
Lucie AUGUSTINKOVÁ¹, Alice KLIMA²**INSIGHT INTO THE FULNEK CHURCH AND PARISH MEDIEVAL BUILDING
CHRONOLOGY****Abstract**

The church of the Holy Trinity and parish in Fulnek was for nearly four centuries an Augustinian canonry and collegiate church (1293-1389). The medieval church and parish building chronology, however, have not been thus far established. From research between 2015 and 2016 we have been able to identify medieval portions of the buildings, clarify the site medieval construction phases and date the parish buildings (formerly the canonry) from dendrochronological analysis of embedded wooden scaffolding.

Keywords

Augustinian canons, canonry, city of Fulnek, Gothic Architecture



Fig.1 and 2: Northwest facade of the parish and church in Fulnek, photograph, 2015. M. Ferko, Fulnek on map of Czech Republic.

1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of this paper is to provide insight on the building chronology of the Fulnek church and parish buildings in the Middle Ages, to state more precisely and contribute a more detailed understanding of the Gothic building phases of the church and parish buildings, and hence add to our knowledge of building design and development of Central European monasteries in general.

Several **social and life science research methods** were utilized in this research. The initial phase included essential heuristics of written sources (editions and archives) and analysis and comparison of visual sources, in this case, historical maps, plans and cityscapes. Based on an

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analysis of the buildings *in situ* the site was documented using methods for the study of historical objects and art historical methods, here specifically architecture such as formal analysis. Due to the interdisciplinary aspect of this study, the life sciences approach using dendrochronological dating of selected timber structures was especially significant.



Fig. 3 a 4: Northwest façade portal to cloister, photograph, 2015, drawing by A. Knápek, 2015.

2 BRIEF HISTORY OF THE FULNEK SITE

The first mention of the Fulnek parish dates back to the 13th century, when the Lichtenburg nobles founded the town.[5] The **Kravař noble family** founded the monastery in **1389**.[8] In the 17th century the canonry was completed on the southwest side, and the largest part of the new building was completed under **provost Paul Brugmann**. The administrator and later **provost Barwig** built **the new collegiate church in the mid-18th century according to the design by Nicholas Talherr** (1708-1769). **Joseph Ignác Sadler** painted the interior church frescoes and several other painters and sculptors contributed to the artistic program. During the reforms of Emperor Joseph II the canonry was **dissolved in 1784** and shortly after two reconstructions followed in quick succession. The first and major reconstruction between 1784 and 1788, after the dissolution of the monastery, was based on designs by **Václav Talherr** (1737-1788). Shortly after, **in 1805**, M. Wielsche and M. F. Koller implemented further modifications to the complex. In the early 20th century the Brno **architect Ferdinand Hrach** restored for the first time Sadler's church frescoes and the remaining claustral complex with the intent to return them to their original appearance.[1]



Fig. 5, 6, 7, 8: Heraldic and figural decoration in the cloister – Kravař and Sternberg family crests on a vault springer, Kravař and Sternberg family crest and head of Christ on vault bosses, photograph, 2015.

3 DESCRIPTION OF THE GOTHIC FEATURES AT FULNEK

Although the Fulnek parish church and adjoining parish buildings are significant examples of Moravian architecture and are recognized to some extent in scholarly literature (especially the Baroque church interior),[6] facts on the Gothic phase of construction are only fragmentary and knowledge on the phases of construction is scant. Publications up to now are mired with numerous inaccuracies including errors such as the location and number of surviving gothic portals.

On the exterior of the complex only one Gothic feature is visible – **the entry in the parish northwestern façade**. The **round arch portal** has a torus archivolt while the lower half of the jambs are damaged with unclear articulation. This profile type is common and occurs in Bohemian and Moravian Gothic architecture throughout the 14th century.



Fig. 9, 10: Southeast cloister alley with three windows, central with surviving flamboyant tracery, photograph, 2015.

Most frequent information in current literature is on **the cloister including the Kravař and Sternberg heraldic decoration**. The cloister is also the most ornate part of the former canonry. In addition to coat of arms, applied to simple or floral ornamental bosses and vault springers, the rib vaults are also decorated with simple floral decorations and others still with a head of Christ. Although the boss decorations are limited to the Kravař arrow with beard curls and the Sternberg eight-pointed star heralds, floral ornaments, and a head of Christ, no feature is identical. The arrows have various minor formal variations and the frame and size of each heraldic figure also varies. Likewise, Christ's head, the flowers, and leaves are treated differently in each instance.

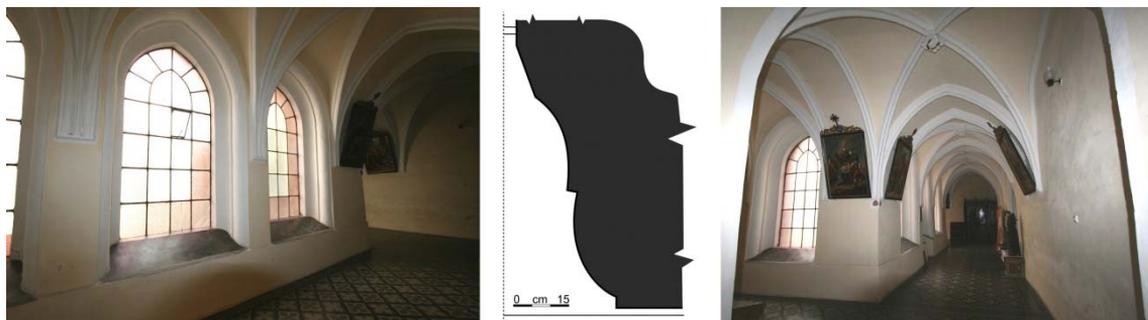


Fig. 11, 12, 13: Windows to cloister garden, window profile, and cloister vault, photograph 2015, drawing by A. Knápek 2015.

The cloister is relatively small (in comparison to other Augustinian monasteries [14]). In each cloister alley three large **pointed-arch windows** with torus and cavettos profiles lead to the cloister garden. **Tracery with rotating flame motifs** is preserved only in one window in the southwest alley of the cloister.



Fig. 14, 15, 16: Portal from the cloister to the church, photograph, 2015, drawing by A. Knápek.

The cloister, in addition to an exterior entrance, is also linked to the church, staircase, and parish buildings. In the northeastern cloister alley **portals** with Gothic features lead to the church and in the opposite direction to the cloister garden. The pointed arch **portal to the church** includes a profile that stretches over a substantial area with one torus roll and several cavettos and right angle recessions. The portal profile faces into the cloister and in the northeast direction connects to a corridor, bending in plan, and leading away from the church.



Fig. 17, 18, 19: Portal from cloister to cloister courtyard, photograph, 2015 and drawing by A. Knápek, 2015.

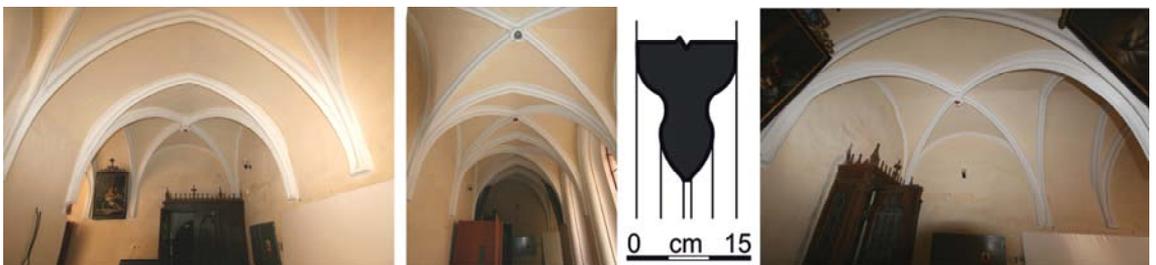


Fig. 20, 21, 22, 23: Cloister vault, photograph, 2015, vault rib profile, drawing by A. Knápek, 2015.

The pointed arch portal that connects the cloister to the cloister garden has a considerably simpler profile, derived from the window profiles and masonry in the immediate vicinity, but enriched with one torus roll. The profile faces into the cloister. Only the pointed archivolt is visible from the cloister garden side to which, currently, a section of plastered masonry is attached.

The cloister is vaulted with four-part pointed rib vaults. Transverse ribs separate individual bays and pointed arch bands separate the corner bays. The typical, yet elegant, pear-shaped rib profile does not allow precise dating of the Gothic building phase since similar rib profiles appear in Bohemian and Moravian Gothic architecture for almost three centuries.

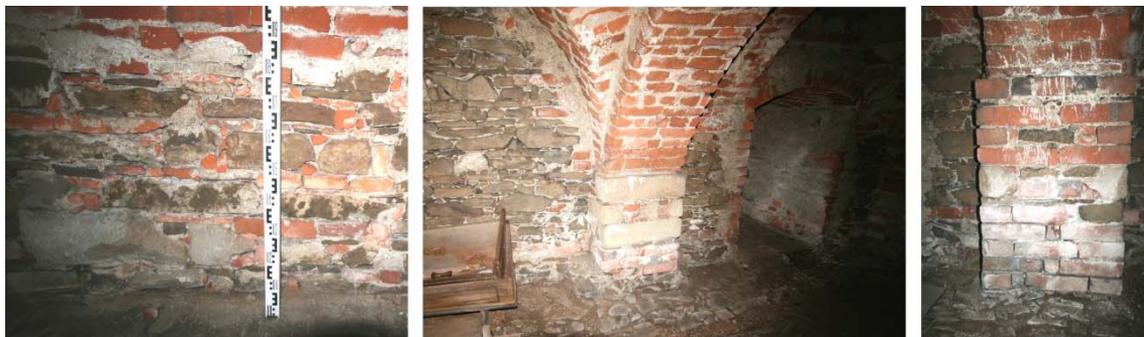


Fig. 24, 25, 26: Church crypt, reused masonry, photograph, 2015.

Other noticeable **reused Gothic fragments** are recorded in the basement masonry. The church crypt is in fact largely built from reused masonry. The masonry was most likely originally utilized in **portals with grooves** for door panels. Other parts with chamfering are difficult to categorize in terms of original function. Both pear- and wedge-shaped **rib vaults** are also present in the masonry (unless the wedge-shapes were caused by damage to the ribs). The vault ribs are applied as a simple building material for walls and even in relatively specific construction roles, in this case, as springers in the **southwestern** area of the crypt.



Fig. 27, 28: Southwest side of the church, brick supporting arch above medieval wall and reused masonry above, visible in the space below the upper floor, photograph, 2016.

Additional reused Gothic rib vault parts are located in the perimeter wall of the church upper level, specifically in the area between the vault backfilling above the ground floor and the wooden floor of the upper level. These are again likely **chamfered portal fragments and ribs** with today damaged (probably originally pear-shaped) profiles. These reused pieces are found above a massive relieving arch that supports masonry above the entrance from the cloister to the church.

Another area with evidently Gothic features is in a **southwestern part of the complex**. In terms of elevation these rooms are in the **partially submerged basement** accessible from the southwestern side of the complex. The corridor with an entrance from the exterior has a brick vault that on the southern side connects to a stone barrel vault section with lunettes. Parallel with this corridor is a **room with a rectangular layout again with a stone barrel vault**. A pointed-arch stone portal leads from this room to the northeast. The upper portion of the portal is well defined, while the lower portions of the jambs are damaged.



Fig. 29, 30, 31: Partially submerged basement on the southwest side of the complex, the entrance and pointed arch exterior and interior, photograph, 2016.

The portal leads into another part of the partially submerged basement - rooms with **barrel vaults** and a rectangular layout. Above the entrance is an archway with a triangular shape that has traces of formwork panels. In the northwest wall of this room is a niche with a segmental vault. This is likely a walled in passage to the cloister recorded on the Talherr plan from the years 1784-1788.

Another room, again placed in parallel with the corridor also has a **stone barrel vault**. In the northwestern wall is a niche with a segmental vault. The wall is adjacent to the cloister, which may be a later entrance to the cloister, however, there is a height difference between the basement and cloister floors that would have had to been resolved with steps or a ramp.



Fig. 32, 33: Partially submerged basement on the southwest side of the complex, southeastern room, eastern part with entrance and widow with notched iron bars, photograph, 2016.

In the northeastern wall of this space is another entry with an arched band. Just one **stone jamb** remains from the earlier portal. The entrance leads into the **third parallel room** that is situated between the passage of the church and cloister. In the northwest wall, under the barrel vault is a stone niche with a round archway that was probably originally a window into the cloister.

The final **space is perpendicular** from the previously described rooms. It is also **vaulted with a stone barrel vault**. On the northwest side of the space is a short stone barrel vault that connects across a lunette to the vault of the entire space. In the northeastern wall **one window with a massive stone lintel and a pair of bullion and notched iron bars** leads into the space below the

current spiral staircase next to the church. On the other, southeast wall, a window opens into the yard and in the southern corner there is a small cavern in the wall.

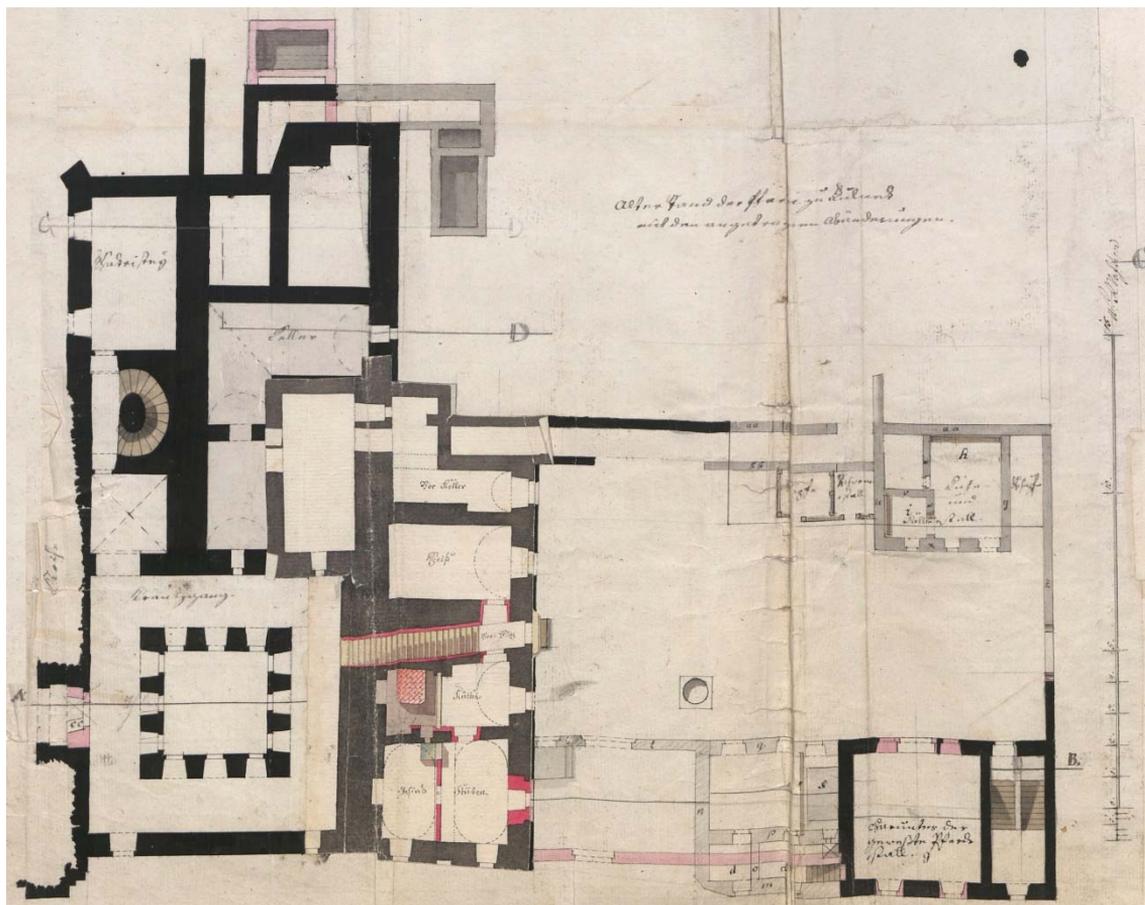


Fig. 34: M. F. Koller, Plan and reconstruction of ground floor parish in Fulnek, drawing 1805. MZA in Brno, Fund B 15, kart. 623.

Other areas that most likely still contain medieval components are under the southeast wing of the complex. Two rooms, which with regard to the elevation are located between the partially submerged basement and main floor are in fact, due to the hillside, a **partially submerged main floor**. The rooms have younger brick vaults with lunettes abutted to the Gothic walls. The vaults were added to the primarily stone medieval peripheral walls and in several places the surviving **medieval plaster**, consisting of clay and organic material, is distinguishable from the lime plasters of the Early Modern period.

4 THE FULNEK CHURCH AND PARISH BUILDINGS AT FULNEK BUILDING CHRONOLOGY

The building plots of the Fulnek church and parish were certainly already occupied in the 13th century. The first reliable reference to the parish, which implies the existence of a church building, dates to **1293**. Only the *patrocinium* of the first church buildings is certain, however, we do not know the materials used for building during this Lichtenburg period.



Fig. 35, 36: Partially submerged main floor, Early Modern brick vault and medieval peripheral walls with remains of plaster containing clay and organic material, photograph, 2015.

On September 29th, 1389 Beneš (III.) of Kravař endowed the Fulnek monastery with the villages Děrné and Jilovec, including all properties and work force. This is considered the founding charter for Fulnek. Although the date of the Beneš foundation is well known, up to now scholars have dated the construction of the cloister primarily on the basis of formal analysis. For example, based on formal analysis D. Líbal dated the cloister to 1400 and 1434.[2] The division of the cloister construction into two phases was based on the heraldic sources: the arrow of the Kravař family and the Sternberg family star. The Sternberg family did acquire Fulnek after 1434 and Líbal follows Samek's dating of the cloister to 1432.[3] Already in the catalog *Od gotiky k renesanci*, [4] however, the possibility of a pre-Hussite construction of the cloister with reference to Parler-type flame tracery was considered.



Fig. 37, 38: Partially submerged main floor with medieval peripheral walls and brick vaults, photograph, 2015.

Establishing the construction timeframe of the monastery in this paper is based on a combination of several social and natural science research methods. During repairs in 2015 of the exterior walls we obtained wood samples for **dendrochronological dating**. The results indicate a date between **1389 and 1390**. [18] Samples collected from the support beams of the embedded scaffolding were collected and sent for dendrochronological dating. They were moved to the Depository of Historic Building Materials at the Faculty of Civil Engineering (FAST), documented, evaluated, and placed under inventory numbers A 254 and A 255. **The round timber scaffolding beams** preserved not only growth rings, but also in large part the bark. The dating reliability hence is very high. The scaffolding support beams were removed from the upper level on the northwestern side of the canonry. This means that the building of the convent happened very quickly and most likely without wooden temporary structures. Makeshift wooden buildings were common at other sites, for example Cistercian monasteries in the Middle Ages.[7] Specifically in Fulnek, the Capuchin monastery most likely had provisional wooden structures for roughly 30 years.[15] The Augustinian

claustral buildings, which in the Middle Ages often existed in the form of a block along the collegiate church, was built quickly and to its full height.



Fig. 39, 40, 41: Northwest façade of the parish at the time of the repairs, detail of the embedded round beam in the wall and detail of extracted timber, photograph, 2015.

Tab.1: Dendrochronological dating of timber from the exterior wall of the Fulnek parish.

Ordered by	Lucie Augustinková	Region / district	Moravskoslezský / Nový Jičín	Elevation	295 m.n.m.
Address	Gen. Píky 2917/19 Ostrava	Municipality	Fulnek	Latitude	49.7118472 N
Phone	737976884	street (number)	Kostelní 111	Longitude	17.9039217 E
e-mail	metis@centrum.cz	House number	111	Compiled	
Date of sample	2015	Site	Augustinian canony	Dated	Kyncl T.

Number	Method of production	symbol	Thick-ness and cm	Lenght Cm	WK	Construc-tion	Descrip-tion of sample	comment	Sample number	Wood type	Num. of rings	Date felled
1	Cut	-	8,4	24	A	SZ canony facade	Scaffolding	Cut	X2306	Fir	41	1389/90
2	Cut	-	11	39	A	SZ canony facade	Scaffolding	Cut	X2307	Fir	51	1390 I
X23fulnek-klasternAB						X2306+07				Fir	51	1389

Both written sources as well as the results of the dendrochronological analysis support Beneš Kravař III, whose arrow with curled beard herald is in the cloister, as the canony's founder. The eight-pointed star of the Sternberg family is also justified here as the wife of Beneš Kravař, Agnes, was from the Sternberg and Lukov families. The rapid building of the canony, soon after the founding of the monastery points to **advance planning by the Kravař family** as patrons, and also a well-organized and efficient masonry workshop in their service. Nevertheless, even these facts do not point to exact dating, only a date *post quem*. We would need to find analogous examples where timber is used the same year it is felled. In 1391 Peter I Kravař founded the Augustinian canony in Prostějov. Today only the medieval outer walls of the church and cloister are extant.[4] It is possible that the builders at Prostějov were the same as at Fulnek, however, the cloister consoles indicate a different group of stonemasons.

The Fulnek canons were also associated with Roudnice on the Elbe, the Bohemian Augustinian canon motherhouse. Roudnice was founded and supported both financially and spiritually by Jan of Dražice IV in 1333, the bishop of Prague until 1342. The bishop, who was forced into an eleven-year stay in Avignon to resolve an accusation of heresy, brought back with him from France a model of French monasticism in the form of Augustinian statutes that inspired reforms in Bohemia, Moravia, Silesia and neighboring German territories along the Danube.[23] The Fulnek canons came from Roudnice and no doubt brought the Roudnice Statutes with as a model for the new foundation. Further studies should focus on possible formal similarities between Roudnice and Fulnek, in terms of stylistic similarities of the as the surviving tracery motifs but more importantly in terms of layout and function of the complex. [19] The link between Roudnice and Fulnek indicates a fundamental connection between the institutions in the form of a monastic model represented by the statutes. The two monasteries would have shared among other things a similar daily schedule, views on accepting novices, discipline, dress, ritual, and devotion practice. It is probable that these practices influenced the organization and layout of the medieval monastic buildings as well.[13]

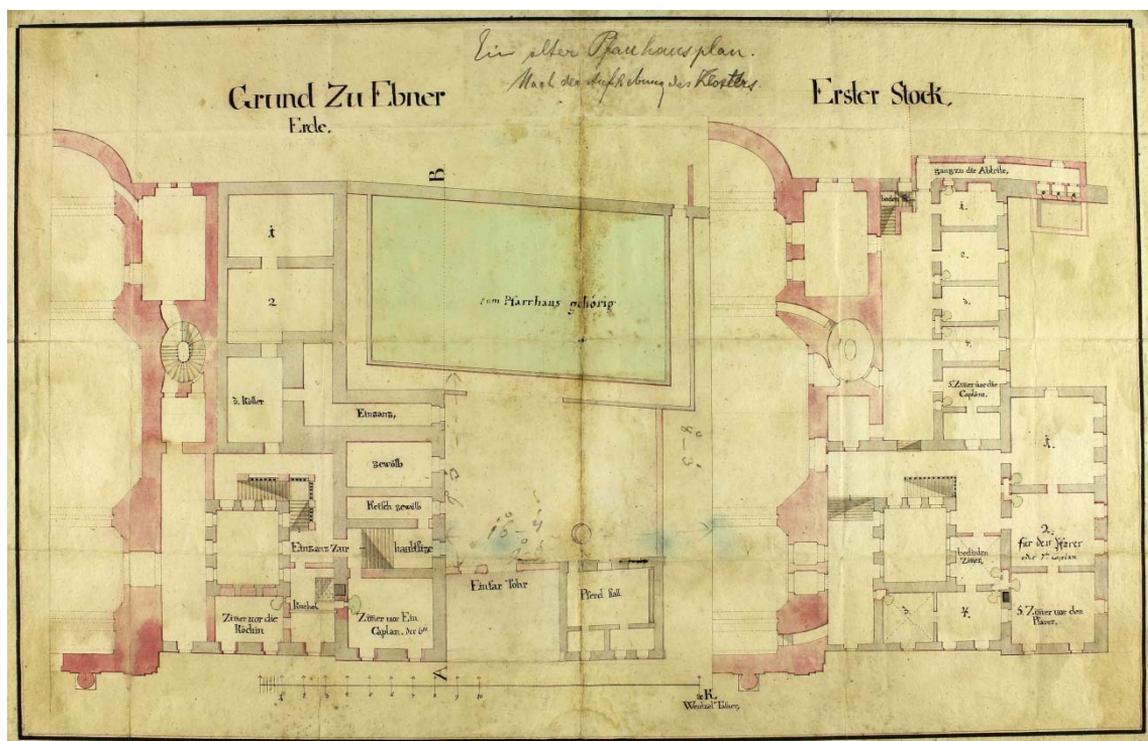


Fig. 42: Václav Talherr, Parish Plan, 1st and 2nd floor, 1784 – 1788. SOkA Nový Jičín, Collection of Catholic Parish Fulnek, kart. 3, inv. č. 153.

On the **scope and form of the Gothic Fulnek claustral buildings** we can say that the mostly stone building was situated on the south side of the church with the short end facing into the town square through an archway and the long side into the parish courtyard. The Gothic canonry buildings were the width of the cloister up to a recess in the wall. Analogous to Roudnice [13] and other European canonries [9, 10, 11], we may assume the original location of the sacristy next to the choir, the chapter room in the recessed ground floor staircase at the site of the present Baroque stairs, and a dormitory in the upper story, which is roughly the location of the Early Modern canon cells.

The building chronology of the canonry in the Early Modern era was marked by major changes. In the mid-17th century, under provost Brugmann, the canonry was extended southwestward to the current length of two residential blocks. After the dissolution of the monastery in 1784, there were two major reconstructions, in relatively short intervals. According to the Václav Talherr plan,

already in the 1780s, the elongated claustral buildings were modified by demolition of the central space and insertion of a gateway to the parish gardens. The southern part of the Renaissance building was hence separated from the original canonry and today the property allocated a separate parcel number. At that time the Gothic cloister was also significantly modified by insertion of a kitchen and cook's rooms. Some practical arrangements, such as the kitchen, obviously did not work out, because in 1805 further adjustments were made according to the M. Wielsche and M. F. Koller plans. The stairs and the kitchen were removed and the cloister was again open for communication and assembly functions. The kitchen was inserted into the parish area southwest of the cloister just like the staircase to the upper floor, which now leads upstairs through a small hall from the parish courtyard. [1]

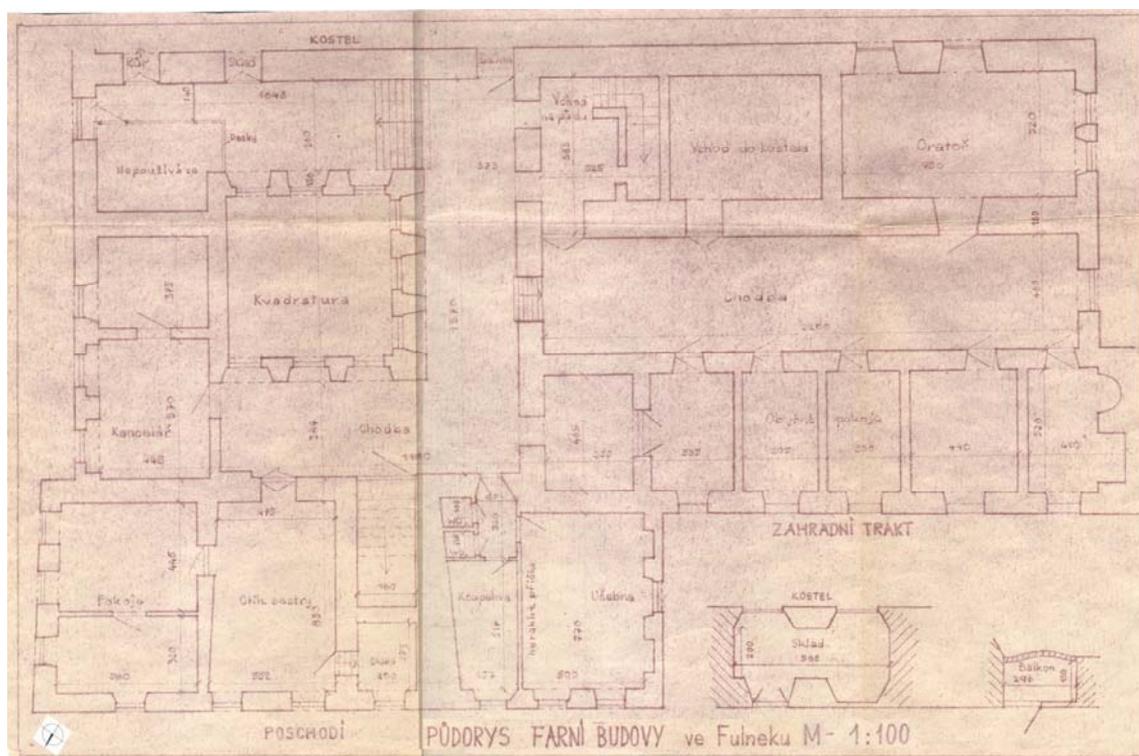


Fig. 43: Plan of parish basements, Fulnek, Archive of Catholic Parish in Fulnek.

We have minimal knowledge about the collegiate Gothic church in Fulnek. Due to the occurrence of wedge ribs and based on the height of one of the vaults springers above the cloister near the entrance to the church (Fig. 14) we are inclined to believe that the stone church was already present at the time of the building of the canonry, or between **1293 to 1389**. Beneš Kravař then added the cloister and upper levels of the claustral buildings to the church.

In the mid-18th century part of the sloping hill southeast of the church was removed and a retaining wall was put in place. This created a larger space for the church choir of the new, longer, collegiate church. For technical reasons, only part of the southwest Gothic peripheral wall was preserved. Other parts of the new Baroque building were constructed with reused masonry, which contains fragments including Gothic ribs and other cut stone fragments. Ribs are simple pear- and wedge-shaped, others distinctly Gothic and clearly classifiable profiles were not found in the visible areas. [1]



Fig. 45: Fulnek Indicator Sketch, 1833. Moravian Land Archive, Fund Moravian Indicator Sketches Brno.

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