

TULLN/DONAU

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The Historical Center of Tulln

A guidebook of the city with historical commentary
by Dr. Roderich Geyer



Tulln is lovelier!

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Tulln an der Donau 2016

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Tulln has a nearly 2000-year history and traces of it can still be seen in many parts of the city. This walking tour of Tulln is intended to help you explore this past. It begins with a favorite public gathering spot, the Nibelung Fountain. It then proceeds along Donaulände (the Danube promenade) to the Roman fort, the Imperial Convent, the charnel and parish church, then to two important squares Rathausplatz (town hall square) and Hauptplatz (main square), the city fortifications and the Monastery of the Friars Minor.

1. Nibelung Fountain

The medieval town of Tulln plays a special part in the Lay of the Nibelung, an epic written around 1200: Traveling from Traismauer in the latest leg of her bridal journey to the Land of the Huns, Kriemhild met up with King Etzel and his retinue in Tulln. The meeting was replete with the poetic details of royal life around 1200. Kriemhild dismounted her horse. Two princes picked up her train, and Margrave Rüdiger, the old friend who had accompanied her, introduced her to King Etzel and his liegemen, both Hunnish and Germanic.

In honor of the future queen, Etzel had a tournament staged in the Tulln Basin with thousands of men-in-arms from his empire. The poet devoted a hundred verses to this event. From Tulln, the party moved on to Vienna, the site of the sumptuous wedding celebrations.

The poet's decision to have Kriemhild and Etzel meet in Tulln shows the significance of the town around 1200. Another factor in the poet's mind may have been that the border between West (the German lands) and East (Hungary) had run through this town 250 years earlier.

The monument

The group of figures to the left comprises two train-bearing princes, Margrave Ruediger, and Kriemhild; the one to the right represents King Etzel, his brother Bleda and the kings Theoderic



the Great and Gibich. The child is a reference to the son from the marriage of Etzel and Kriemhild.

The interlacing water jets in the fountain are meant to symbolize the connection between East and West. The opened book refers to the fact that this epic is handed down in written form. The right-hand page is empty – the future is still an unwritten page. The bronze figures were produced using a hollow casting technique. They are the work of the sculptor Michail Nogin; the fountain was designed by Hans Muhr. The monument was installed in the summer of 2005. The big square that opens up the town to the Danube was named Nibelungenplatz (Square of the Nibelung).

The path then proceeds over Donaulände, which affords an impressive view of the Danube landscape complete with river, bridges and riparian forest.

2. The Bridges

The fate of the city of Tulln has always been determined by its location on the Danube and the possibilities for crossing the river at this point. The Danube was the most important artery

of transportation in the Middle Ages. The “Lände”, the landing at the Roman Tower, was the transshipment place for goods in Tulln. The mighty Danube and its dangerous floods also posed a constant threat to the city. After many attempts, this danger was finally eliminated in the early 19th century with the construction of the dam for the Greifenstein power plant (1980 ff). People crossed the Danube on flat-bottomed boats known as plätten or other kinds of boats well into the 19th century. Tulln was the only place between Hollenburg and Korneuburg that had ferrying rights and it earned good income from this activity. The iron railroad bridge for the Franz-Josefs-Bahn was built from 1869 to 1871 and the first road bridge was erected in 1874. Both have been altered many times, were destroyed in 1945 by an explosion and rebuilt again by 1950. In 2009 a totally new iron railroad bridge was built.

Tulln obtained a new road bridge west of the city in 1995 with the Rosenbrücke (Bridge of Roses). It is a cable-stayed bridge 440 meters in length and is supported by a 71 meter high concrete pylon.

After the construction of the Danube power station at Greifenstein, Donaulände, the landing area along the Danube, was able to be totally redone as a large recreational area. It extends from the mouth of the Grosse Tulln River near Rosenbrücke all the way to Langenlebarn. It is landscaped and offers many opportunities for recreation and sports.

3. The Danube Fountain

This fountain was created in 1984 by Hans Muhr. It consists of five fountain columns made of cut sandstone conglomerate blocks dating to the Tertiary. These blocks were found in the riverbed during dredging for the Greifenstein power station in 1980/1984.

4. The Medieval Synagogue



The medieval synagogue lies on the right as one enters the narrow Fischergasse. It dates from the 13th century and consists of Gothic dry stone walls with dressed cornerstones. Two Gothic jambs stem from the construction period. An addition was added to the building on the north side in the 16th century; the current façade was built in 1900.

Tulln demonstrably had a **Jewish community** in the 13th century that was large and prosperous enough from money transactions to afford such an elaborate synagogue. The Jews of Tulln lived in the area around this synagogue, on Fischer gasse (formerly Judengasse (Jewish Lane)), Albrechtsgasse and Rudolfstraße, in other words, close to the oldest market square. They lived according to their own laws and customs, as proven by a document from 1267 setting down rules for kosher slaughtering by the Jewish community.

The Jews of Tulln were also among those affected by the first major pogrom in 1337. Coins found in the house at the corner of Rudolfstraße and Fischergasse show that the owner was unable to dig up the cash he had buried. The second pogrom in 1410 wiped out all Jewish communities in Austria, but Tulln probably had very few Jewish inhabitants left when it struck.

The title to the synagogue passed to the city. It was used as a prison into the 19th century, which explains the addition that was built and the bars on the windows on the north wall.

5. Schiele Monument and Schiele Museum

The monument was created in 2000 by Michail Nogin. It is a naturalist depiction of the artist with a typical hand gesture in front of an easel.

The internationally renowned painter Egon Schiele (1890-1918) was born in the stationmaster's apartment at the main train station in Tulln. He spent his childhood and attended primary school in Tulln but spent his later years in Vienna. He was a recognized artist during his lifetime.



The museum was officially opened to mark the 100th anniversary of Schiele's birth and is installed in the old jail building of the district court of Tulln. The artistic focal point of the museum is the period from Schiele's birth in 1890 to the founding in 1909 of his own group of artists, the Neukunstgruppe (in English: "New Art Group"). This

presentation is unique with its focus on his early work, thematic connections from Tulln and Lower Austria, as well as the staging of the world of his childhood in fin-de-siècle Austria.

6. Donaubühne Stage

This stage was built in 1999 at the Linz shipyard and is used for the variety of cultural events held here in the summer. The riverbank and supplemental mobile seating accommodates crowds of more than 2,000.

7. The Water Chapel

During a flood in the 18th century, an artistically insignificant crucifix was swept on shore and set up at this place along the city wall under a baroque canopy. The three-story building behind the chapel is part of the former Strudelhof; the wide section of wall on the ground floor is a remnant of the former city wall.

8. Das Kastell Comagenis und der Römerturm

Wiener Straße, Nibelungengasse, Donaulände and Zantallee are the streets that describe the periphery of the Roman fort Comagenis. Visible fixed points are the free-standing Roman Tower as well as the excavated foundations of the walls of the eastern gate (*porta principalis dextra*) and the southeastern corner tower. The northern third of the fort was swept away by the Danube in the Early Middle Ages.

The fort was set up around 80 AD and a stone version of it was built in 104 AD. It extended over an area of around five to six hectares and was manned by 1,000 mounted archers, a special unit of the Roman army along with the necessary auxiliary and staff personnel. The fort was rectangular in shape and had a wall and four gates (the eastern one is excavated; the location of the western one has been determined). The second expansion phase after 350 AD involved the building of at least two corner towers (fan-like towers) landwards and six to twelve side towers (horseshoe-shaped towers).

The civilian settlement (*vicus*) was outside the fort and featured stone and wood structures of varying quality and longevity. This area reached from today's Monastery of the Friars Minor to Hauptplatz and into Karnergasse. Further afield were the graveyards, a large part of which have been examined archeologically. More than 1,000 graves were opened and yielded a wealth of knowledge about Comagenis and its inhabitants. The finds are largely displayed in the Roman Museum.

The fort continued to exist with varying troop levels until 488 AD, when it was abandoned. The walls remained standing and the fort was resettled again around 800 as Burgplatz and became the core of the city of Tulln. The planned expansion of the city in the 12th century rendered the fort superfluous; its walls, towers and gates were razed and used as building material for the new city.

The Roman Tower (also known as the Salt Tower) is a projecting horseshoe-shaped tower flanking the fort to protect the western wall of the camp. It dates back to the second expansion that occurred around 350 AD and in the years thereafter. This tower was the only one to remain standing. The reason it survived is that it helped protect the Danube landing stage in the Middle



Ages. Later it was utilized as the municipal arsenal, then as a salt warehouse, hence its second name. The tower is an original Roman structure up to the edge of the roof. The outside of the narrow western side is rounded. Two thirds of the length of the tower project out of the wall. The loopholes in the upper part of the tower are original Roman ones. On the north side is a walled-up door; it was here that the wall-walk was. The entrance to the tower can be seen on the east side. The wooden blocks in the wall seal off the Roman putlog holes. In 2004, the additions that had been built onto the tower were removed and it was renovated.

Nibelungengasse enters Donaulände to the right (west) of the Roman Tower. There was a water gate or watering gate in the medieval fortifications here into the 19th century. The oldest market square in Tulln was located a few steps toward the city from here. It was probably created back in the 10th century and was triangular in shape. It is built-over today and recognizable only by the course of the streets – Nibelungengasse, Albrechtsgasse, and Wassergasse as the three legs of the triangle. This square was in front of the **western gate of the fort**, the medieval fortress, and was close to the landing. A relief on the corner of Nibelungengasse and Ländgasse depicts the site of the western castle gate. A street still used today, Albrechtsgasse, proceeds from here westward to Fort Asturis near what is today the town of Zwentendorf.

9. Equestrian Statue Featuring Marcus Aurelius

This statue is a one-to-one copy of the famous equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, Roman emperor from 161 AD to 180 AD, that stands on the Capitoline in Rome. It is a hollow casting made of bronze. It was created by Michail Nogin and installed here on Donaulände in 2001. It is meant to commemorate the 400-year presence of the Romans along the Danube frontier. The words on the base of the statue are taken from the emperor's philosophical work "Meditations", which he wrote during the Marcomannic Wars along the Danube.

10. The Imperial Convent

On the way there, one passes the foundations of the small **Church of the Holy Cross**. It belonged to a large complex making up the Imperial Convent. A small community of monks was also associated with this nunnery and provided pastoral care for the nuns. This community existed from about 1290 into the 16th century and had its own church, whose foundations can be seen here.

In 1280 King Rudolf I founded a **Dominican nunnery** on this site. In doing so, he fulfilled his vow to show gratitude for his victory over King Ottocar of Bohemia. It was also called the Imperial Convent. It existed until 1782 and consisted of a large complex of buildings and a stately church. The only parts of the convent still standing today are the northern wing and the eastern wing, the old priory.

After the convent was dissolved, the church was razed. The rubble was thrown into the Danube to fortify the banks and some was used in the construction of the surrounding houses. The convent buildings were used by manufactures, none of which were long-lived. In 1882 the complex was converted into a sanatorium and several pavilions were added to it. It was used as a state hospital from 1945 to 1989, when the hospital was moved to the outskirts of city. The premises today comprise Marcus Aurelius Park; the priory houses a youth hostel, the Roman Museum and documentation of the Dominican nunnery.



The convent played no pastoral role in the city. The nuns came from the rural nobility and the upper middle classes. They lived in an enclosed community and spent their time in prayer and worship. The Tulln convent had good connections at the imperial court well into the 16th century because of its founder. It drew its revenues from extensive land holdings that had been accumulated from bequeathals and from the dowry of the nuns. The convent survived the Reformation but lost its good connections at court and many of its land holdings. In 1752 a disastrous fire destroyed the convent and church. Both were rebuilt but the convent remained in debt and was dissolved in 1782.

11. Roman Fort Gate

The excavation includes the foundations of the eastern double gate to the fort – porta principalis dextra. The complex consisted of two gates and two towers for their protection; one keystone from the arch has been preserved, as has the middle pad stone for both arches. The left-hand passage through the gate was walled-up in the 5th century.

The building material was sandstone from the Vienna Woods. The stones were smoothed beforehand and then laid in layers with Roman mortar (sand, water, lime) in-between to form



the wall. Then they were rendered. The level of this area in Roman times can be seen from the irregular stones at the foot of the tower foundations.

The priory contains the **Roman Museum**. It documents the four-hundred year presence of the Romans here on the Danube and also exhibits a number of finds that have been unearthed here over the last century.

Another excavation, the „**Fan Tower**“, is only accessible through the courtyard of the school and can only be seen on a guided tour. It is from the second construction phase and remained standing into the Middle Ages. It was not razed until the city was expanded. This tower was the southeastern corner tower of the fort. It had the floor plan of a corner arc and was placed several meters in front of the wall. The excavation shows the entrance to the tower. The thickness and quality of the wall are impressive.

Continuing on the way to the parish church, one leaves the premises of the former convent. To the right is the „**Widhof**“, the only remaining Gothic remnant of the convent.

A band of stones on Bonvicinistraße marks the former southern wall of the fort.

12. Der Karner

The charnel house is not only an art historical gem of Tulln, but also stand for the importance of the city in the 13th century. It is considered one of the most significant structures of its kind in Europe. Given the artistic parallels, the master builders here were presumably also active in the Hungarian city of Jak. The structure is Late Romanesque. This highly developed style of architecture had a late golden age under the Babenberg dynasty in Austria at a time when Gothic was spreading throughout Western Europe. It was erected around 1240 by order of the last Babenberg ruler Duke Frederick II.

The upper story of the charnel house is actually a funeral chapel accessed over a perron and entered through the magnificent



funnel-like Romanesque portal. The apse is oriented to the east but the portal is shifted slightly to the northeast in the direction of what is Wiener Straße today. This was the east-west axis of the city already back then. When the charnel was built, the elevated Gothic chancel of the parish church

did not yet exist so there was an open view to the portal. The octagonal floor plan of the charnel is modeled on a sacred structure in Jerusalem. The lower story of the charnel served until 1785 as an ossuary for the exhumed skeletons of the deceased from the graveyard that surrounded today's parish church and covered approximately the same area as the paved square today.

The Tulln charnel is strictly Romanesque, as is evident from the bulky nearly ornament-free main body of the building, the Lombard band with rounded arches running throughout and the crenulated band under the eaves. Other typical features are the blind arcades, the small round-arched windows and the richly ornamented portal. The influence of Gothic is shown, however, by the use of the corner pillars, which converge to form pointed arches in the wall panels. The richly decorated portal is in intentional contrast with the non-ornamented surfaces of the structure. The smooth columns in the funnel-like portal are on Attic bases. Just one is grooved and decorated with a Romanesque knot. They have graceful crocket capitals.



The columns then continue as curved archivolts. The finest ornamental stone carving can be seen between the columns and the archivolts. The portal has no figurative representations. It is artistically comparable to the one at St. Stephen's in Vienna, Wiener Neustadt and Klein-Mariazell.

The entire building is sparingly decorated with plant

ornamentation elements. The only figure, the so-called founder figure in a niche in the blind arcades on the west side, was not created until after the charnel house was completed. Its meaning is unclear. The hinged door with iron fittings dates to the construction period, making it more than 700 years old. Although not erected until after the renovation in 1975, the perron resembles the original entranceway as various structural elements later showed.

The interior of the charnel

The interior of the charnel house is round in shape and has a dome. The walls are divided by blind arcades. The half-columns reach from dome to floor. In only one place, namely to the left of the apse, the half-column ends on a corbel.

The charnel chapel probably served as a graveyard chapel in the Middle Ages. It was here that the wealthy guild of livestock traders and butchers had their altar. In the 16th century, the charnel chapel lost its religious function. It was relegated to a storeroom and became dilapidated. It was not until the end of the 19th century that Anton Kerschbaumer, the parish priest in Tulln, recognized the art-historical value of the charnel house and had it restored in 1874.

Attempts were made at the time to uncover the paintings hidden at the time under lime wash. However, only paint residues and outlines of the figures remained and the restorer had to supplement the colors himself. The paintings are therefore no more than a “re-telling” of the original.

Viewed from the altar, the paintings are arranged in a religiously meaningful way. On the right, on the side of good, are the wise virgins from Jesus’s Parable of the Virgins in Matthew 25:1-13, one of the most popular parables in the



Middle Ages. Their oil vessels are full; they carry them with the opening pointing upward. St. Catherine, the Adoration by the Magi and the human crowned by the crown of the eternal life, represent the heaven entered by the wise virgins.

On the left, the side of evil, are the foolish virgins. Their vessels are empty. They are carrying them with the opening facing downward and are being led into hell by the devil. The demons of hell are depicted opposite the altar and here also human vices. Intemperance is clearly recognizable in the figure with the wine cask.

In the apse is a depiction of Christ judging, beside him an angel with sword (tribunal) and one with crucifix (redemption), in front Mary and John. Above the apse is St. Michael Fighting the Dragon. The paintings represent the Last Judgement, the separation of the humans in good and evil. Underneath the paintings is a band with mystical creatures.

13. St. Stephen's Parish Church

The church building and its history

In 1014, Emperor Henry II bequeathed, inter alia, land in Tulln to the Bishop of Passau, Berengar, to build a church and rectory. To support these efforts, he also bequeathed to the bishop a royal domain consisting of about 30 hectares of land.

This gift covering five church sites laid the groundwork for safeguarding and expanding church life in central Lower Austria, an area that had not returned to Bavarian-German control until the late 10th century.



Tulln was therefore able to build a church, which was completed shortly after 1014. There is only archeological evidence for this first building; it was in the middle of what is the nave today. The church was built outside the old fort in the first new area of expansion in the settlement. This settlement was protected by a rampart and palisades.

In the 12th century a three-aisled **Romanesque basilica** without transept was built to accommodate the fast-growing city. It featured three apses as well as an imposing westwork – the two

towers with the western gate. The three aisles had a flat wooden ceiling. The floor, a type of terrazzo flooring reddish in color, was about 60 centimeters lower than today's floor. The length of the Romanesque building can be divined most readily from the south side aisle. The building extended from the towers to the elevated chancel erected later; it was completed in 1170.

Around 1280 the nave was rebuilt for a reason that remains unknown. It was the same size as its predecessor but had only five bays (instead of six). The five small windows in the clerestory date from this period.

In the 14th century, there were probably plans to undertake an extensive **renovation in Gothic style**. However, only today's elevated chancel and the north side chapel were built. Following a major fire in 1491, the nave and side aisles were vaulted over and today's roof truss was built. In 1590 an earthquake damaged the church. The side chapel and the north wall tipped outward (still apparent today) and had to be shored up with support structures. The northern tower was also badly damaged. The top section collapsed and had to be rebuilt.

The two transept chapels were built after 1752; Baroque features were added to the church interior in the late 18th century.

The original Romanesque division of the wall is still clearly visible on the **south façade** of the church. Half-columns with lesenes on cushion capitals bear a Lombard frieze with rounded arches. Low blind arcades to both sides of the entrance suggest a Romanesque side portal that was once richly decorated. One can also clearly see several of the small Romanesque rounded arch windows that are walled in today.



The **elevated Gothic chancel** and late Gothic side chapel on the north side are set off from the Romanesque nave. Both have typical Gothic windows and buttresses. The sacristy was added to the south side in the 17th century. A **lion's head** of unknown origin is incorporated in the wall at the top of the south side of the south tower.

An imperial double-eagle with two decapitated heads of Turks in its claws hangs above the **west portal**. This motif is a reminder of the significance of Tulln as a point of congregation for the Christian relief army prior to freeing Vienna in 1683.

The Baroque stone figures next to the portal – St. John of Nepomuk on the left and St. Charles Borromeo on the right – were once set up next to the water chapel on the Danube landing. They have been in their present location only since the late 19th century.



The west portal, the main portal of the church, is unlike any other in Austria. The two figural pillars were installed around 1200, after the completion of the Romanesque church. They feature twelve busts contained in semi-circular niches and are reminiscent of

Roman gravestones. The busts represent the twelve bishops of Passau. It is assumed that the then bishop of Passau, Wolfger von Erla, had these two pillars put in around 1200. His intent was to provide evidence also in pictorial form of his title to the church building, which the Passau bishops had owned since 1014. The busts show all Passau bishops from Berengar in 1014 to Wolfger around 1200. It is coincidental that they number twelve. Later this number led to the assumption that the busts represented the twelve apostles. This portal was known in local parlance as the Apostles' Gate.

The two imposing **towers** of the Tulln parish church are a dominant feature in the cityscape, rising to a height of 49 meters. They were part of the westwork from the beginning. Originally they were several meters lower than they are today and were probably topped by pyramidal roofs. After the fire of 1491, pointed spires were added and after another major fire in 1752, the bodies of the towers were increased in height and the Baroque spires were added. The firebreak was also added back then, i.e. the diaphragm arch between the two towers.

The interior of the Tulln parish church



The church is one of the largest parish churches in the Diocese of St. Pölten: 57 meters long, 19 meters wide and 12.5 meters high. Visitors enter the church through the **Romanesque north portal**, one of the oldest structural parts of the church. The two columns bear remarkable capitals. The left one is decorated with an eagle, the right one with stylized foliage and fish.

Today's **nave** has five bays and dates back to 1280/90. It is erected in the Early Gothic style typical of the churches of the mendicant orders: octagonal pillars without capitals, wide-span pointed Gothic arches.

The vaults were built around 1500. The nave has a Gothic vault with a flat groin and a simple stellar rib pattern; the side aisles feature Gothic cross-ribbed vaulting.

The **elevated chancel** is a superb example of regular High Gothic: It dates from the 14th century, has four bays, cross-ribbed vaulting and a 5/8 chancel end, i.e. the chancel floor plan is octagonal but only five of the sides are covered over. Originally the elevated chancel had two rows of nine tracery windows. They flooded the space around the altar with light, setting it off from the dark nave, which had only small windows. Several



of these tracery windows were walled up and today's windows in the side aisles were broken out in the early 16th century. These changes undermined the original spatial design. The intent of the master builder was surely to implement the mysticism of light, a Gothic concept (dark nave with believers, brighter space around the altar). Choosing nine as the number of windows in the elevated chancel supports this view.

The only original Gothic furniture remaining in the church are

a recessed seat in the elevated chancel and the twelve-sided Gothic baptismal font, which stands in the right-hand side aisle today.

The interior of the parish church was destroyed by a fire in 1752. Today's interior all dates back to the end of the 18th century. The **high altar** and choir stalls are from dissolved monasteries. The high altar is from the Carmelite Convent in St. Pölten. It was built there in 1717 and moved to this church in 1786. The altar is made of marble. The main altar painting showing "The Stoning of St. Stephanus" and the painting above it showing the "Holy Trinity" were done by Josef Steiner around 1790. The two side statues depicting St. Camillus and St. Leopold belonged to the altar and the two upper ones representing St. Mary Magdalene and St. Rosalia were added to the Tulln church in 1788.



The Rococo **choir stalls** are especially sumptuous. They were built around 1750 for the Carthusian church in Gaming and came to Tulln in 1790. The front row of seats was added in the 19th century. The

present-day glazing in the windows was installed in 1951. The former Neo-Gothic windows had been destroyed toward the end of World War II.

The two Rococo **side altars** are from the second half of the 18th century. The main altar painting in the left altar, "The Annunciation", is a contemporary copy of a work by Franz Anton Maulpertsch (the original hangs in Belvedere Palace in Vienna and was initially painted for Türnthal Castle); the right-hand altar painting, "St. Lucy", is of unknown origin.

The **chapel on the north side** is somewhat newer than the elevated chancel and also more elaborately designed: keystones, rib profile, wall baldachin – but no figures. The Gothic windows were baroquized. The chapel has a Rococo altar with a painting by Josef Steiner modeled on a famous work by Raphael, “The Marriage of the Virgin”. The large grave slab in the floor marks the burial place of Jodok Höpfner von Prendt, parish priest in Tulln and auxiliary bishop in Passau, who died in 1686.

The other **gravestones** set up here were previously in the floor of the church. They covered the burial places of Tulln citizens and clergy. There is a further gravestone in each of the Baroque side chapels and a number of further stones are incorporated in the outside wall of the church.

At the front of the side aisle on the south side is a triple-stepped **Romanesque arch**, the beginnings of the right-hand apse of the Romanesque church. The south side chapel planned for this site was never executed, which is why the arch remained standing.

The altar in the **left-hand Baroque side chapel** contains the oil painting “Glorification of St. John of Nepomuk” executed in 1734 by Father Inno, a member of the Friar Minors of Tulln. The **right-hand Baroque side chapel** has an excellent altar painting by Franz Anton Maulpertsch with finely scaled colors and typical chiaroscuro effects of light and shadow. It possibly depicts the scene with Thomas the Apostle from the Gospel according to John. Its origin is unknown.

The Late Baroque **pulpit** is rich in figural decoration. It was executed after 1752 and can probably be ascribed to the Tulln sculptor Matthias Klöbl. Allegorical seated figures on the body of the pulpit symbolize the church as mother, as ruler of the world and as teacher. The relief on the pulpit parapet depicts Christ handing over the keys of power to St. Peter and atop the abat-voix is a veiled female figure symbolizing faith. The pulpit therefore has a definite theological message to communicate: The church leads people to faith through the preacher’s words.



Five oil paintings in magnificent Rococo frames hang above the other pillars in the nave. They show St. Peter and the four evangelists, painted in 1786 also by Josef Steiner.

The **music choir** was built in 1635, the **organ** dates from 1960. It has three manuals and 37 organ stops.

14. Schoolhouse and Bürgerspital

To the south of the parish church is the **old schoolhouse**, a simple structure from the 19th century. Predecessor structures date back far into the Middle Ages; a school was mentioned as early as the 14th century. To the north of the parish church is a residential building from the Gründerzeit, the name given to the period of dynamic growth and industrialization from the mid-19th century to World War I. The **Bürgerspital** (citizens' hospital) with a chapel stood on this spot into the 19th century. Probably founded around 1300, this hospital served as a municipal old-age and nursing care home and was the most important social institution in Tulln. The hospital was very wealthy. It had its own property from endowments granted by citizens and was self-sustaining. It could accommodate over 30 citizens but also cared for the elderly and the sick outside its own premises. Another institution associated with the hospital since medieval times was the leper colony outside the city, later known as the "Lazar House".

Social welfare until the late 19th century was provided by the family, religious orders and citizens' foundations. One such benefactor was Schnalzer, a municipal judge. His coat-of-arms is set above the entrance to the building.

15. Wiener Straße



The rectory (17th/18th century) is on Wiener Straße; the southwest tower of the Roman fort stood at the corner of Wiener Straße and Nibelungengasse. A vaulted medieval lane has been preserved

vis-à-vis, Blutgasse. Wiener Straße also has a number of old burgher homes, the core of which date back to the 14th century. House No. 18 was the oldest **city hall** of Tulln and was altered numerous times.

A city hall was needed when the citizens of Tulln successfully attained their independence from the aristocracy and were granted a limited **right of self-government**. Towns and cities, including Tulln, grew vigorously with the rapid expansion of the economy in the 12th and 13th centuries and became prosperous through trade and commerce. With the emergence of the money economy, the self-confident burghers had substantial sums and were a new economic factor. They demanded personal and economic freedom, elected officials, self-government in all municipal matters, financial sovereignty, a court and the right to bear arms and build walls for self-defense. Tulln received these privileges in a **city charter** in 1270 from the territorial lord, King Ottocar of Bohemia, who was likewise Duke of Austria at the time. It was confirmed in 1276 by Rudolf of Habsburg, King of Germany. From the 14th century on, the city also took part in the state parliaments.

Owing to these privileges, the city continued to be subject to the territorial lord and paid him taxes but the burghers were free and city judges and a council controlled the fate of the city into the 19th century.

16. Rathausplatz

Rathausplatz is the geographic center of the historical center of Tulln. The old Roman fort sufficed as a fortified area of settlement around 800, in the days of Charlemagne. The latter had conquered the Danube territories in 791. Yet as early as the 11th century, the settlement already began spilling over the walls of the Roman fort and in 1014 the parish church was built outside those walls. This expansion involved settlement to the south of the fort.

The economic flowering of Central Europe in the 12th century also led to the growth of Tulln and to extensive **urban planning concepts**. The city grew to cover six times the area of the fort and had a rectilinear grid of streets still in place today. In the 13th century a wall was built around Tulln. It was not until the late 19th century that the city grew beyond its medieval walls. Until the 12th century, Burgplatz in Tulln had mainly a defensive function.



Then Tulln became an **economic center** for the surrounding area and was transformed into a city. The inhabitants gained prosperity from the local need for trade and commerce but they became rich from their production of ceramics, loden fabric (“Tullner tuch”) and leather goods for the region and beyond – sheep and cattle were raised on the wet meadows of the Tulln Basin – and from trade in livestock, grain and wine. The city had the right to hold three fairs a year.

However, in the late 15th century, Tulln lost its prosperity. To blame were wars, fires and the Turkish threat. An upswing did not occur again until the 18th century but it was limited to small-scale trade and local commerce at the time.

Rathausplatz is the square where the east-west axis, Hauptplatz / Wiener Straße crosses the north-south axis, Rudolfstraße / Bahnhofstraße. The square had been called Alter Fleischmarkt (old meat market) since the Middle Ages and its north side Tuchlauben (cloth arcade). The “schranner”, Austrian dialect for court building, stood at the spot where the savings bank building is today.

The court building later served as the city hall of Tulln from 1850 to 1891, which explains why the square has been called Rathausplatz (city hall square) since that time. The court building was not replaced by the savings bank building until 1929. The patterned paving in the historical center was installed in 1991 when reduced-traffic zones were set up.

The **Late Baroque Marian Column** in the middle of the square was carved in 1745 by Tulln sculptor Sebastian Gurner. He was commissioned by a citizen residing here. The base of the statue bears the inscription: “Protected from fire, war and famine through you, Blessed Virgin, God help us”, with a chronogram of 1745. The angels on the base hold signs with the inscriptions “You Helper of the Poor” and “You Comforter of the Downcast.” The framing for the column was added in 1990.

The **Baroque house** on the corner of Rathausplatz and Rudolfstraße has a façade from the first half of the 18th centu-



ry divided by pilasters and protruding exterior window-sills. On the façade facing Rudolfstraße, the building has a “Hausbild” (house picture) depicting the Holy Trinity, the only one left of the many

Tulln once had.

Gasthof Zum Schwarzen Adler is a multi-story complex with a large inner courtyard. This inn was the only building in Tulln granted the “salva guardia”, an imperial right which exempted it from having to quarter members of the military. That is also why it bears the imperial coat-of-arms. Members of the nobility often stayed here.

17. Hauptplatz

Hauptplatz (main square) was called Breiter Markt (broad market) well into the 19th century and has been the heart of the city since it was first laid out in 12th century, down to the present day. It was planned and is comparable in size to Am Graben, a famous square in the center of Vienna, but is actually wider than Am Graben. The square was originally 300 meters by 55 meters and extended through half the city. A group of buildings was erected in the Middle Ages that divided this square in two, forming today’s Rathausplatz and the actual Hauptplatz. The latter measures 190 meters by 55 meters. The square is lined with Tulln’s most significant old burgher houses, whose core structures date back into the 14th century. A typical feature of these houses is a large courtyard and many of them still have one today. When these buildings were built, they were at a level 60 to 80 centimeters lower than today.

Extensive archeological studies were conducted from 2006 to 2009 under Hauptplatz and the premises of the Rosenarkade shopping center. All this work paid off scientifically: The excavations yielded objects from the Roman period on up into the 17th century. They also showed the development of Tulln from the 10th century onward in full detail (buildings including outbuild-



ings, building engineering, business enterprises, streets with vehicle grills, treasures, etc.). Above all, the studies produced evidence – the first ever in Austria – of how urban planning proceeded in the Middle Ages: street planning (rectilinear in Tulln), property lines between parcels (stone markers with wattle fences), building construction, and the shift to stone buildings from 14th century onward. Even lime kilns for the stone structures were found at Hauptplatz.

This planned square was always a **place of trade and commerce**. There were several gravel horizons of Danube gravel for soil stabilization and evidence of alternating market stalls (insertion holes). A permanent hall made of wood and 23 meters by 12 meters in size was detected in the northwest corner as

well as a central open area of about 25 meters by 20 meters. Everywhere, the soil was stabilized with gravel. These structures corresponded in function with the three fairs that Tulln had the privilege to hold.

Buildings have been built of stone since the 14th century; before that, they were made of wood. This change came about because of growing prosperity on the one hand and large-scale fires on the other. Outbuildings continued to be built of wood. Expensive tile roofing did not start until the Late Middle Ages. The last shingle roofs lingered on until the 19th century, however, which also explains the many fires.

The building facades were adapted to fit the taste of the times. Today's facades date largely from the Gründerzeit (boom period from mid-19th to early 20th century) or are post-World War II.

The **District Commissioner's Office** was built in 1891 when Tulln became the seat of the Tulln administrative district. Modeled on the city palace of Archduke Eugen Viktor on Schwarzenbergplatz in Vienna, the



building represents the Vienna Ringstraße architectural style in Tulln. Large buildings have stood on this square since the Middle Ages, most recently that of the salt authority.

The **Baroque building** to the south of it has a facade from the first half of the 18th century. It has been used for business and as a residence since then. The gate leads to the Citypassage, a shopping arcade built here in 1888. The building next door also has a business arcade plus a passageway to Karls-gasse. This

arcade is known by its earlier owner as Holzschuhpassage.



The striking **Renaissance building** at the corner of Hauptplatz and Jasomirgottgasse dates back to 1570. With its round projecting corner tower, blind windows and Venetian crenellations, the structure resembles a fortress. It was built by Tulln municipal judge Florian Träppel.

The **Gothic building** on the opposite side of the square dates from the second half of the 15th century. The archway, the Gothic sitting alcoves in the entryway hall, and the oriel are all nicely preserved. The latter has a small recess for the house coat-of-arms of the municipal judge Georg Täbrer. This building is one of the few Late Gothic structures left standing in Tulln.



The **south side of the square** was largely destroyed by a bombing attack in 1944. The buildings standing there today are products of the necessity to rebuild. Rosenarkade, a shopping mall that opened in 2008, is also on the south side. It extends from

Hauptplatz to Franz-Josef-Straße on the edge of the historical center. Its façade facing Hauptplatz is a replica of two buildings built here in 1950. In 2009, an underground parking garage was built under Hauptplatz for about 350 vehicles. Hauptplatz is paved with slabs of Chinese granite.

The **Trinity Column** stands nearly in the center of Hauptplatz. A plague epidemic raged here from 1679 to 1682. During it the city council pledged to erect this column and made good on its pledge in 1693. The column bears a depiction of the Holy Trinity. Gracing the quadratic base are four angels holding twisted candlesticks as well as four reliefs: On the south side is the Virgin Mary with child. An inscription calls to mind the pledge made by the city



council. On the east panel is St. Peregrine and on the west panel St. Sebastian. St. Mary Magdalene is shown atoning on the north panel, flanked on the left by the municipal coat-of-arms and on the right by the imperial eagle. The monument was executed by two master stonemasons from Eggenburg: Paul Stricker and Wolf Steinbeck; the angels are the work of the sculptor Johann Hiernl. The column originally stood in the middle of the square before being shifted several meters to the west in 2009.



At the west end of the square is the **district fountain**, created in 1991 by Hans Muhr. On its outer curve are the coats-of-arms of all municipalities in the district.

There are very few remarkable buildings on other streets in the historical center but their core structures nearly all date back to the 14th and 15th century. One remarkable exception is the building with the Gothic oriel at Karlsgasse 17.

18. Former Capuchin Monastery



Construction of the former Capuchin Monastery began in 1635. In 1750, the Duchess of Savoy, who lived in nearby Judenau, had it expanded, restored and put into its present-day

form. It housed the Capuchin Monastery until 1787. Then it was used for commercial and private purposes. The Capuchin Church located between the building and Hauptplatz was torn down. In 1995 the former monastery building was thoroughly renovated; today it houses the municipal music school, a kindergarten and several clubs. The old monastic kitchen is still preserved on the south side. The east wing with the monks' cells was razed in 2007 to build the Rosenarkade shopping mall.

The Capuchins and the Friars Minor are mendicant orders. The Friar Minors have been well-established in Tulln since the 13th century. They had no property except the monastery building and lived from donations from believers. In exchange they met two fundamental needs of the townspeople: religion (masses, devotions, sermons, confession and personal pastoral services) and social welfare (helping the poor, nursing care for the sick, and nursing and spiritual care for the dying).

19. The Remnants of the City Fortifications



The city tower and the moat in front of it are the last remains of the former municipal fortifications of Tulln, begun in the 13th century and largely razed in the years following 1860.

The round **city tower** protected

the southwestern corner of the city wall and was erected in 1560. Signs of the city wall can still be seen on its sides. The actual **city wall** or “High Wall” as it was known, was about 1.8 meters thick and over five meters high. In front of this wall was the narrow path known in German and often times also in English as the “zwinger” or sometimes in English as the outer ward. In front of the zwinger was another wall, the zwinger wall, about one meter thick and only two meters high. In front of that second wall were the city moat and city rampart.

The city fortifications were built after 1200 according to plans. They form an approximate rectangle 600 meters long by 420 meters wide. On the corners were towers or bastion-like fortifications; in the middle of the sides of the walls were four gates in the four cardinal directions. This fortification was greatly reinforced after 1400. Following these changes, it consisted of two walls and the 20 meter wide city moat. It was filled by way of its own supply line, which drew water from the Kleine Tulln River near Staasdorf. Beyond the moat were the ramparts. Part of the moat can still be seen in front of the school, as can part of the ramparts; both are incorporated in a landscaped area today.

20. Former St. Pölten Gate and Surrounding Area

The two buildings with arcades at the west end of Hauptplatz indicate the site of St. Pölten Gate. It was torn down in 1860 along with the other three gates. A stone bridge crossed the city moat at this point. Previously, there was a drawbridge here, as was the case at all gates. The statue of St. John of Nepomuk stood near the bridge since the 18th century. The city moat was filled-in to the north of St. Pölten Gate. Today, Nußallee runs where the moat once did.



The **Gründerzeit** refers to the decades of booming economic growth and industrialization from the mid-19th century to World War I. During it, rows of houses containing a number of state-ly **mansions** sprung up on the edge of city. One built in 1902 stands on the corner of Buchingerstraße and Nußallee. It is pure Jugendstil, a style of art and architecture that occurred in Germany and Austria parallel to art nouveau. Buchingerstraße also has several other mansions and residences worth noting from this period. They show the

attitude toward architecture during the Gründerzeit. Several of the buildings have been restored to their original state.

In the late 19th century, Tulln saw extensive **planned construction activity**. An elegant residential area was planned for the area west of the historical center and for the most part, was carried out. A residential and mansion district to the east of the historical city remained piecemeal, as did the industrial zone envisaged for the area south of the historical center with Bahnhofstraße forming the axis. A ring was to be drawn around

the historical center but only Franz-Josef-Straße and Wilhelmstraße were actually laid out. The latter street had a city park, a typical feature of the Gründerzeit. The park has since given way to a thoroughfare for traffic passing through city. Although mansions and contemporary buildings were also erected along these two streets, only a handful of them are preserved in their original state. The Jugendstil home at Wilhelmstraße 18 is well worth seeing.

In the second half of the 19th century there was a general **economic upswing**, from which Tulln also benefited. The economic upturn for the city began in 1870 with the building of a railroad known as the Franz-Josefs-Bahn. It crossed the Danube at Tulln, quickly allowing the city to share in the benefits of economic development. In 1885 a connecting rail line was opened to St. Pölten. In short succession, the city built a district court, a post and telegraph office, a savings bank, a police station, a fire department and a secondary modern school. In addition, Tulln was a garrison city and in 1891 became the seat of the newly established Tulln administrative district. The population doubled between 1850 and 1910 and the number of residential buildings increased by more than 90 percent. As the population grew, so too did the diversity of occupations and commercial enterprises and businesses. Cultural and sports activities were conducted by numerous clubs and associations, many of which still exist today. Tulln is the only town with city status in the administrative district and the center of the district in every sense.

World War I put an abrupt end to the flurry of building activity that had gone on during the Gründerzeit. The construction plan of this period is recognizable only fragmentarily any more due to the difference in traffic flows and damage wrought by World War II as well as the natural aging of buildings and social changes.

On the music school building on Buchingerstraße, a **sgraffito** reminds passers-by of the **Turkish siege of 1683**. The Chris-

tian relief army that had come to free Vienna gathered beforehand in and around Tulln.

The Tulln Basin was devastated by Turkish attacks back in 1529 as well as 1683 and many inhabitants died. Tulln managed to hold its own ground both times, however, thanks to the efforts of its citizens. The two centuries of the Turkish threat were accompanied by economic decline. City tax revenues fell to a third of their previous level, causing Tulln and environs to become impoverished. In 1665 only 30 of the 190 buildings in Tulln were still in proper condition; the others were run-down or abandoned.

In August of 1683 the imperial commander Charles V, Duke of Lorraine, established a bridgehead around Tulln. From early September on, the Austrian troops began approaching this site along with contingents from the Holy Roman Empire, a number of volunteers including Eugene of Savoy, later conqueror of the Turks, and finally also the Polish army. A pontoon bridge was laid across the Danube especially for the Polish.

The Polish king Jan Sobieski was the supreme commander and ordered the troops to attack immediately. On 10 September 1683, they were set in motion. After arduously crossing the Vienna Woods, they took position in its heights on 11 September. The following day they won a glorious victory. The Turkish army fled and Vienna was freed.

The little city of Tulln derived no advantage from this event except historical honor; it did not benefit until Austria experienced its own economic and political upturn. The 18th century was a time of re-emergence and prosperity for Tulln, as evidenced by the large number of Baroque buildings that were erected.

21. Minoritenplatz

The Monastery of the Friars Minor

The Friars Minor mendicant order settled in the northwestern corner of Tulln back in the 13th century. The monastery was then abandoned during the Reformation and not re-inhabited again until 1635. A handsome new monastery building and church were built in Late Baroque style from 1713 to 1756. In 1807 the monastery of the Friars Minor was shut down and in 1827 the building became a school for the imperial corps of engineers. Then the building was modified in 1858 and turned into barracks, making Tulln a garrison city. It was used as apartments in the 20th century. In 1990/93 the connecting wing was erected and the structure was thoroughly renovated. Today it serves as the city hall.

On the bottom floor, visitors can view an exhibition documenting the history of the building and see remnants of the two older religious structures.



Minoritenplatz

Minoritenplatz has a 17th century Baroque stone cross with a Franciscan coat-of-arms. It also has a ball fountain consisting of a 1000 kg marble ball kept floating by water pressure from below. The core structures of the two buildings on the south side are from the Late Middle Ages; a Gothic oriel and the Gothic gate are preserved in building No. 3.

22. Church of the Friars Minor

The church as it stands today dates back to the early 18th century. The original lower tower was increased in height in 1889 and topped with a new spire modeled on the parish church of Pöchlarn. A statue of the Immaculate Conception was donated in 1774 and had been positioned in the south wall of the church since the mid-19th century. Today it is back in its old spot: a niche in the exterior wall of the chancel uncovered in 1991. A statue of St. Francis by Tulln sculptor Josef Weinbub was placed in the niche in the south wall in 1994.

The interior of the church

The interior of the church is surprising in its elegant splendor and Late Baroque unity. It has a programmatic design down to the last detail. The church has remained unchanged since its consecration in 1739.

One striking feature of the interior is the contrast between the altar space colored red, brown and green and the main body of the church with its Bohemian vaults colored white and light gray. Light green is the dominant color in the side chapels, in



the vestibule of the Loreto Chapel and in the oratories. The delicate interlacing stucco combined with floral motifs as well as the regular panel molding framing the ceiling frescoes are typical of the style of decoration in the first third of the 18th century.

One noticeable aspect of the design is the use of the number two and multiples of it. This single-nave church is divided into four bays through double transverses over double pilasters; further, there are four side altars, pairs of windows, two confessionals, four altar figures and double doors. The reason for this number design is presumably that the church is dedicated to two saints: As a Franciscan church it is a Marian church but when the new church was built in 1739 St. John of Nepomuk was added as a church patron, a fashionable saint in the Baroque Age.

Around 1400, the historical John of Nepomuk (aka “Johann von Pomuk”), vicar-general of the archdiocese of Prague, had a dispute with then King Wenceslaus about church property. The king had him executed and his corpse thrown into the Vltava River. The Counter-Reformation made John a martyr who had lost his life defending the seal of the confessional. The legend is that he was the queen’s confessor and refused to tell the king what she had confessed despite the king ordering him to do so. For this reason, the king staged a show trial and had him thrown into the Vltava.

The cycle of **ceiling frescos** depicts the life of this second



John: “John of Nepomuk as Confessor of the Queen of Bohemia” under the organ loft; “John of Nepomuk Appearing Before King Wenceslaus IV” above the organ loft; then going in the direction of

the high altar are „John of Nepomuk as Preacher”, “The Saint’s Pilgrimage to Altbunzlau” and “The Saint Being Thrown from the Bridge”. One detail is quite remarkable: The foot of an angel extends physically out of the frame. The painting in the high altar depicts the Virgin Mary and John of Nepomuk being assumed into heaven and completes the cycle.

On the east side of the church is a magnificently wrought **high altar**, which also has a programmatic theological design. The altar table is of green stucco marble and is shaped like a sarcophagus. Two angels stand on it bowing before the richly carved tabernacle, which is crowned with a replica of the devotional painting of the Virgin Mary from Mariazell. The painting in the high altar is a fresco and with its black-gold stucco frame is integrated directly into the architecture of the space. It depicts St. John of Nepomuk being assumed into heaven through the intervention of the Virgin Mary.



It depicts St. John of Nepomuk being assumed into heaven through the intervention of the Virgin Mary.

The depiction of the Holy Trinity is unusual here: God the Son appears not as a person but as the word “verbum”, which proceeds from God the Father and the Holy Spirit as a beam of light. In the Gospel according to John, “Caro factum est” (“The word became flesh”) the story continues with Christ becoming human and then in the speech scroll of John the Baptist “Ecce Agnus Dei” (“Behold the Lamb of God”) as a work of salvation. From his gesture, John of Nepomuk is clearly beseeching the

Virgin Mary to protect the city of Tulln, which can be seen in the lower left-hand edge of the picture. This supplication was heard, as one can see from the devil fleeing hell-ward in horror. Flanking the picture in the high altar are life-size statues of John the Baptist and John the Evangelist as well as St. Leopold and St. Wenceslaus of Bohemia, all fashioned out of white alabaster plaster by Sebastian Gurner.

The **side front altar on the left** is dedicated to **St. Francis of Assisi**. He was the founder of the Franciscan Order, a fact indicated by the words "Ordinis Minorum Fundator" above the altar. The picture showing the saint is older than the present church. It was probably painted in the early 16th century. Francis has stigmata and holds a book in his hand decorated with the letter "T", the seal letter for Tulln. It is quite certain that this picture came from the medieval church and managed to survive the Reformation. It was then put in the new church as an altar decoration. The artist was compelled to use the tiny picture to fill up the entire reredos. He solved the problem by having angels hold the picture, placing a tabernacle underneath it and adding two columns to the four pilasters. The two figures represent St. Jude Thaddeus und St. Maurice. The tabernacle picture is a scene from the legend of St. Francis where the saint is teaching a sheep to worship God.

Across from the St. Francis altar is its counterpart, the **altar** dedicated to the second great saint of the Friars Minor, **Anthony of Padua**, "Rerum Perditarum Inventor" ("Finder of Lost Things"). His picture is flanked by two bishops: St. Blais and St. Erasmus. The tabernacle relief shows another scene from the legend of St. Francis: the donkey of a heretic genuflecting before the Holy Host.

The **side altar** at the rear on the right side is dedicated to the saint that protects people from fire and water shortages, **St. Florian**, "Aedium Conservator" ("Protector of Homes"); at the lower left of the altar picture is the monastery with the city of

Tulln burning in the background. This picture refers to the city fire of 1752 and is therefore not as old as the rest of the church furnishings. On either side of the altar are the statues of two saints invoked against the plague: Sebastian and Roch.

Across from this altar on the left side is the **Altar of St. Joseph**, “Filius Dei Nutritus” (“Foster Father of the Son of God”). The figures on either side represent Joachim and Anna, the Virgin Mary’s parents, and complete the Holy Family. The picture is a copy of the devotional painting of Our Lady of Perpetual Succor in Passau.

The four side altars do not have identical designs. Instead the two front ones correspond to each other (they only have bust portraits), and the two rear ones (they have large altarpieces). The reason: the old picture of St. Francis had to be integrated harmoniously in the church interior. The four side altars are in niches which are colorful, like the space around the high altar; they give the illusion of two side aisles, making the church seem larger than it actually is.

The sumptuously decorated **pulpit** has a relief in the middle of it. It depicts the recovery of the corpse of John of Nepomuk from the Vltava. In the background are the historical center of Prague and the Charles Bridge.

All **carvings** in the church – the pews, confessionals and doors – were done by lay brothers of the Monastery of the Friars Minor. A superb piece of carpentry is the cabinet with inlay work located in the sacristy and dated 1746.



The author of the theological program applied to the interior remains unknown, as does the architect who artistically implemented that program. There are parallels with the monastic church in St. Andrä an der Traisen that indicate a group of artists from St. Polten may have been involved.

This magnificent church in no way reflects the Franciscans' ideal of poverty but the order did know how to win over sponsors. The money came from the Duchess of Savoy, a wealthy woman who appreciated art and spent her summers at her estate in nearby Judenau. She was a generous benefactor of the Tulln monasteries.

The **Loreto Chapel** is a replica of the Holy House in Loreto, an unrendered barrel-vaulted brick structure. According to legend, this house in which the Holy Family lived was carried by angels from the Orient to Loreto, Italy. Copies of this



house were very popular in the Franciscan Order and were built in many monasteries in the Late Middle Ages, including this monastery in Tulln. The chapel is therefore probably older than the present-day church. A replica of the Black Madonna of Loreto is found here behind wooden Baroque latticework. It is surrounded by angels and illuminated by light passing through the small side windows. The carvings on the doors to the chapel depict two scenes from the life of the Virgin Mary: the Annunciation and the Visitation.

Under the Loreto Chapel is the non-accessible **hermitage** – several cellar rooms lined with stones and shells, probably a chamber of repentance from Baroque times.



The **lower church**: Because of the proximity to the Danube, the new church of the Friars Minor built in the 18th century required a solid foundation to be laid down. This lower church likewise serves as a burial place for the

monks of the monastery. Several burial niches contain members of the order who died in the period from 1750 to 1780. At the front of the lower church is an altar with a life-size figure of St. John of Nepomuk being mourned by the Queen of Bohemia. A plaster baldachin crowns the scene. The lower and upper churches are also connected by an acoustical channel.

It is just a few steps from the Church of the Friars Minor to the starting point of the city walking tour, the Nibelung Fountain.

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