

Accompanying materials  
to the tour

EN

# Water Tanks at Špilberk



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MΣ

Brno City Museum

| Špilberk Castle

# Dear visitors,

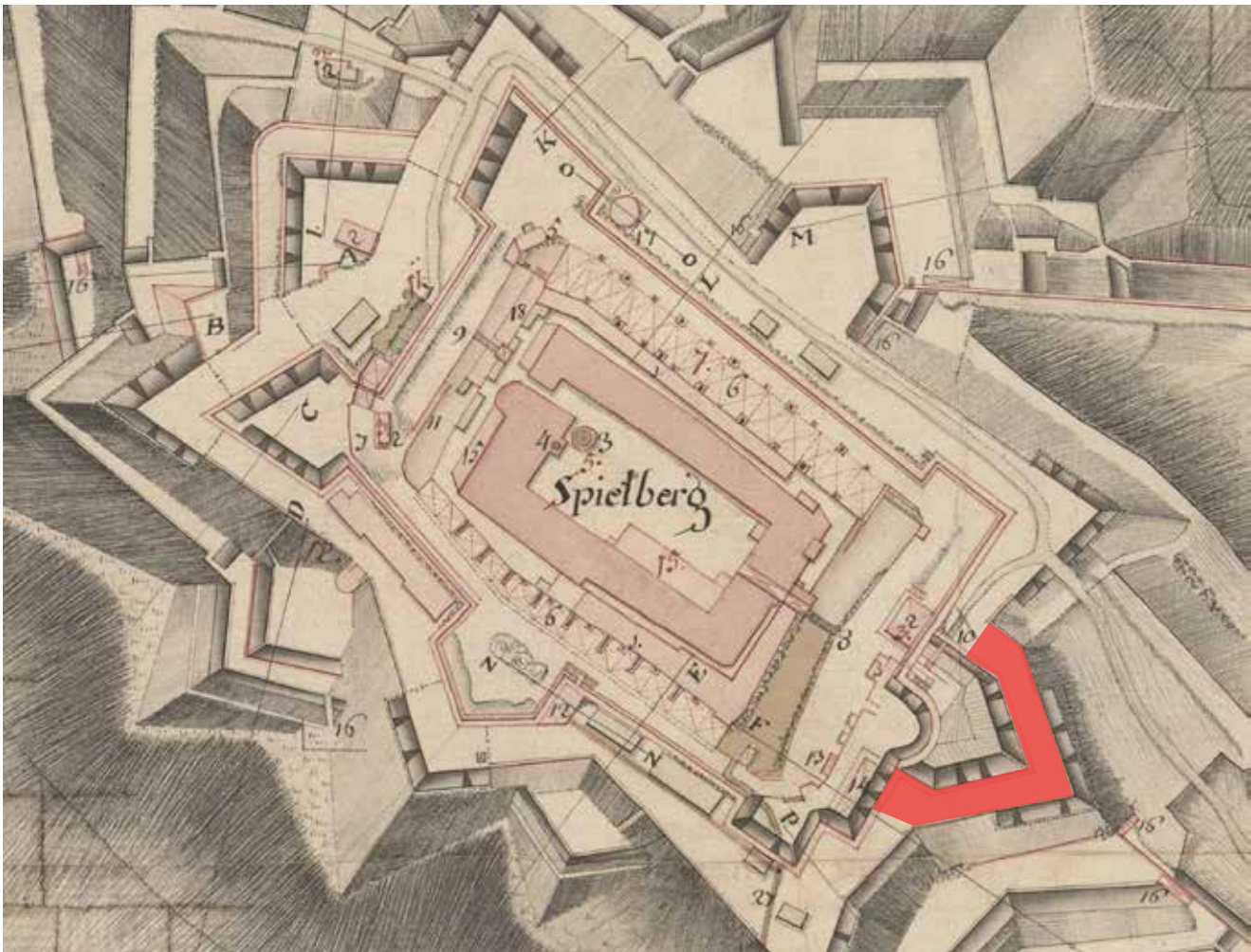
Welcome to the national cultural monument, Špilberk Castle and Fortress, the seat of the Brno City Museum.

The castle has been an inseparable landmark of the town for more than seven hundred years. It was founded by the Czech king Ottokar II of Bohemia. At that time it mainly had a military and representative function. In the second half of the 14th century and at the beginning of the 15th century it became the seat of the Moravian Margraves of the Luxembourg family. Špilberk played a key role during the Thirty Years' War, especially in 1645 during the unsuccessful siege of Brno by Swedish troops. After the war, great financial resources were invested in the reconstruction of the fortress and by the middle of the 18th century Špilberk and the town became the largest fortress system in Moravia. As part of this reconstruction, a new belt of fortifications was built, including the so-called eastern bastion, which we will visit shortly.

It fulfilled its function as a fortress element until the 19th century, when two

water reservoirs were gradually built into its space.

The economic development of Brno since the beginning of the 19th century was linked to a steep increase in its population. In 1852, Brno ceased to be a closed city and the fortified historic core was merged with the suburbs. It meant the abolition of the vast double ring of bastion fortifications from the Baroque period. The vacating of the fortress lands opened the way for new urbanization. As in Vienna and other European cities, a new ring road was created around the historic city centre. At the request of the public and on the initiative of the then mayor Christian d'Elvert, the new road also included areas of public green space. The planting on the outskirts of the fortification was preceded by the transformation of the bare Špilberk hill with the fortress into a public park, which was designed and implemented by the gardener Antonín Šebánek in 1861.



Plan of the Špilberk fortress from the middle of the 18th century with the eastern bastion highlighted



## Bastion

Bastion is a pentagonal fortress structure, the two sides of which have their tip protruding into the moat of the castle. Bastions connected by curtain walls are the basis of the bastion fortification system, the concept of which originated in the Apennine Peninsula at the turn of the 16th century.



Construction of water reservoir on Žlutý kopec, Špilberk in the background (before 1900)

# Water reservoirs in Špilberk

In addition to the urban planning challenges, the city's population concentration and recurring epidemics made the supply of safe drinking water urgent. In the 1860s, a public tender was issued for the construction of a new municipal water supply system by a private company. Thomas Docwra, an English water, gas and railway construction entrepreneur, was the most successful bidder. He offered to build and operate the waterworks in return for a concession for ninety years, with the city being able to buy the business under specified terms after thirty or fifty years. The basis of the new water supply was to be a river water treatment plant in Pisárky below the weir at the Kamenný mlýn settlement on the Svratka River, equipped with proven English filtration technology. The water was then to be distributed through a new water supply network to the town, which was divided into two height zones with balancing reservoirs. The water reservoir at Žlutý kopec was designated for the lower first zone and the water reservoir at Špilberk

for the higher second zone. On March 30, 1869, the local authority authorized the city council to enter into a contract with Thomas Docwra. The charter of incorporation of the water company with its seat on Jezuitská Street was drawn up on 16 June 1869. The businessman Docwra was represented by the engineer John Glynn, who, together with the later director of the Pisárky waterworks Gustav Heink, is believed to have managed the entire construction. A water reservoir with a capacity of 20,000 buckets (i.e. approximately 1,132,000 litres) was planned to be built at Špilberk. The location of the water reservoir was not chosen at random. After considering various construction options, the eastern bastion of the Baroque fortification was chosen. The water reservoir was to be only shallowly embedded in the terrain, and mostly set into the body of the bastion. At that time, Špilberk was no longer a famous prison, but a barracks. In the upper part of the bastion there was an officers' garden with a garden pavilion and a skittle alley.



Thomas Docwra



Contract between T. Docwra and the City of Brno (1869)



Officers' Garden (before 1887)



Construction of the pumping station  
(1870 - 71)

## Pumping station (1870 - 1871)

It was built at the same time as the older reservoir and originally consisted of a boiler house with two boilers, an engine house, a coal house and the engineer's house.

In the 1890s, the pumping station equipment was modernized. The original English Worthington steam pumps were replaced. In 1924, the steam pumps were replaced by electric motors and the boiler house was closed down.



Construction of an older water reservoir  
(1870 - 71)

# Older Water Tanks (1870 - 1871)

The construction of the water reservoir was connected with the construction of a pumping station at the promenade path in the new park on the hillside above Pellicova Street (now the Špilberk 217/2 building). Water was to be pumped into the reservoir using a steam engine from the main pipe on Pekařská Street and then piped back to the water main on Husova Street. The pumping station was to consist of a boiler room with two boilers, an engine room, a coal room and the engineer's house. On 6 July 1869, Thomas Docwra called on the city administration to discuss with the War Ministry in Vienna and the Military Construction Directorate in Brno the transfer of land and new access to the officers' garden, as the road led through the planned water reservoir. The army accepted the request without objection, on the understanding that the town would pay the military administration 10 Austrian guilders per year for the lease of the land and that the Špilberk garrison would receive 100 buckets (i.e. approximately 5,660 litres) of drinking water per day free of charge. In this spirit, the town signed a contract with the Military Construction Directorate on 8 June 1870. On July 6 1870, exactly one year after the negotiations began, Thomas Docwra undertook to pay the designated fee for the town. However, it is not clear how the specified water ration was delivered to the garrison. The plan of Špilberk from 1873 shows a small tank connected to the water reservoir opposite the bridge over the eastern moat. According to the plan, the supply led through the upper part of the bastion with the garden and then



A vaulted two-aisle brick building with a rectangular ground plan with internal dimensions of 30.7 x 8 m and a height at the top of the vaults of 5.8 m. The bottom of the reservoir is located at 274.82 m above sea level. Its walls are covered with cement plaster with asphalt coating.

The volume at a water height of 4.82 m was 928 m<sup>3</sup>.



through the half-cylindrical late Gothic bastion. It was necessary to overcome a considerable height difference between the water reservoir and the office building. The specified ration was probably pumped regularly every day by a hand pump from the service house of the reservoir. The main source of water for the entire fortress remained the castle well, approximately 114 m deep, and the adjacent cistern in the large courtyard. However, according to Christian d'Elvert's personal testimony from about 1859, it was not a very rich source.

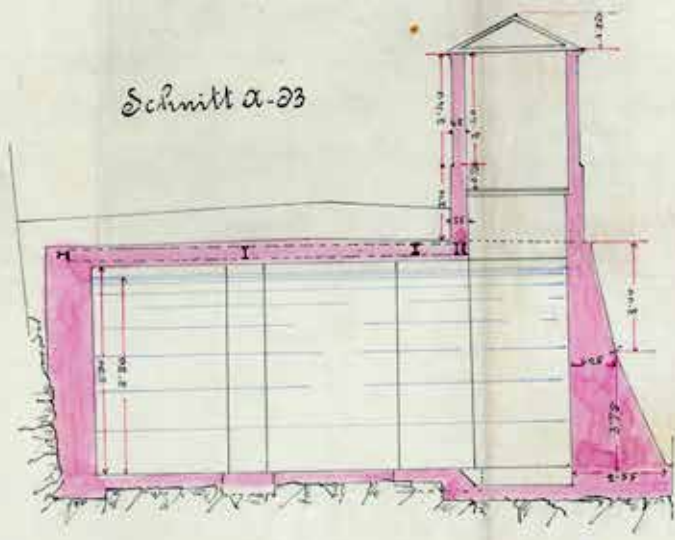
On 18 December 1869, a committee met with the owners of the private gardens under the promenade road to survey the site of the pumping station. The expropriation hearing took place on 31 December 1869 in the Kamenný Mlýn. A construction plan for the station and the older water reservoir was drawn up by engineer John Glynn and approved by the Common Council on February 25, 1870. The technological project was completed on 13 July and the building permit was issued on 25 July 1870. It was built between 1870 and 1871.

# Spielberg Reservoir II.

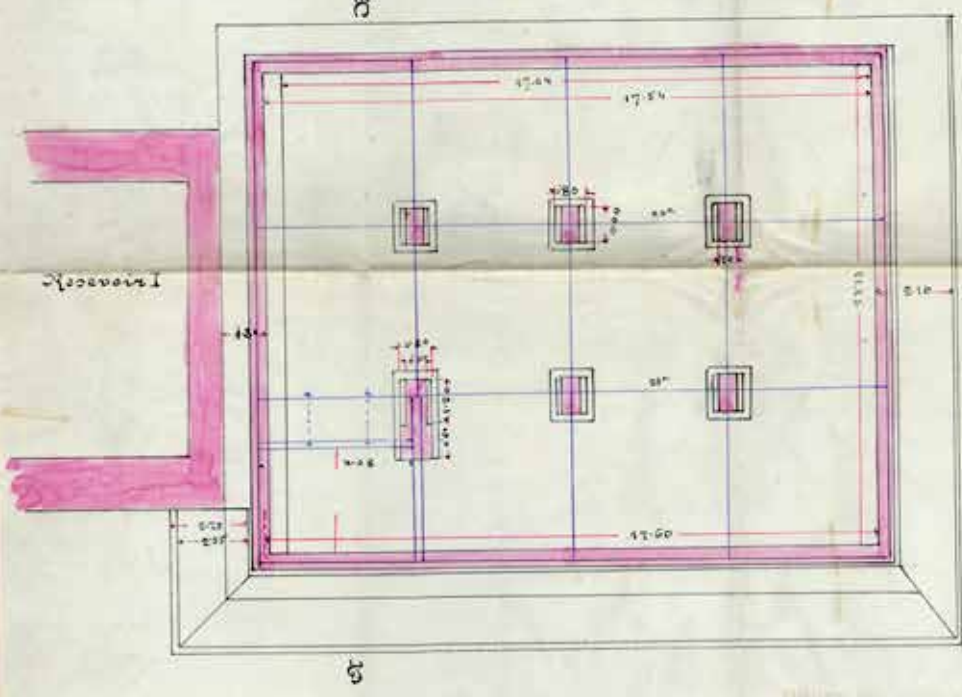
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Plans of the newer water reservoir (1900)

# Newer Water Tanks

In 1900 a newer water reservoir was built into the bastion. The documentation for the construction has not survived, but it is most likely that the bastion wall at the eastern gate had to be rebuilt due to the greater width of the new water reservoir. The two reservoirs were initially connected to separate pipelines from the pumping station. In 1914 a regulation chamber was added to the older reservoir, where the central supply for both reservoirs was connected.



Its internal dimensions are 17.5 x 13.1 m and the height is 5.9 m, with a water height of 5.5 m the capacity was 1,234 m<sup>3</sup>. The reservoir is made of reinforced concrete and was built by Pyttel & Brausewetter.



## REGULATION CHAMBER (1914)

It was used to regulate the volume of water. The reservoir contained a drum that moved on iron rods. When the water level rose, it pushed the drum up. At the maximum point, the flow of additional water stopped.

→ **INTERESTING FACT:** The principle of operation is similar to that of a toilet water tank.







The older water reservoir before reconstruction

# Lapidarium of the Brno city museum and the temple of stone exhibition

In 1960, Špilberk Castle was given to the Brno City Museum. Two years later it was declared a national cultural monument. By that time, all the museum collections had already been moved to Špilberk, with the exception of the lapidarium, which remained in the cloister of the New Town Hall and in the adjacent premises of the former Dominican monastery. The exhibition of Zorošlava Drobná and the architect Josef Polášek from 1937 was moved gradually from 1965 and finally disappeared in 1988. Even though the total restoration of Špilberk had been underway since 1984, the collections of the lapidarium remained only temporarily stored in warehouses for decades.

After the change of political conditions in 1989, the idea to use the reservoirs as a lapidarium was born right at the beginning of the 1990s. The project was developed in 1994-1995 by architect František Kopřivík. Work on the project has been underway since mid-1994. The construction was permitted but in the end it did not take place.

It was not until 2017-2019 that the lapidarium exhibition called THE TEMPLE OF STONE was installed in the water reservoirs.



From the Latin word lapis - stone, the lapidarium represents a collection of stone artefacts from various periods. In addition to stone-sculpture works from town houses, there are also medieval and early modern tombstones from Brno churches, sculptures and architectural elements.

The original city lapidarium was created and installed in 1908 in the cloister of the medieval Dominican monastery on Dominican Square in the area of today's New Town Hall. In the same year, a large set of architectural elements from the demolished Gothic chapel of the Virgin Mary and St. Wenceslas (the so-called Royal Chapel) was added to the collections.

In 1937, the second lapidarium exhibition was installed, the author of which was Dr. Zorošlava Drobná. The prominent architect Josef Polášek participated in the architectural design.



The original installation of the town lapidarium in the cloister (1908)

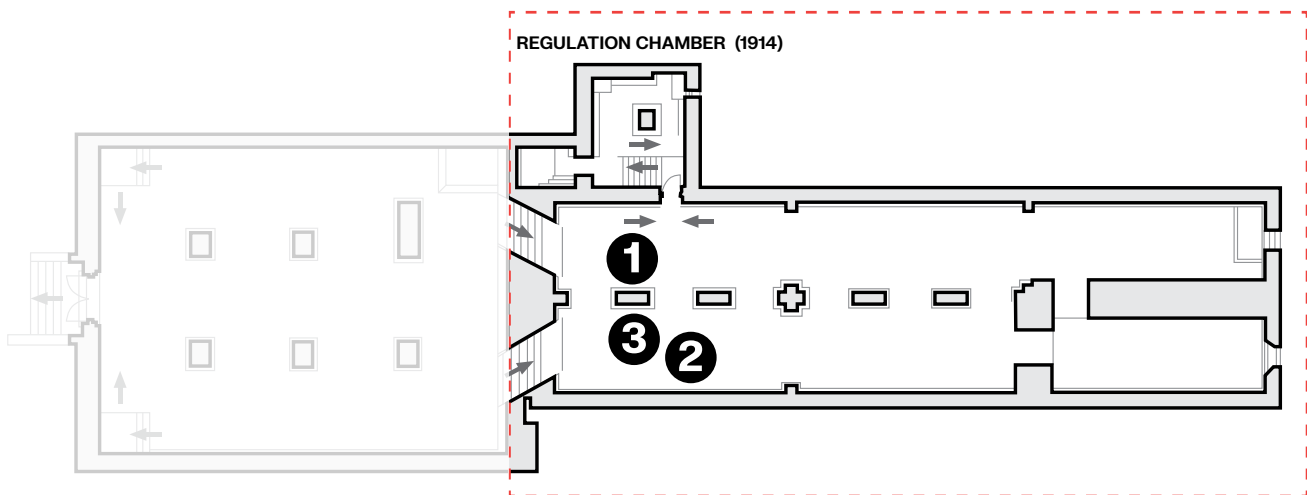




View of the older water reservoir. On the left the statue of the Sitting Turk ③, on the right the keystone from the so-called Royal Chapel ②

## NEVER WATER TANKS (1900)

## OLDER WATER TANKS (1870 –1871)



## SELECTED EXHIBITS

- ①** Console with a male face (1508)

**③** Sitting Turk (18th century)
- ②** The keystone from the so-called Royal Chapel (pre-1322)

# Selected exhibits - older Water Tanks

## Anton Pilgram, console with a male face, 1508

Dimensions: 44 x 46 x 47 cm

Material: crinoid limestone

Location: demolished Jewish Gate in Masaryk Street



1

ANTON PILGRAM (circa 1460 - 1516)

He was likely born in Brno. He was probably educated in Vienna and worked in Germany, e.g. in Heilbronn, Rottweil, Ohringen. Around 1500 he returned to Brno where he became the head of the stoneworks at the Church of St. James. In 1508 he created the artistic ornamentation of the Jewish Gate and around 1511 the portal of the Old Town Hall. In 1511 he took over the management of the steelworks at St. Stephen's in Vienna. As builder of St. Stephen's Cathedral in Vienna, he created the base of the organ emporium with a self-portrait (1513), the pulpit with busts of the four Church Fathers and the epitaph of Jan Keckmann. He died in Vienna around 1516.



Jewish Gate (1820)

# Vault keystone, beginning of the 14th century (pre-1322)

**Dimensions:** diameter 52 cm,  
height 34 cm

**Material:** crinoidal limestone, remains of  
polychrome

**Location:** demolished chapel of St.  
Mary and St. Wenceslas on Dominican  
Square



The so-called Royal Chapel (1904)

2

CHAPEL OF THE VIRGIN MARY AND ST.  
WENCESLAS, THE SO-CALLED ROYAL  
CHAPEL

The chapel was founded by the Czech King Wenceslas II in 1297. In 1323 it was donated to the Cistercian order by Queen Elizabeth Richeza. They owned the chapel until 1782, when Emperor Joseph II abolished their order. Later, the chapel belonged to the army which set up a warehouse there. In 1904, the chapel was acquired by the city of Brno, which decided to remove the chapel as part of the redevelopment of the historic centre. The demolition took place four years later. However, the cultural elite strongly protested against the demolition. Thanks to the protests against the demolition of the chapel, the building was one of the few demolished buildings in Brno to be documented and surveyed in detail. The preserved stone elements from the interior were taken over by the Brno City Museum, which installed some of its parts in the lapidarium exhibition in 1908.



# Sitting Turk (Alexandros Ypsilantis the Elder, Prince of Wallachia and Moldovia), late 18th century

Dimensions: height 103 cm

Material: shell limestone

Location: demolished house  
Křídlovická 4



The so-called Ypsilanti's House (1906)

3

ALEXANDROS YPSILANTIS (1725 - 1807)

He was born in Constantinople, in a district inhabited mostly by Greeks.

At the Sultan's court, Ypsilanti initially found employment as an interpreter, in 1774, the Sultan sent him to rule the Balkan province of Wallachia and in 1787 to Moldavia. In the same year, the combined armies of the Russian Tsar and the Austrian Emperor launched a military campaign to push the Turks as far as possible out of southeastern Europe.

In one of the attacks in Moldavia, both the Turkish army under Ibrahim Pasha and the troops of the Moldavian ruler, Alexander Ypsilanti, retreated. He was captured by Austrian hussars while escaping and brought to Brno in 1788. Here, he constantly stressed that he was not a Turk, but rather a member of a nation that wanted to liberate the Balkans. At first, he was placed in a house in Old Brno, later he was briefly moved to Špilberk. After interrogations and consultations with the Viennese court, he was found „not guilty“ and Ypsilanti was allowed to live in a house on the then Great Square (today's Freedom Square). After the political situation changed, Ypsilanti was extradited to Turkey in 1791. His later life, however, was marked by distrust of the Sultan.

In 1796, he was sent to Wallachia, but after a short time he returned to Constantinople. In 1806, when an uprising of Serbs broke out in Belgrade, Ypsilanti was seen in Constantinople as the spiritual leader of the rebels and was executed.

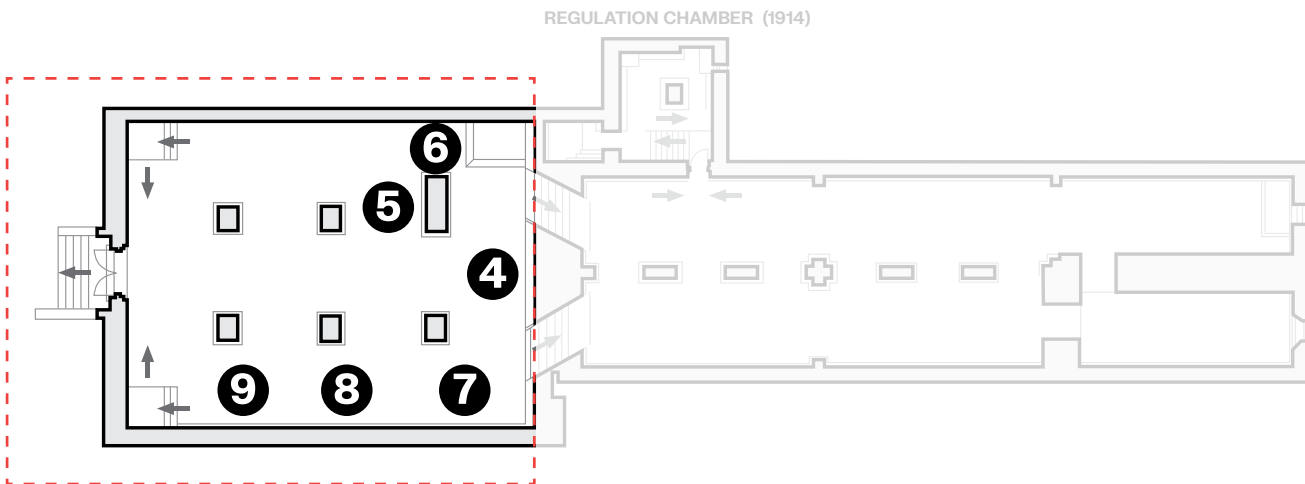
→ **INTERESTING FACT:** The house at 4 Křídlovická Street in Old Brno had a house sign, a sitting „Turk“ - during the renovation of the old house in the 1930s the sign was removed and placed in the collections of the Brno City Museum.



View of the newer water reservoir. Left tombstone of Kateřina Hocke ⑤, right wayside shrine ④

## NEWER WATER TANKS (1900)

## OLDER WATER TANKS (1870 –1871)



## SELECTED EXHIBITS

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| ④ Wayside shrine (1494)                | ⑤ Tombstone of Kateřina Hocke (1828)        |
| ⑥ Tombstone of Albert of Krosno (1399) | ⑦ Improved coat of arms of the city of Brno |
| ⑧ Tombstone of Anna Lipenská of Lipno  | ⑨ Tombstone of Jan Meziříčský of Lomnice    |

# Selected exhibits - newer Water Tanks

## Valerian Planer, wayside shrine, 1494

**Dimensions:** original height 473 cm, installed upper part 320 cm high

**Material:** crinoidal limestone

**Translation of the surviving text:** 1890 restored and erected here (i.e. in the courtyard of the New Town Hall)

**Location:** the column stood until 1805 in Pekařská Street, then in the Denis Gardens, since 1890 in the courtyard of the New Town Hall

4

### WAYSIDE SHRINE

A small structure usually in the shape of a column or pillar, sometimes covered by a roof. They are meant to symbolize the pillar at which Christ was scourged by the decision of Pontius Pilate.

Wayside shrines are located at crossroads and intersections, at village squares, and were built at places of significant events or other places of interest. They represented important elements of the Baroque cultural landscape and aesthetically enriched the surrounding landscape.



Wayside shrine in the courtyard of the New Town Hall (1890)



# Tombstone of Kateřina Hocke, widow of a merchant, † 1828

Dimensions: height 220 cm

Material: crinoid and shell limestone

Translation of the text: Kateřina Hocke, widow of a merchant, died on 2 January 1828. Reunited with her daughter and mourned by her husband, the relatives are left with only the noblest and best.

Location: the dissolved municipal cemetery in Tyrš Gardens near Kounicova street



5

MUNICIPAL CEMETERY ON KOUNICOVA STREET

Its foundation is connected with the reforms of Emperor Joseph II. For hygienic reasons, he forbade burial inside the city walls. That is why new municipal cemeteries began to be built outside the walls. This cemetery was founded in 1784 and served its purpose until 1883, when the Central Cemetery was established on Vídeňská Street, where it still exists today. In 1907, a park, the so-called Tyrš Gardens, was established on the site of the closed cemetery. A neo-Gothic cast-iron cross from 1846, placed in the middle of the garden, reminds us of the original cemetery function of the place.



→ **INTERESTING FACT:** Some of the Špilberk prisoners were also buried in the town cemetery on Kounicova Street, namely five Italian Carbonari who have their own monument in the Špilberk park.



# Tombstone of Albert of Krosno, rector of the Church of St. Nicholas, † 1399

Dimensions: 95 x 171 x 14 cm

Material: crinoid limestone

Translation of the text: In the year of our Lord one thousand three hundred and ninety-ninth, Mr. Albert of Krosno, rector of this chapel, died on the day of St. Dionysius (i.e. March 27). Pray for him.

Location: demolished church of St. Nicholas on Freedom Square



Church of St. Nicholas (1869)

6

## ST. NICHOLAS CHURCH

Its origins date back to the first half of the 13th century, when it was built by the Romano-speaking inhabitants of Brno. From its beginnings, the church was affiliated to the nearby Church of St. James. In 1645-1648, it was temporarily used by the Capuchins, in 1760, the church was Baroqueised under the leadership of František A. Grimm. In 1786, the church was closed down and in the following years it was used as a warehouse. In 1869-1870, it was removed from the square.

→ **INTERESTING FACT:** The tombstone of Albert of Krosno, which is part of the Temple of Stone exhibition, has been preserved. Then there are two statues from the facade of St. Nicholas and St. Martin, which can still be seen on the facade of the Church of St. Mary Magdalene on Masaryk Street.



Church of St. Mary Magdalene

# Improved coat of arms of the city of Brno from the Thirty Years' War with the year 1717

Dimensions: 86 x 98 cm

Material: shell limestone

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## IMPROVED COAT OF ARMS OF THE CITY OF BRNO

For the successful defence against the Swedes during the Thirty Years' War, the coat of arms of the city of Brno was improved by the imperial double-headed eagle and the initials F III., which symbolized the emperor Ferdinand III., who improved the Brno coat of arms. However, this coat of arms, valid from 1646, had the tinctures of the centre shield reversed, with a silver heel instead of a silver head, and a red field at the very top (in the 19th century, the centre shield was depicted according to the pre-1646 coat of arms). Another change to the town's coat of arms, which is still in use today, took place in the 1930s.

→ **INTERESTING FACT:** The coat of arms is used by the municipal district of Brno - centre.



Improved coat of arms granted to the city of Brno by Emperor Ferdinand III in 1646

# Tombstone of Anna Lipenska of Lipno, prioress, † 1593

Dimensions: 98 x 178 x 16 cm

Material: marble

**Translation of the text:** In the year of our Lord 1593, on the seventeenth day of April, the Venerable Maid Anna Lipenska, Prioress of the monastery of the same, died. May God have mercy on her soul. Amen.

**Location:** the former Dominican monastery on Pekařská Street



The former monastery on a photo from 1907

8

## DOMINICAN CONVENT ON PEKAŘSKÁ STREET

In 1312, King John of Luxembourg, at the suggestion of his wife Elizabeth, gave the Dominicans some land on the outskirts of Brno, by the road, today's Pekařská Street, leading to Old Brno. It was the so-called Royal Garden with an orchard, courtyard, tower and garden. In the following years, a convent was established here, whose sisters initially lived in a temporary residence. The construction of the monastery, called Hortus regis (i.e. the Royal Garden) with the Church of St. Anne was started in 1317. The convent was closely connected with the Lords of Lomnice, who took care of it until the middle of the 16th century. The first prioress was the widow of Tas of Lomnice, Kateřina, who also gave the monastery its initial property: patronage of two churches and five villages. In the middle of the 16th century the monastery was acquired by the monarchy. It was damaged during the siege of Brno in 1645, but in the following years it was repaired and further expanded. It was dissolved during the Josephine reforms in 1782, when 32 choir sisters and 6 lay sisters lived there, and its property went to the state religious fund. A military hospital was subsequently moved to the premises, but from 1786 onwards there was a nursing home, today's St. Anne's Hospital. The complex was gradually adapted for hospital purposes, but by the middle of the 19th century it no longer met the requirements. The buildings of the monastery and the church were demolished in 1864 and replaced by a Neo-Renaissance hospital in 1865-1868.

→ **INTERESTING FACT:** Today, the St. Anne's teaching hospital is located on this site.

# Tombstone of Jan Meziříčský of Lomnice, Moravian governor, † 1515

Dimensions: 120 x 214 x 16 cm

Material: marble

Translation of the text: On March 20, 1515, in the twentieth year of his governorship in the Moravian Margraviate, a noble lord, Jan of Lomnice, lord of Meziříčí, died. May his soul live in God.



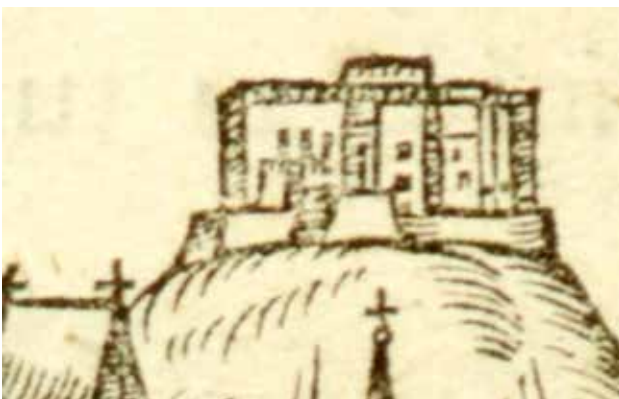
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JAN MEZIŘÍČSKÝ OF LOMNICE  
(1455 - 1515)

The first direct ancestor of the Lords of Lomnice is considered to be Oldřich, who called himself 'of Lomnice' as early as 1265, based on the castle of the same name near Tišnov. Later, the family branched out and some of its branches changed their names according to their new settlements. The most influential and powerful was the Meziříčí family from Lomnice, especially Jan Meziříčský. He was very influential at the court of King Vladislav II, holding the office of Moravian provincial governor and thus interfering in the development of events not only in Moravia but also in Bohemia. After his death there was a rapid decline in the importance of the whole family, which died out in 1566.



→ **INTERESTING FACT:** In 1498 the Lords of Meziříčí and Lomnice acquired Špilberk as a pledge for fifty years.



Špilberk in the 16th century



Jan Meziříčský from Lomnice



*TIP: YOU CAN LEARN MORE ABOUT THE HISTORY OF THE ŠPILBERK RESERVOIRS AND THE TEMPLE OF STONE EXHIBITION IN THE CATALOGUE, WHICH IS AVAILABLE IN CZECH AND ENGLISH AT THE TICKET OFFICE.*



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