

A visit to Meissen is not just a demonstration of how to decorate porcelain. It was once a very important city, and Dresden was its subsidiary, not the other way around. Here, one of the most important writers on architecture of the early 20th century describes the work of Arnold von Westfalen, who built the castle between 1471 and 1500:

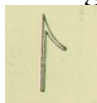
Cornelius Gurlitt: *Meißen (Burgberg) Dresden, 1920*

Meissen, Albrechtsburg (p.408)

b) Central building (fig. 494 to 497)

On the ground floor the new sally port forms a division. A once narrow door, but widened during rebuilding, leads directly from the court to a downward stairway, which, however, was later moved further out. It descends 23 steps from ground floor level of the court to the Upper Cellar, in order to reach the sally door via a downward slope. The open staircase leading down to the slope, which is now in front of the latter, is of recent origin. The door itself, however, like the vaulting over the entrance, belongs to the time of Master Arnold. The hexagonal form would have been an unlikely choice without a good reason, unless either an old tower was used or the structure of the chapel had been planned earlier. Beneath the room in front of the door is a yet smaller Lower Cellar, which has embrasures and probably served as defence of the ascent to the sally port. One has to assume that this was via a ladder.

The Great Hall (fig. 506 and 507) makes up the first floor with the two spiral staircases leading up to it and the Chapel. The Hall is 28 m long and at 12.2 m wide takes up the entire breadth of the building. Two pillars, each with four attached columns, bear wide transverse arches with the walls of the second floor resting on them, and at the same time with a third central pillar, with six attached columns (fig 508) and the rich rib vault and the richly ornamented cell vaulting. Most of the ribs have been renewed. On the walls, corresponding pillars bear the ribs. To the west are three windows with deep alcoves, and to the east two windows. The western window tracery (fig. 510) is a new addition modelled on the old east windows. Stone masons' marks can be found on some of the building materials. (Fig. 511). From the southern part of the Hall, doors lead westwards to the Great Spiral Staircase and along the passage to the Cathedral, eastwards to the anteroom to the chamber in front of the Hall. A thin ogee arch crowns the first door; the second door reveals the mason's marks shown in Fig. 511. The aisle door has distorted side-walls. On it is the mason's mark shown



here:

From the northern section a door leads to the Small Spiral Staircase to the west (Fig. 507) and a wide opening to the Chapel at the east. Two entrances break into the north wall to the Large Hofstube, whose walls were completed during restoration. They show a reasonable likeness of Arnold with a round bar (Fig. 509), while the openings to the adjoining room hold to characteristic forms.

Above this aisle is the Trumpeter's Seat, where the balustrade is decorated with tracery on the side facing the Great Hall, while on the side of the Great Hofstube, window-like openings are inserted. It is accessible from the Small Spiral Staircase.