correctly. Consequently, like all the local builders they drew on a wide variety of manuals, especially Sebastiano Serlio’s architectural treatise. By c. 1600 the north Italian immigrants had absorbed the local Gothic traditions and fused them with the contemporary architectural language. In culturally peripheral regions, which Upper Hungary (now Slovakia) and Transylvania (Romania) had become on account of their political instability and the threat of Turkish expansion, further transformation of vernacular brick architecture virtually ceased until the mid-18th century. Elsewhere in the region vernacular architecture was influenced by elements of Italian Mannerism, generally through local high-style examples. In some areas, especially in Silesia and the lands of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth, a number of builders looked to Netherlands and north German examples, which were already popular with the German craftsmen living in these areas.

The masters of the Lublin Bricklayers’ Guild were at the forefront of the continuous search for new means of artistic expression. Irrespective of their Italian, German or Polish origin, their vernacular work combined diverse local and imported forms, resulting in a rich and vivid artistic language that was independent of the canons of West European art. The economic and political decline of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in the second half of the 17th century disrupted and terminated the richest sequence in the development of vernacular architecture. At the same time in the Habsburg Empire, following the end of the Thirty Years War (1618-48), there was a period of splendid architectural development that also involved lower sections of society. In the 18th century, master masons either merely worked to the designs of others, thus following non-vernacular models, or they simplified vernacular models to a radical degree. Nonetheless, the successive stages in the transformation of Baroque and Zopfstil (Austrian Baroque classicism) had a spectacular influence on the vernacular architecture of towns in Bohemia and Silesia, and later in Hungary. They also sporadically affected western Poland from the mid-18th century and, after 1772, that part of its southern region which was under the rule of the Habsburg Empire. This involved not only the Baroque treatment of gables and gates but even the addition of pilasters on façades. In Habsburg lands stone village architecture, especially that of the traditional Danube type, which was deeply rooted in the pre-Gothic period, was often decorated with corrupted Baroque forms from the late 18th century to the mid-19th.

In timber architecture, however, Late Gothic forms remained dominant for considerably longer than in brick. The vernacular architecture that succeeded Gothic is not recognizable in any timber structures from before the early 17th century, by which time the technical development of carpentry was complete and the construction of high-style Renaissance and Mannerist architecture in timber had proved completely unsuccessful. Vernacular timber architecture was hardly influenced even by Italianate decorative motifs; the Baroque proved to have a slightly greater impact, and elements of the style were adopted sporadically from the mid-18th century. From the late 17th century leading architects had begun to design manor houses and churches in timber as high-style buildings. Although Baroque in their typology and architectural vocabulary these were usually erected by carpenters who simplified the Italianate forms of detail and ornamentation and