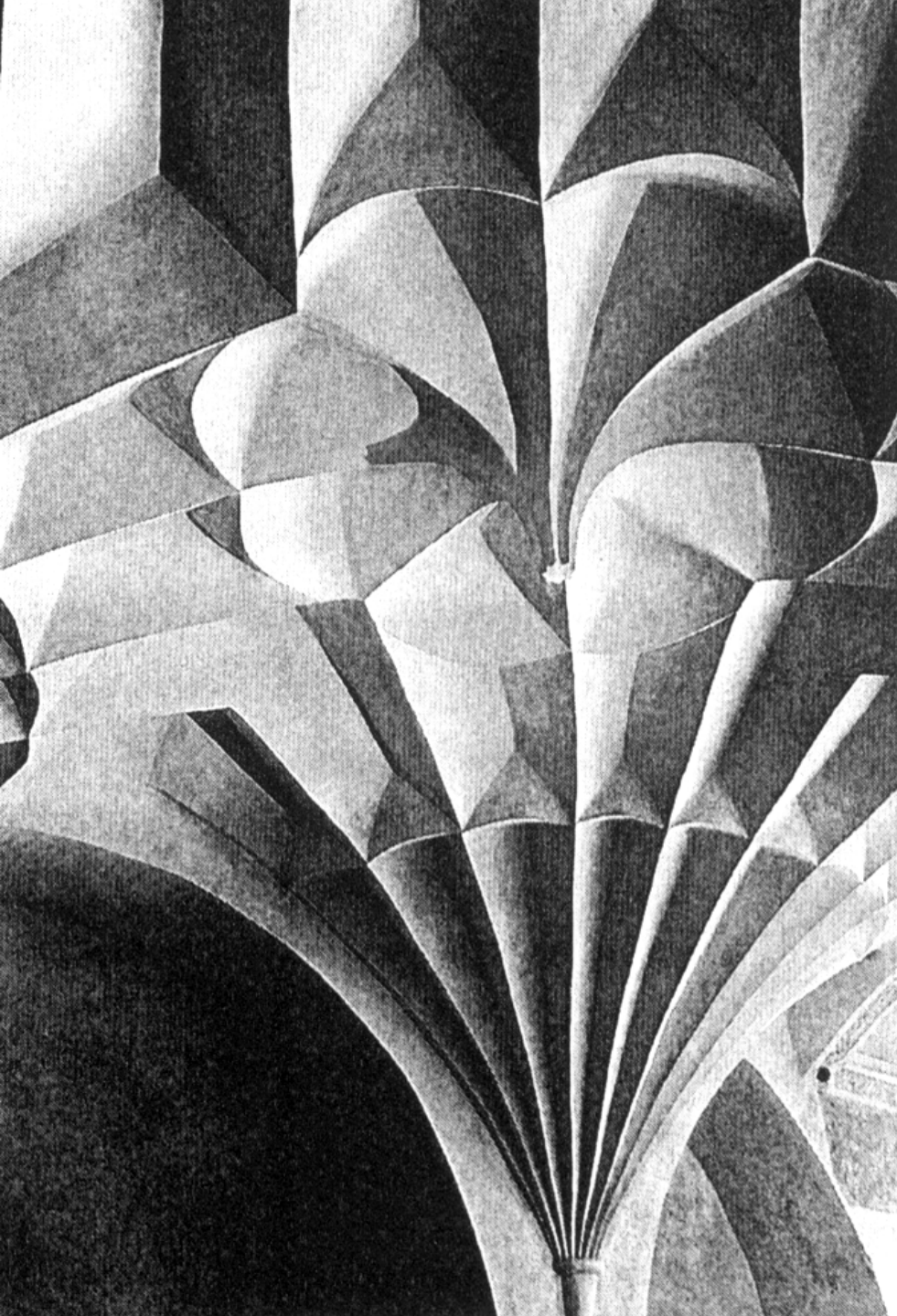
## Houses in Slavonice



Monograms  
of Leopold Estreicher

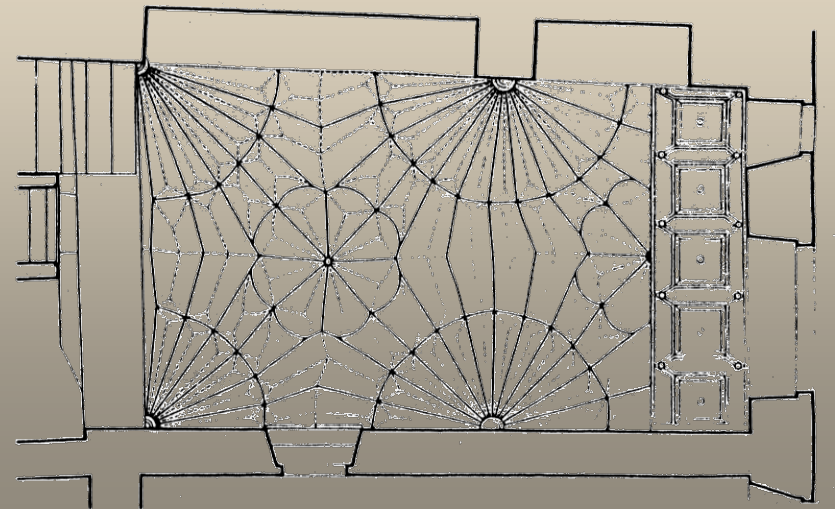
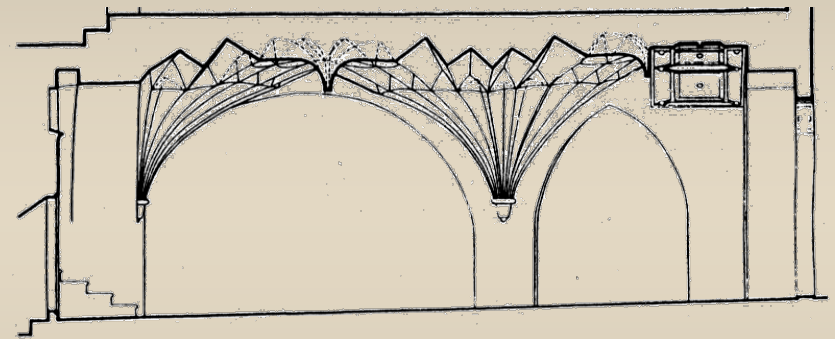
The diamond cellular vaults in Slavonice, constructed about 1550 by Leopold Estreicher, a great master-builder of the Region and signed with his initials, have survived in the original form and structure. The shape of the vault is always adjusted to the shape and character of the interior, and it never repeats, which, together with the authenticity of the substance, makes the houses in Slavonice exceptionally valuable. Leopold Estreicher's cellular diamond vaults, based on the central symmetric vaulting pattern with characteristic **owered bosses** and unknown outside Bohemia, testifying to the builder's great skill, created a modern living space in burgher houses.



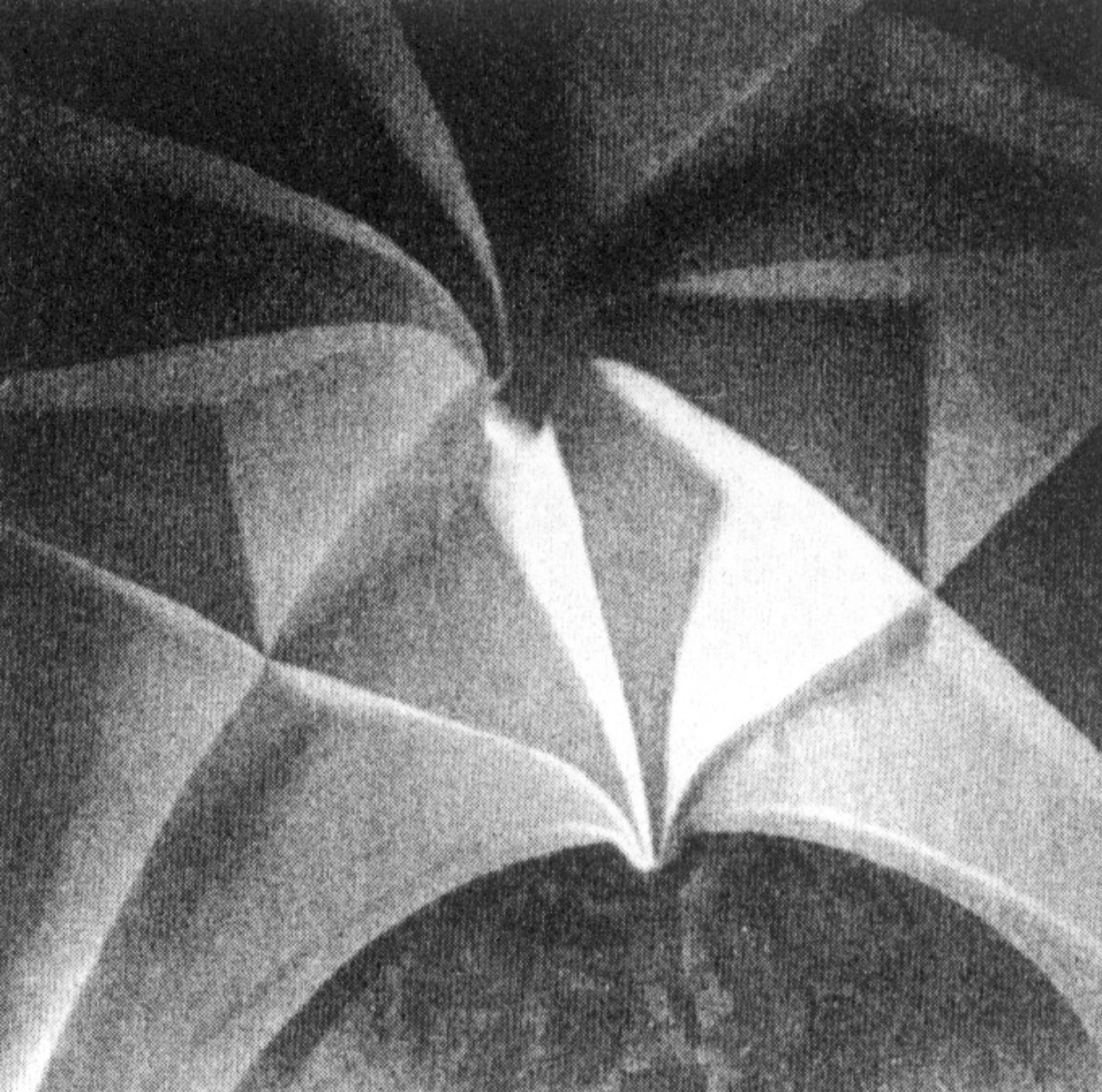


Leopold Estreicher's cellular diamond vaults, represent a masterpiece of human creative genius

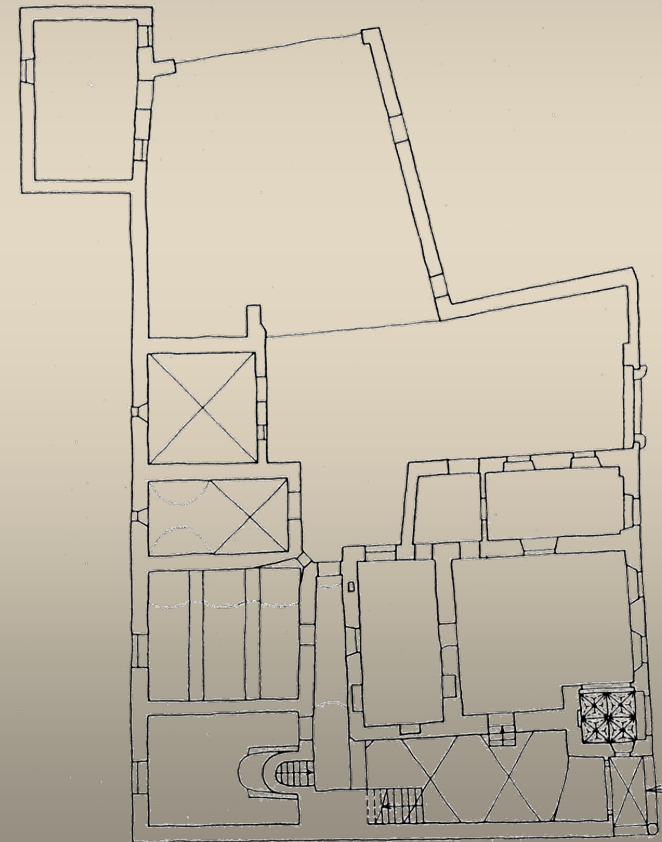
*Slavonice, large entrance hall ceiled by vault with lowered bosses*





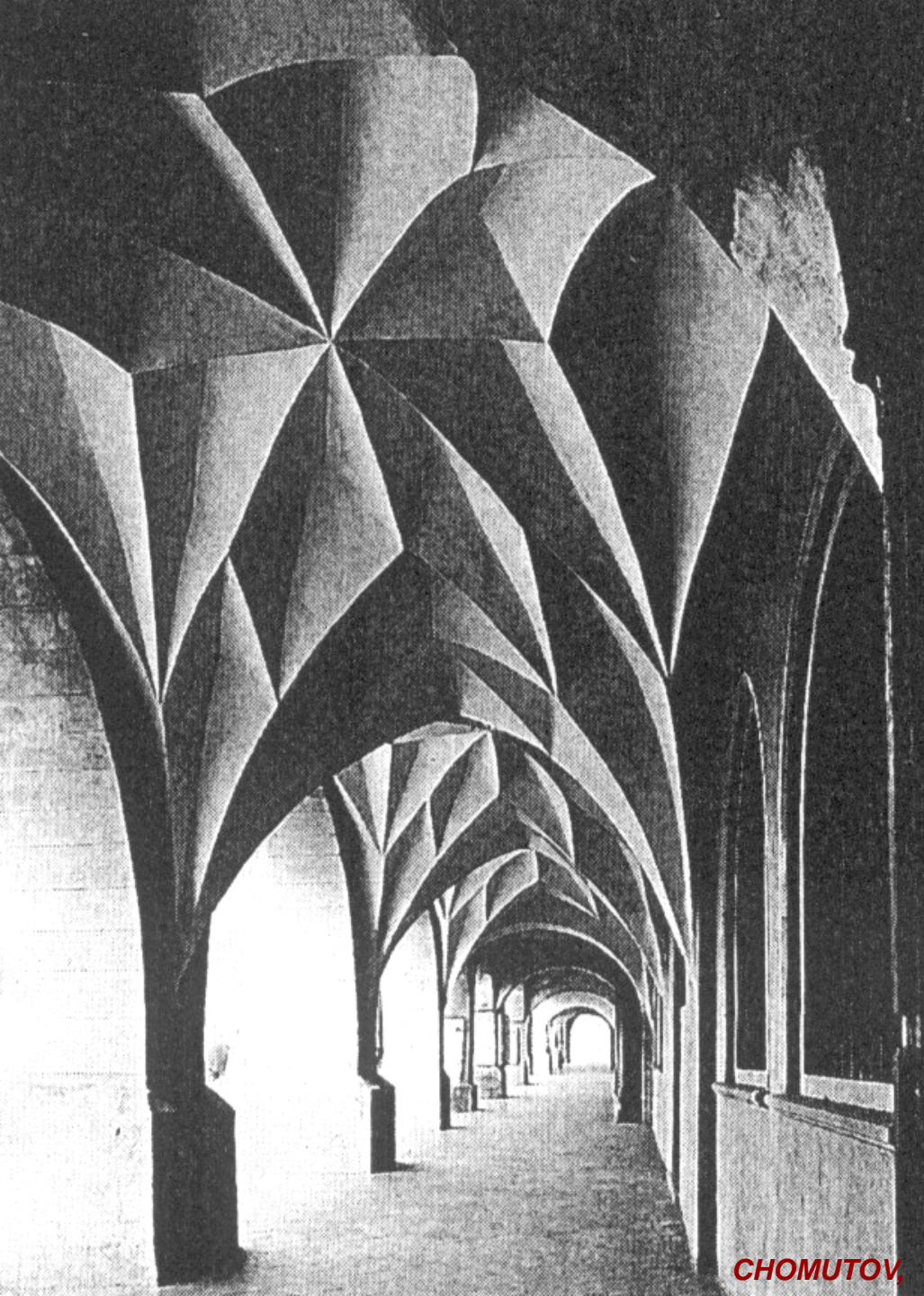


They are found in several Czech towns in this region (Jindrichuv Hradec, Jahymov, Znojmo, Telc) but the largest, most representative and artistically most valuable examples has survived in **SLAVONICE**

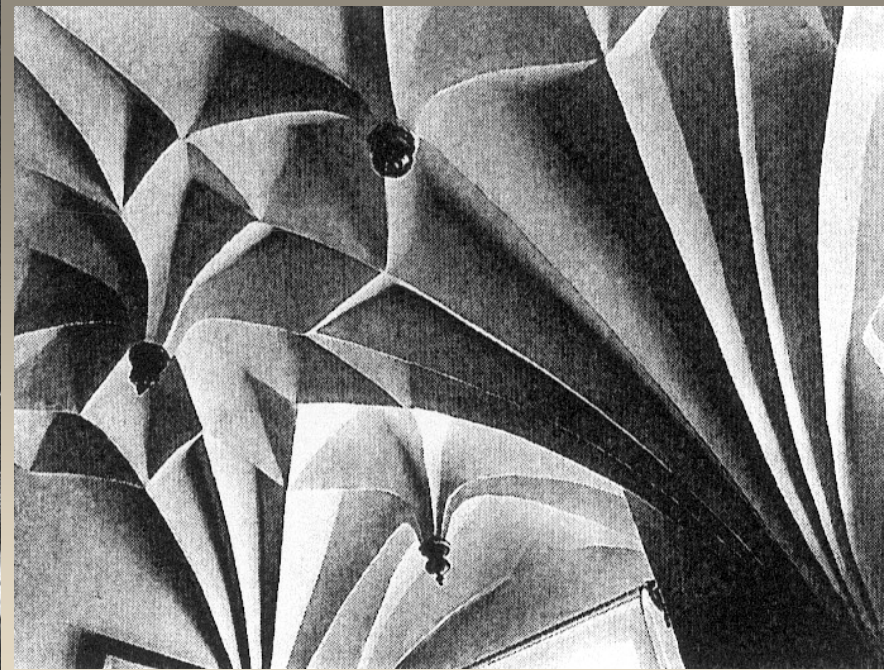


**Slavonice**, old post office ceiled by vault with lowered bosses



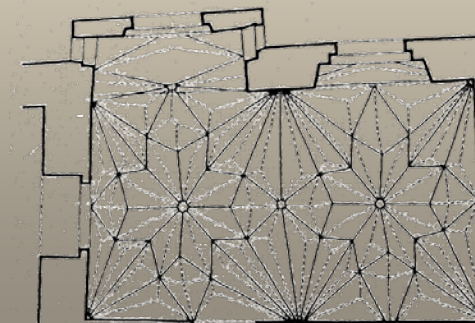


**CHOMUTOV**



**ZNOJMO**, arcades to the Market Square

**Diamond vaults were created also in the public spaces in the centre of Bohemian towns in Renaissance period**



**arcades at the Market Square**





Another equally spectacular feature of the heritage of the Region is the rich ornamentation of the exteriors of houses, including sgraffito facades, stone parapets, attics, and also impressive stone portals.

Case study:  
SLAVONICE

This heritage represents extremely high level of art and architecture.





Burger-houses nr 518-517

**The very rich and valuable sgraffito decoration formulates dominant feature in appearance of public space in Slavonice**

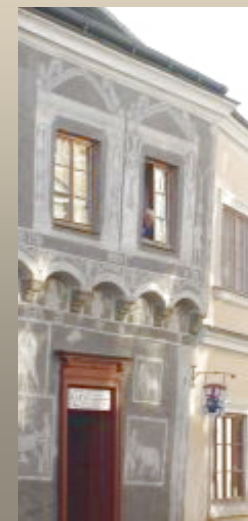




nr 520

nr 528

nr 450



**Slavonice**, „Venetian gables” and **sgraffito** decoration, the work of domestic Czech-Austrian masters.



*Slavonice, burger- house nr 453*

All fotos: Libor Karasek: [www.Slavonice](http://www.Slavonice)



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- *Thank You for your attention*

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