

THE PARISH CHURCH OF SS. PETER AND PAUL IN
KRALOVICE NEAR PLASS

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The church at Kralovice, built during the years 1575—81 as a Protestant parish church by Florian Griesbeck von Griesbach, a royal Bohemian councillor, was the work of an unknown architect, probably of Italian origin. The church was connected with the family burial-place; the chancel and tower of the former Gothic church were incorporated into the new building.

This church is remarkable in the history of Bohemian and Central European architecture. The nave is of unplastered brick and the building was the earliest example of a post-Gothic pilaster church with galleries in the Empire at that period. It was inspired by the pilaster churches of the late Gothic period as well as by the chapels built for castles during the decades prior to its inception. Massive columns were used on the façade, the earliest example of this feature in the sacred architecture of Central Europe. A contrast is provided by the tracery windows, Gothic in character, which dominate the side walls of the church from the outside. From the inside these windows are barely noticeable on account of the pilasters. A unique feature are the side-chapels below the galleries which are inaccessible from the interior, opening up toward the exterior.

The architect of the church may well have been Ulrich Austalis — scion of a family of architects from Lugano — who is said to have been patronized for a time by Florian Griesbeck von Griesbach. The church may also have been inspired by buildings in northern Italy.

No other churches have been modelled directly on the Kralovice parish church. Pilaster churches and the use of massive pillars for façades are only rarely found in the next decades. Nor do these isolated churches seem to have been inspired by Kralovice.