

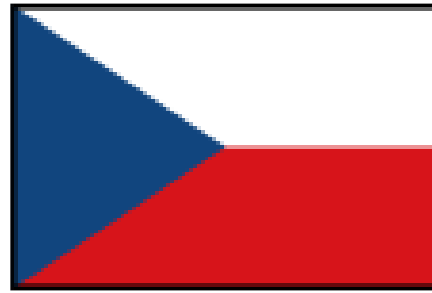
TRIP TO PRAGUE 6-9TH OF APRIL 2009

This time we went to Prague, which is the capital of The Czech Republic.

The Czech Republic lies in the middle of Europe, and borders in west to Germany, in south to Austria, in east to Slovakia and in north to Poland. The Czech Republic covers the historical landscapes of Bohemia (*Čechy*), Moravia (*Morava*) and parts of Silesia (*Slezsko*). There are a bit over 10 million inhabitants in The Czech Republic.



The Czech Republic's position in Europe



The Czech flag



The Czech coat of armor

The country's capital and biggest city is Prague. The city was founded in the end of the 9th century, and became soon the seat for the kings of Bohemia, of whom some became emperors of the German-Roman Empire. The county has a bit over 1.2 million inhabitants. Since 1992 the city's old center has been on UNESCO's list of world heritage. Prague lies at the river Vltava in the former Austrian province of Bohemia.

Vltava is the longest river in Bohemia. The river course is 430 km long and stretches from Šumava through Český Krumlov, České Budějovice and Prague to Mělník, where it merges with the Elbe (Czech: *Labe*). Vltava flooded in a 500-year flood in 2002, when many people were killed and it caused massive damage along the entire river.



Prague's position in The Czech Republic



Prague's flag



Prague's coat of armor



Prague-Ruzyně is the biggest airport in The Czech Republic with 12.7 million passengers a year and in 2008 the most busy of in the new EU countries. It was elected the best airport in Central and East Europe by Skytrax in 2005 and 2007. It was opened the 5th of April 1937 and lies about 10 km from the center.



We arrived at the airport so early in the day that we decided to use the public transportation means.

Here Kjell is standing to buy tickets.

We bought tickets for the entire stretch in the arrivals hall. The easiest was to take a bus, which departed just outside the door in the arrivals hall. It happened that when we came outside the bus was ready to leave. It went to the nearest metro station and needed about 20 minutes. The train arrived short after and we followed for a few stations until we arrived at Můstek.



Here we are in the end of Wenceslas square (Václavské náměstí)

The first thing was to have a beer at a street restaurant



Here Kjell has got his first Czech beer



Anne Berit have a good time too



There were hung pictures of him and displayed books, which he had written.



The restaurant was right besides The holy cross rotunda and there were displayed paintings of it.



Nice monument



Night picture of The Castle



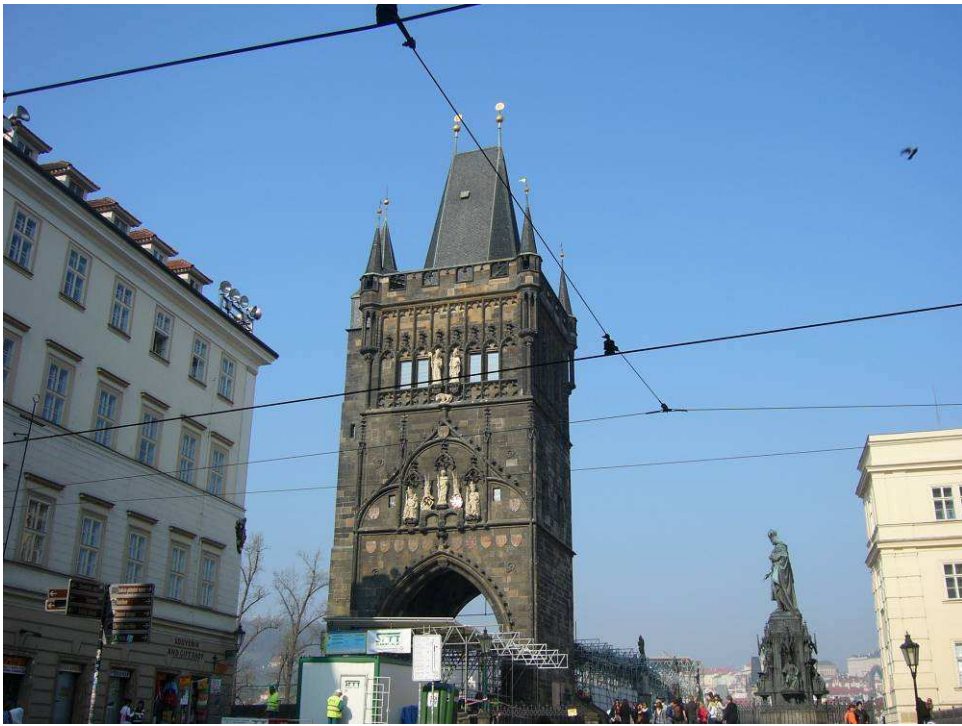
The holy cross rotunda

and the

monument

in daylight





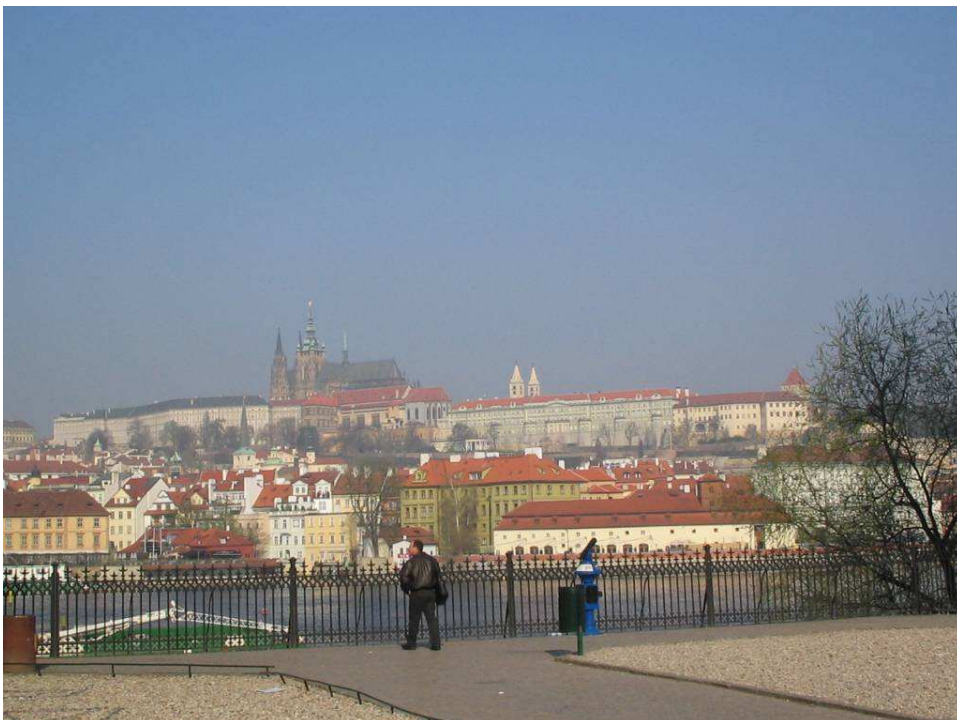
Here we are arriving at the Charles Bridge and are about to cross. There were maintenance work going on at the bridge, but it was still allowed to cross.



This is a statue of Charles IV, which is standing at the end of the bridge. Charles IV was a German-Roman emperor and king of Bohemia from 1346 to 1378.

The Charles Bridge is over 600 years old and was for along time the only bridge over The Vltava River. Today there are several bridges nearby, but it is here, at The Charles Bridge, the most pedestrians are passing, since car traffic is not allowed. On The Charles Bridge there are almost always artists, beggars, street performers and musicians. The bridge is decorated with 30 statues of various saints.

It was built during the reign of Charles IV. The building was started in 1357 as a replacement of the older Judith Bridge, which was destroyed during the flood in 1342. The bridge is built of Bohemian sand stone and it is said that Charles IV ordered the peasants around Prague to deliver fresh eggs that was added to the mortar to make the construction stronger.



Here is a view from the Charles Bridge in direction the Castle



This is one of the 30 statues on the bridge



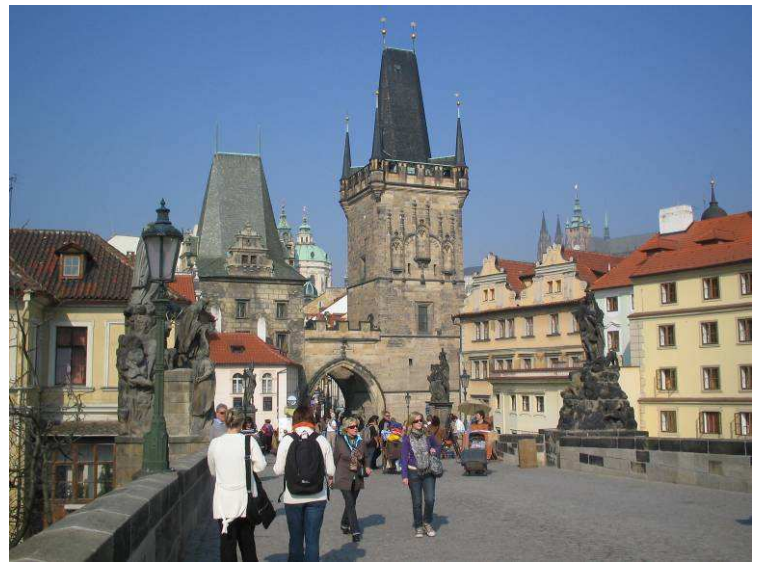
This is the organ grinder who is always present on the bridge. Has is not ready to play yet.



The most popular and oldest statue is of St. John from Nepomuk, which in 1393 was thrown from the bridge on this spot and drowned. It shall bring happiness to touch this, and therefore a picture of St. John at the base is shining after thousands of hands touching it daily.



Here more people are on their way to sell their goods



Here we are arriving at the end of the bridge



This is the St. Nicholas church, which was an important church during the counter revolution.



Here we have entered the Wallenstein palace, which was built 1623-29 for the duke of Wallenstein.



Anne Berit is looking at the pheasants



Nice park with many statues



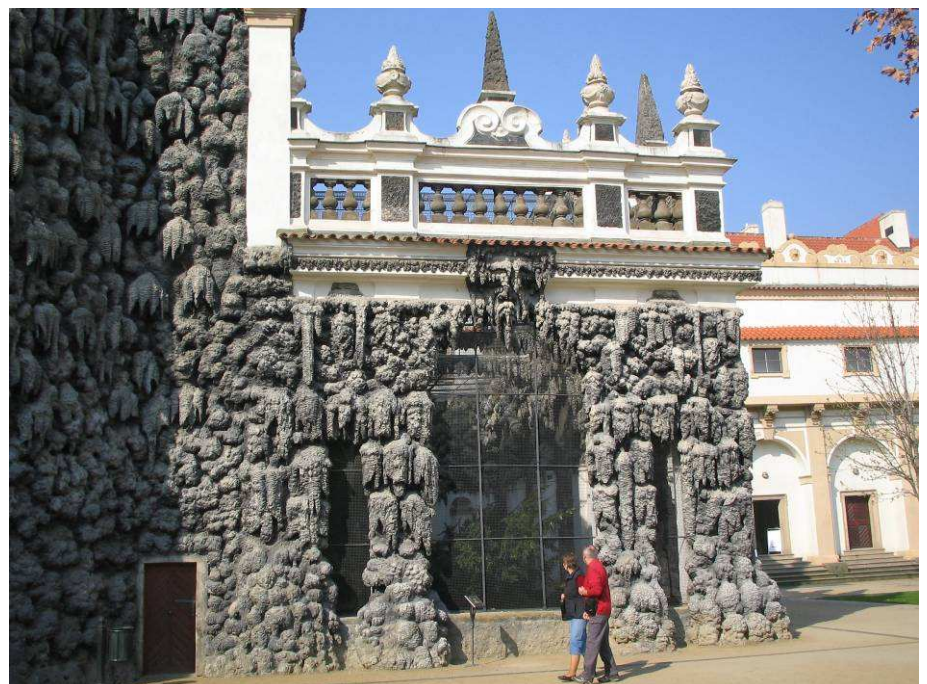
Horse statues



Here is a special wall made by Giovanni Pieroni



Statue of Hercules



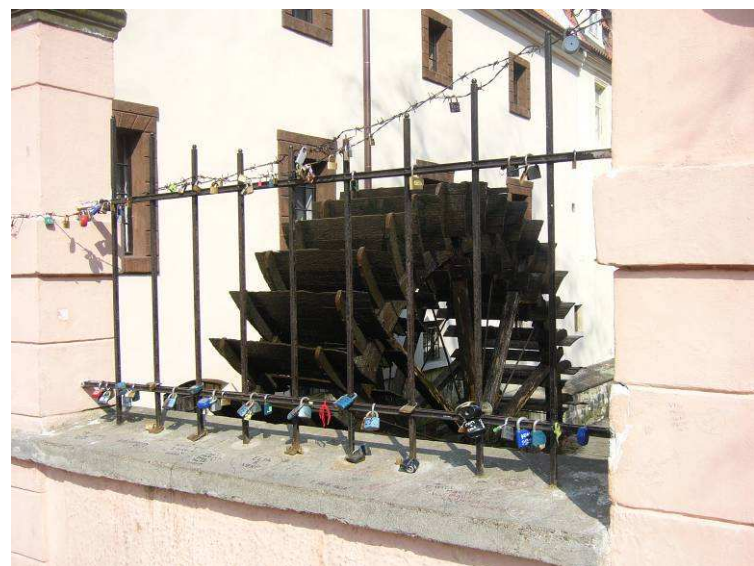
I end of the wall is an Italian loggia.



The John Lennon wall was earlier an ordinary wall, but since the 1980s people have filled it with John Lennon inspired graffiti and quotation from Beatles songs.



A close up of a figure on the wall



Here we are at an old water wheel at a mill on Kampa, which is a small islet in the Vltava river



A view down along the channel besides the river



Now we needed a break and we sat here for a while. It is right beside the mill





There were various statues decorating the islet



A view down the river. The trees are turning green.



Here we are in a ticket line to take the funicular up to the Petřín hill



Here we have arrived at top and this is the wagon, which we were sitting in. This track was opened in 1891.



This is the lookout tower and the baroque church, St. Vavřinec (1735-70), which is built into the Hunger Wall that was built under Charles IV to provide work for the poor.



The tower, an Eiffel Tower in miniature, was erected in 1891 for the World fair.



The Hunger wall was also a defensive wall. It is about 6 meter high and 2 meter broad and there are defense platforms along the wall. It is now only 1200 meter long, while it before went through the whole district.



In a tree in the park there was somebody who had hung a bottle in a tree to collect sap.



When we are descending from the hill on the south side, we are passing the Strahovský convent.



The convent seen from another angle.



Here we are leaving the convent area



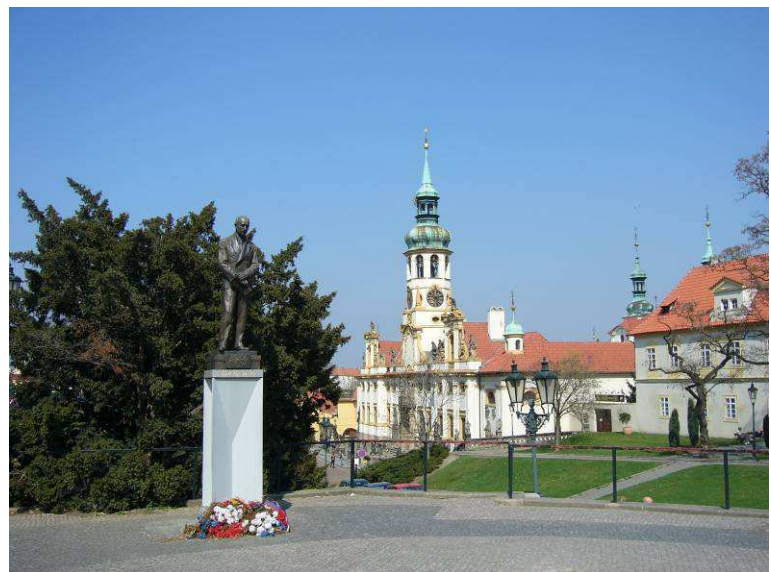
Now we have reached the Loreto Square and now it is time for some food. We had a salad here.



Anne Berit is very pleased.



Kjell is studying the road further on the map.



This is Our Lady of Loreto Church



The Schwarzenbersky palace right before we are entering the Castle complex.



The Arcibuskypsky palace right before we are entering the Castle complex.



Fine lamps on the Castle Square



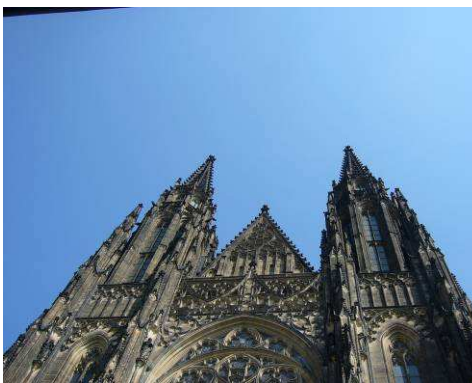
The entrance seen from the Castle Square (Hradčanské Náměstí)



The entrance



One of the guards



The St. Vitus Cathedral seen from various angles



One of the decorations on the St. Vitus Cathedral



St. George's convent



St. George's convent



On the way for the relief of the guard



The exit in the north east. The "black" tower is a part of the fortress. It was colored black during a fire in 1541, hence the name.



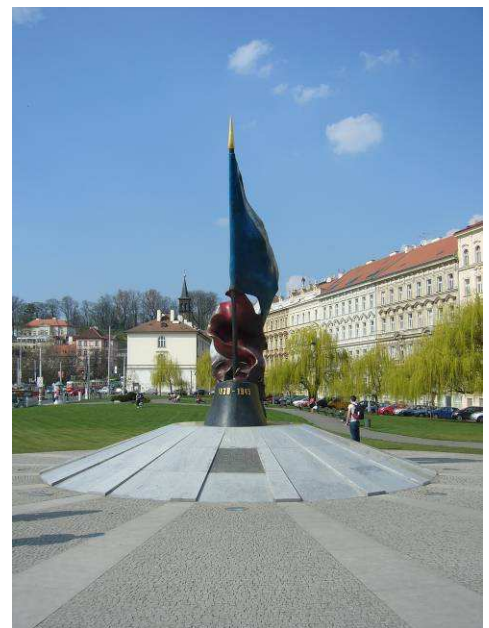
View from the Castle



More views from the Castle



When we came down from the Castle we needed a break again



A war memorial



View down the river from the Manesuv bridge (Mánesův most)



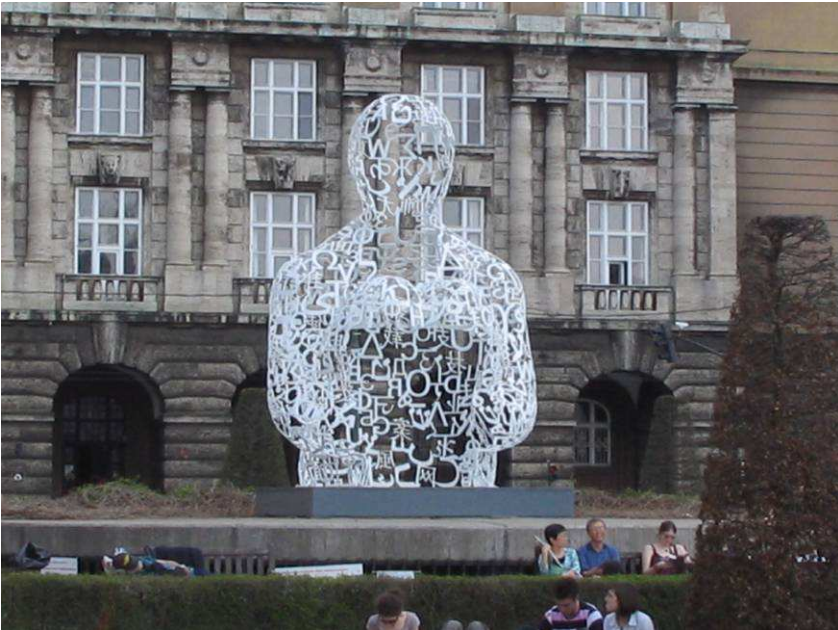
View up the river from the Manesuv bridge



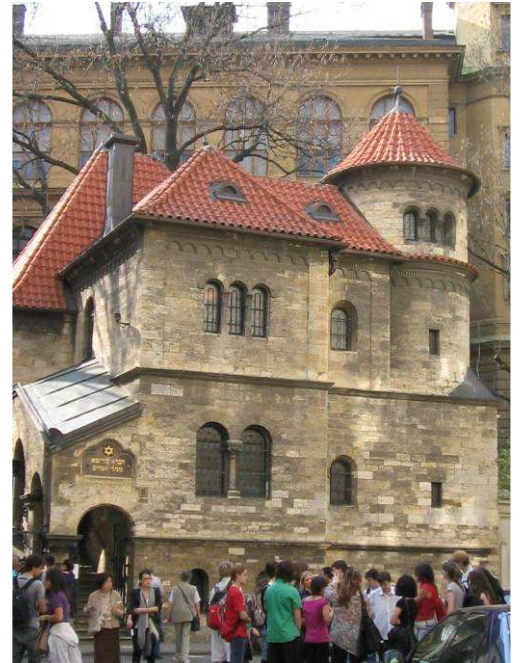
A restaurant under the bridge



Rudolfinum. In 1874 J. Zitec and J.Schulz gave this concert hall to the city of Prague. Dvořák has played here.



Funny figure outside Rudolfinum



The chapel at the old Jewish cemetery



The cemetery. It was not used after 1787 because of fear for plague infection.



The Old-New-Synagogue.



A Jewish clock



The Vysoka synagogue



The Kinsky palace in the foreground to the left. Here the National Gallery has collected graphics from the middle ages and up to now.

In the background we can see Our Lady ahead of Tyn Church (1365 – 1470). This is the second most important gothic church in Prague. The towers are 80 m high.



The Powder Tower is a 65 meter high tower, which is the start on the route through the Old town over the Charles Bridge and up to the Prague Castle. Until 1836 this route was used by Bohemian monarchs on their way to mass in the St. Vitus Cathedral.

Originally the tower was called the Mountain Tower, but after it had been used as storage for gunpowder in the 1600s the tower got its nickname. It was destroyed during the Prussian occupation in 1757. It was repaired in 1875 and 1886.



Veteran cars were used for sightseeing trips in the old city



Horse taxis were also used.



This is the famous clock on the City Hall



A well on The Little Square (Male Náměstí)



Now we needed a break again and a lunch

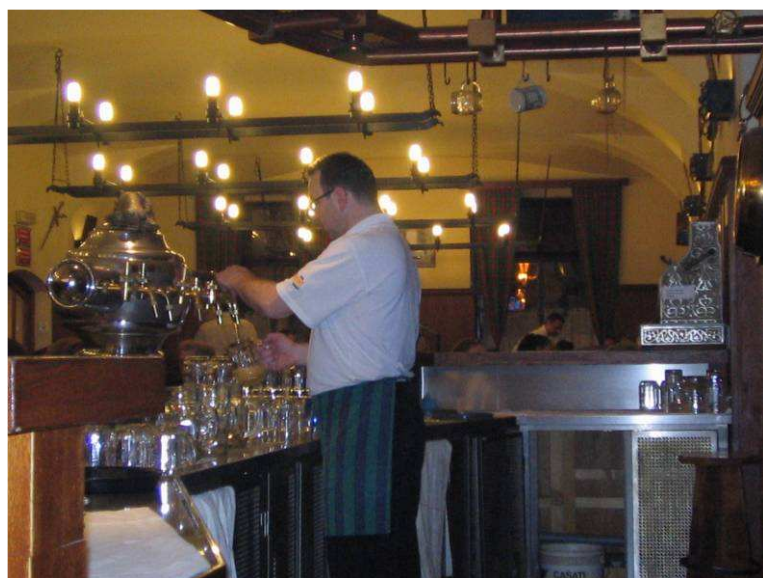


Funny figure near our hotel

After this we had a long siesta and we relaxed without sleeping!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



In the evening we went for dinner to a Czech restaurant



Here a lot of beer was tapped!!



This is the original Budweiser beer that is produced by Budvar. Budvar in The Czech Republic has won a lawsuit over the American company, which has produced Budweiser. Now the American company has to find a new name for their beer. We thought that the glasses were so nice that we bought two of them.



Here we are in the street where Kjell has stayed earlier



At the reception



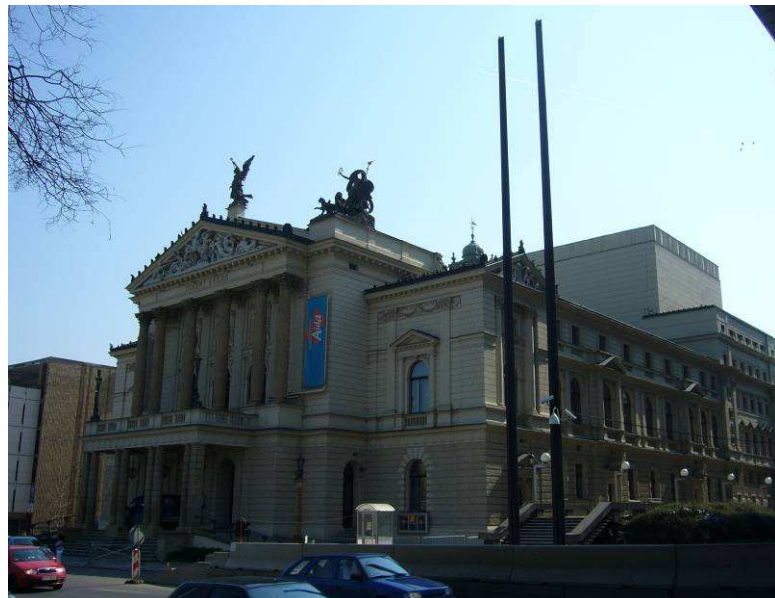
Here we are at the end of Václavské náměstí with the equestrian statue of Prague's saint, Václav.



In front of the statue, there is a memory plaque for the young student Jan Palach, who in 1969 put himself on fire in a protest against the Soviet invasion.



A view downwards Václavské náměstí



The National Museum from 1918



Here we are at the central station. "Destroyed" by posters. From here we took the metro to Vyšehrad.



Kjell is buying tickets



View from the Vyšehrad hill in the direction of the city center

The legend tells that princess Libuse after one of her visions founded the Prague Castle on the Vyšehrad hill in 717. She elected a husband by name of Přemysl who became the start of the Přemysl dynasty (1025-1125) and made Vyšehrad a county under the first Bohemian kings who later moved to Hradčany (The Castle Hill).



Here we have another break



Here we sat



This is the entrance through the inner castle wall



Right inside is a small chapel, The Martin rotunda



The Church to St. Petrus and Paul from the 11th decennium. The Church was rebuilt last century in a new-gothic style.



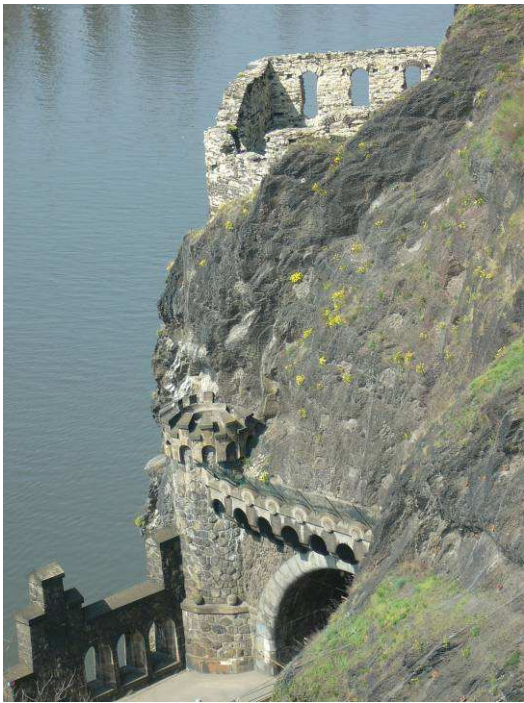
View upwards Vltava



Here we can see a little of the old defensive walls and new houses that are built close to the walls.



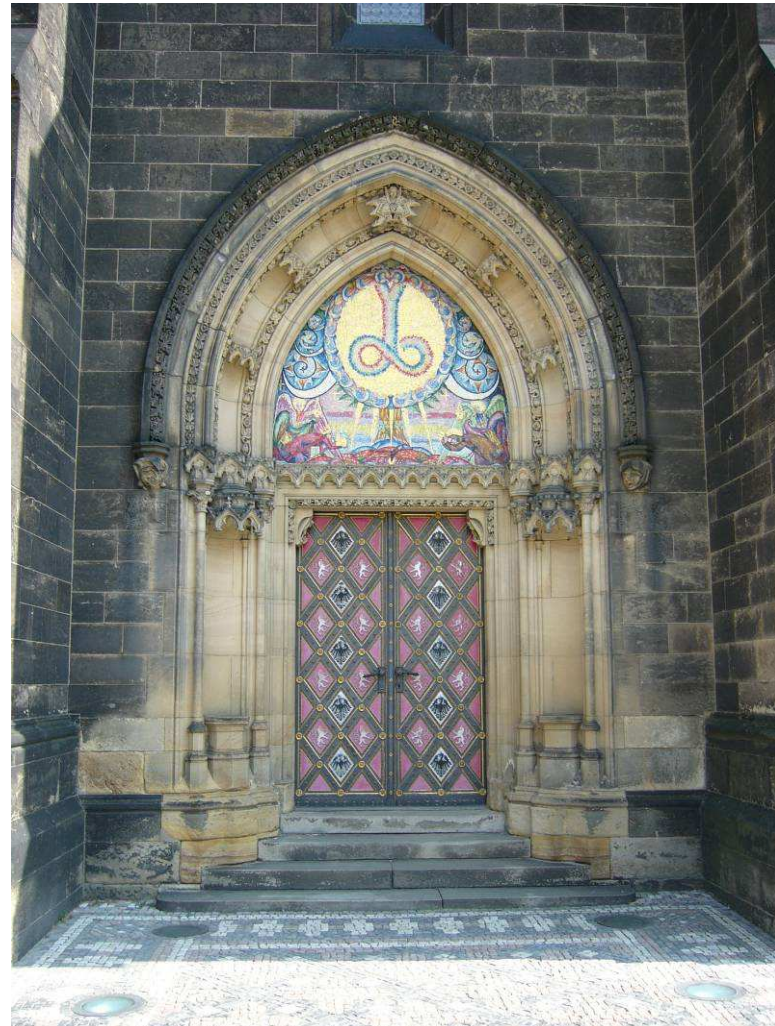
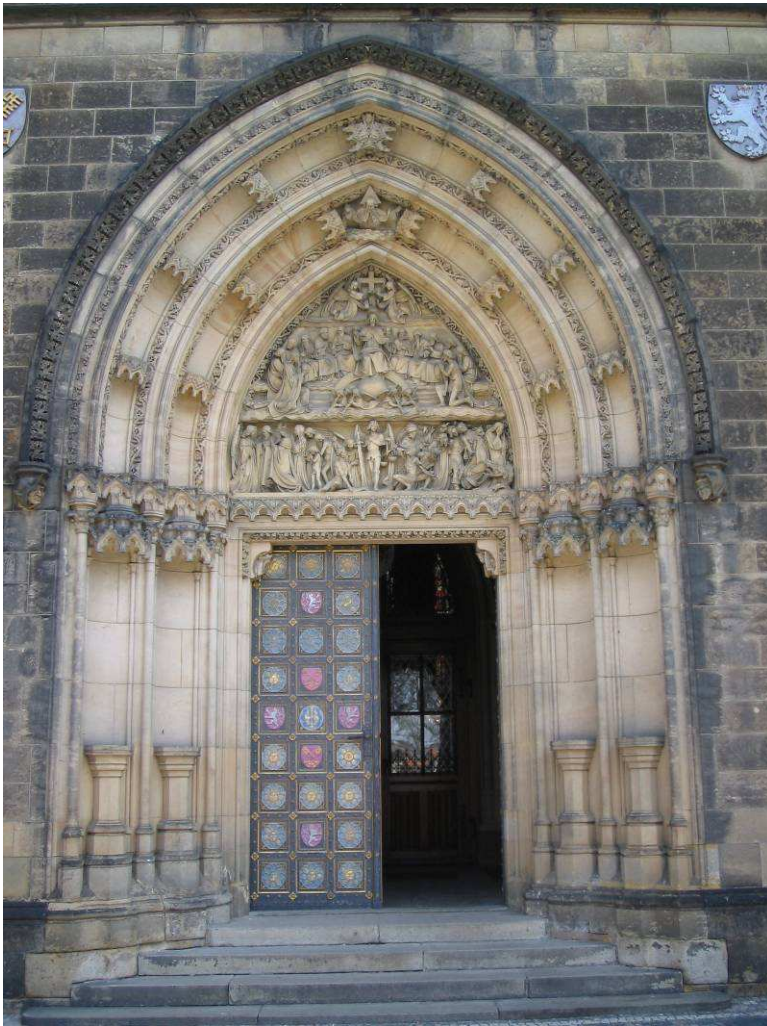
View downwards the river



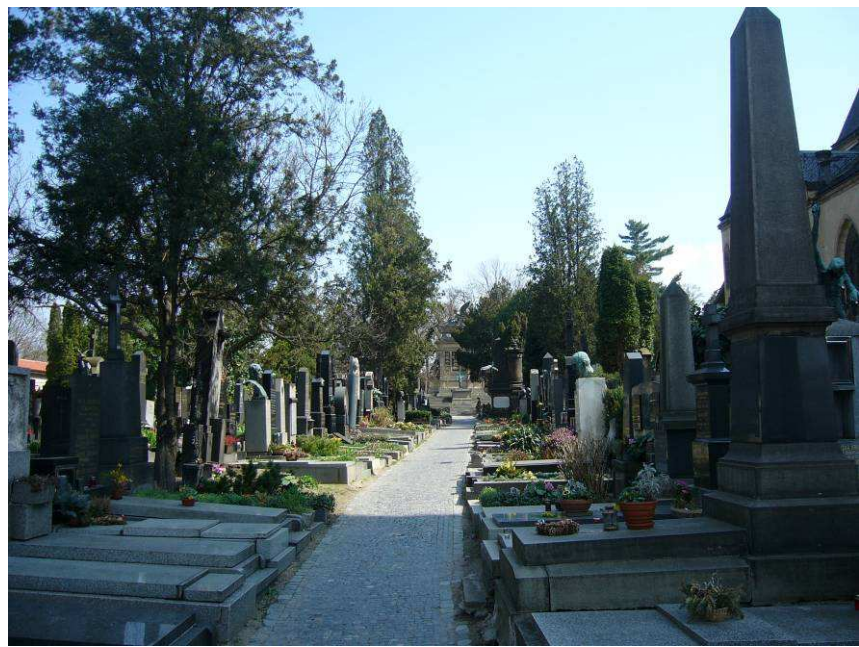
Some of the defenses and a road tunnel that is built through the mountain.



More views across the river



Nice church doors



The small graveyard Slavín is from year 1901. Here lies Czech artists, writers, composers, scientists, and so on; among others Smetana and Dvořák.

Here we are entering the graveyard Slavín



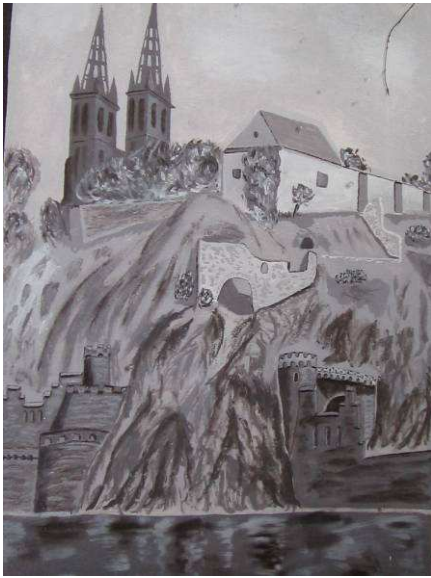
Amusing garden decoration



A cubistic house. It is only in Prague we can find such houses.



Now we needed a stop again and we were sitting for a while at this restaurant



A wall painting of Vyšehrad



Here we are moving on



This is what the trams in the city looked like.



Here we are passing the Emmaus Convent at the left and St. John on the Cliff, a church dedicate to St. Jan Nepomuky.



The convent



The church



Ginger&Fred. The dancing house in Nove Mesto.



A restaurant boat by the river



This is the Slavic island with the Mánes gallery. The renaissance tower on one of the water reservoirs, which supplied water to the public fountains, is integrated in the building.



This is the Masaryk quay with a lot of nice houses.



This is the National Theatre



When we returned to the flat we tasted the worlds strongest beer, which we had bought together with the beer glasses the evening before.



In the evening we went for dinner at a restaurant at the Old Square.

We did not think about how much it should cost, but when we were about to pay the bill, we had precisely enough cash to pay. We had not a single koruna left.

It is incredible that this could be possible.

The same happened the last day when we visited Warszawa.



Before we went to the airport we had a beer at this restaurant. Here is hanging a bunch of pretzels on each table.



Here we are at the airport waiting for the plane to leave.

The plane left just precisely.