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Although the museums listed above hold the items discussed, no guarantee can be given that items are on display. Smaller museums may have limited opening times or open on an appointment only basis. In Vienna, the NHM is the Natural History Museum (Naturhistorisches Museum), the KHM, the Museum of Art History (Kunsthistorisches Museum). Other museums not in the Wachau are less than an hour's drive away. In Krems, Spitz, Weissenkirchen and Melk, staffed tourist offices are happy to advise.

FANNY OF GALLOWS HILL



Gallow's Hill near Stratzing just outside Krems. During the Middle Ages this was where criminals were hung.

39,000 years ago, anatomically modern humans with a fully developed repertoire of modern human behaviour arrived in Europe. Following the Danube River from the Balkans up towards its source in the South of Germany, in Central Europe, the new arrivals brought a new culture into being. This was the culture of the Aurignacian, named after Aurignac in France, where the first artefacts dating from the period were found and identified. The Aurignacians were hunter-gatherers who lived in groups of between 20 and 70 people. Living a semi-nomadic life-style, they repeatedly returned at the beginning of each new season to camps they had left the year before. In Austria, the most well-known artefact from the Aurignacian is a small, slender figurine known as "Fanny". This was found in 1988, on a hill just outside Krems and was evidently left behind by a group of

semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers when, after a short stay, they broke camp and moved on. The find consists of eight fragments of slate, which when pieced together, revealed an image of a woman in a semi-dynamic pose. As the stance of the figure is reminiscent of a pose adopted by the famous nineteenth century ballerina, Fanny Elssler, the sculpture was named “Fanny”.



A copy of “Fanny”. Original: Aurignacian (dated to 34,000 BC), amphibolite, H. 7.2 cm, Natural History Museum in Vienna. A copy is on display in Museum Krems.

Although simplistically rendered, a high degree of skill and co-ordination will have been necessary in order to carve the figure without breaking the stone. The figure’s left arm is raised upwards with the lower arm turned back towards the body so that the hand is trapped between the raised left shoulder and the neck. Contrasting sharply with this uncomfortable gesture, the right arm is directed downwards,

with the hand resting on a stick that reaches to the ground. Where the left leg is straight, the right leg is slightly bent, so that the hips are inclined and likewise slant down towards the right. The figure is female, with the left breast shown in profile and a pelvic area that is disproportionately detailed when compared with the cursory way in which the rest of the body has been depicted.

The dynamism inherent in Fanny is a noticeable feature of a number of sculptures found in a series of caves near Ulm, 570 kilometres upriver from Krems.



A restored copy of the Lion Man of Lonetal. Original: Aurignacian (dated to 38,000 BC), mammoth ivory, H. 30 cm, Museum Ulm.

A PANORAMA AND CALENDAR

In European mythologies, fleeting references are made to a time before the Neolithic. These come in the form of there having been a race of giants who lived during an evil age long before the current age came to be. In Greek mythology, these are the Titans. In Norse mythology, they are the Rime-Giants, who were formed when hot lava cooled and became ice or "rime". Later, from the melting rime, the cow Audumla emerges and when Audumla licks the ice, the first man is uncovered. This is Buri and while Buri is "fair, great and mighty", it is nevertheless not he but his grandsons, Odin, Villi and Ve, who kill the original Rime-Giant and extinguish the race of giants. In Greek mythology, the god of the Titans is Uranus, who provides another echo of how the Palaeolithic was seen, for Uranus is a sky god whose name means "the heavens". Yet he is also a personification of the sun and like a hunter-gatherer, would rise in the morning, travel across the sky during the day and then towards evening, would set in the West so as to return to his wife. With the Neolithic and the ushering in of a new way of life, a more precise way of measuring time was needed and instead of the waxing and waning moon, the sun was taken as a guide. Not only was the sun's daily path across the sky followed, but also its yearly trek from South to North and back again. To this effect, during the Neolithic, all over central and northern Europe, monuments known as enclosures were built, a part of whose function was to pinpoint the risings and settings of the sun at certain times of the year. In mythology, this is reflected through the errant and unreliable sky god of the Palaeolithic, Uranus, being deposed by his son, Kronos, the god of rain, who castrates his father with a "sharp-toothed" sickle, this being a form of

sickle that was invented at the beginning of the Neolithic for harvesting corn. Meanwhile, Kronos' name, which means "the horned one", identifies him as a god of time, as the horns referred to are those of the waxing and waning crescent moon. A feature of the Lengyel Culture, in Lower Austria enclosures generally date from between 5,500 and 4,800 BC, and so far, 46 examples have been identified in the region, with those at Schiltern, Strass im Strassertale and Plank am Kamp all being close to Krems.



The Heldenberg reconstruction of a Neolithic enclosure at Scheltz. Heldenberg is thirty kilometres away from Krems.

Characterised by a surrounding ditch with steep sides and a number of causeways which offer access to a central island, enclosures were built close to settlements. There is therefore good reason to assume that in the vicinity of Dr.-Karl-Dorrek-Strasse 21, there will have also been an enclosure. Thus, on a hill known as the Schreckberg, that overlooks Krems and Stein, as one walks along the road enjoying the panoramic view, the question arises of where the enclosure associated with the settlement in Stein might have been.

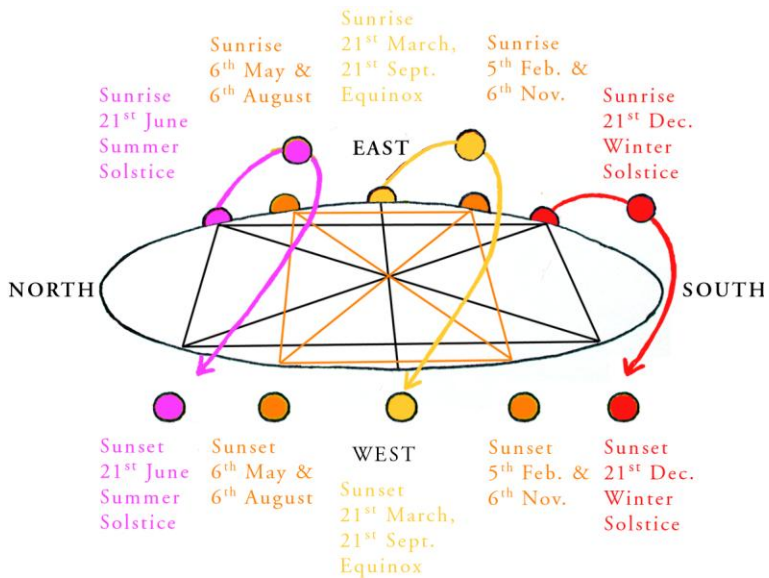
In an enclosure, the causeways are nearly always at least two in number and where there are two, they are either exactly oppose or approximately opposite each other. Often there are four causeways. Inside the ditch, the island was screened off from view by one or, less frequently, two wooden palisades. These were formed with closely spaced, thick posts from trees which had been felled using carefully made stone axes.



Stone axes from the Neolithic of the type that were used for felling trees. L. 15 cm and 4.5 cm, Museum Krems.

For the reconstructed enclosure at Heldenberg, it was found that as a result of wear and breakage, a total of 15 axes was required in order to complete the structure. Expressed in terms of the work done by a single person, this represents an investment of 62 days. While felling trees, cutting the posts and transporting them took 218 days, digging the ditch took 861 days. Erecting the posts then took 576 days. A time investment of 248 days was required in order to make all the tools used, including the axes. The construction of an enclosure was thus a major undertaking. Evidence of the remains of postholes shows that the palisades were interrupted at the points where the causeway met the central

island. The layout thus suggests either an inner area reserved for the few, with the area outside being for the many, or an inner area that was accessible for the many only on certain occasions. Within this secluded area, one or more rings of posts or stones were erected. The fact that in the inner island finds are generally sparse, suggests ritual use on a limited number of occasions. In several cases, the orientation of the gateways and the axis of the structure as a whole have been found to line up with the direction of the rising sun on the days of the winter or the summer solstices.



A diagram showing the movement of the sun at the times of the solstices, equinoxes and the four days mid-way between these dates.

MYTHS OF YORE

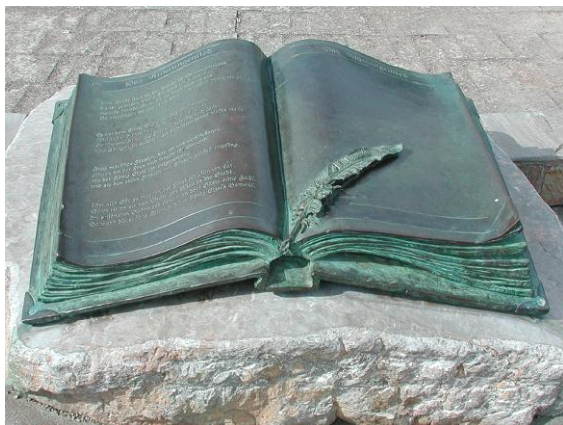
In *The Song of the Nibelungs*, although the treasure is hidden in the waters of the Rhine and the bloodbath that concludes the story takes place in Hungary, as they journey from Burgundy to Hungary, the Nibelungs follow the Danube as it flows from Pförriing in Germany to Melk. At Aggsbach-Dorf, they then turn away from the river and travelling over the hills, follow the Roman road to Mautern, before proceeding on to Traismauer and Tulln. Arriving in Tulln, the heroine of the story, Kriemhild, Queen of Burgundy, meets Attila, King of the Huns. Celebrating the “Meeting of Many Peoples”, a sculpture in Tulln shows the meeting of the beautiful queen from the North, with a powerful and handsome King from the East.



Michail Nogin, *The Meeting of Kriemhild, Queen of Burgundy, with Attila, King of the Huns, in Tulln*, Bronze, stone and water, 2005, Danube Promenade, Tulln.

Below the figures, there is a fountain that recalls the entrance to Andvari's home and a book. Open at the page that describes the meeting, the next page is blank. This tactfully avoids the fact that behind the staged ceremonies and

thirteen years of faked love, Kriemhild's marriage was never about the coming together of peoples that they might live in harmony together but rather that she might extract revenge against the Court of Burgundy for the murder of Siegfried, who was her first husband and only true love.



The book of the *Song of the Nibelungs* that in Michail Nogin's, *The Meeting of Kriemhild, Queen of Burgundy, with Attila, King of the Huns, in Tulln*, serves as a sculptural frontispiece. Bronze and stone, 2005, Danube Promenade, Tulln.

From Aggsbach-Dorf, Kriemhild will have seen the foreboding crags and castle of Aggstein. Before Hadmar I of Kuenring built the castle during the middle of the twelfth century, the crags were thought to be the seat of the sea and river god, Aegir, as indicated by the names “Aggsbach” and “Aggstein”. The equivalent of the Ancient Greek god Poseidon, Aegir was powerful but nevertheless benevolent. His wife however was malicious and unpredictable, and it is after Rán, that the rugged hills of Ranna, downstream from Aggstein, are named. Rán was a mermaid who, armed with a

net so fine that nothing could escape from it, would trawl the seas and waterways of the Earth, looking for the souls of those who had drowned. These she would then confine in huge caverns beneath the sea. In return for a safe passage, however, she would accept gifts of gold.



The mid-twelfth century castle of Aggstein, built on a series of rocky crags that overlook the Danube.

In the prequel to *The Song of the Nibelungs*, Rán plays an important role, as in order to catch Andvari, it is to her that Loki goes, so that by borrowing her net, he might catch and blackmail Andvari. In mythology, Rán has nine daughters and in *The Song of the Nibelungs*, it is mermaids who, thirteen years after Kriemhild's wedding to King Attila, warn Hagen that if he goes to Hungary, he will be betrayed. This is an essential element in the story, since it is as a result of this prophecy, that the Burgundians refuse to give up their weapons when they arrive at Attila's court.

A NEW FORM OF REALISM

As the Middle Ages faded and the new age of the Renaissance dawned, art became increasingly naturalistic. Instead of being depicted as if they inhabited another world, saints and holy people confronted viewers directly with their gaze. In Museum Krems, the Renaissance sculptures displayed in the cloister of the former Dominican Monastery speak to us through their realism.



Viennese, *Madonna*, around 1440, wood, H. 92 cm, Museum Krems.

In a Madonna from Vienna, carved from lime-wood and dating from around 1440, the artist has chosen to depict a passing moment which he has caught and frozen in time. As

the clearly loving mother leans forward, the playful child tugs at her clothes, with everything in the image being believably and naturalistically rendered. In a slightly later image from Tyrol, the artist has not taken a moment in time but, drawing on the older tradition, has made an image that reaches out to eternity and transcends time.



South Tyrolean, *Madonna*, around 1450, painted wood, H. 113 cm, Museum Krems.

While the composition and style of carving appear simple, this conceals a hidden sophistication that gradually reveals itself as the viewer notices such details as Jesus' curled locks of hair and his chubby limbs. Yet these are at odds with the expression on the faces of both mother and child and one wonders what mother and child are thinking.

A CHURCH AND A HOSPICE



The entrance to the Church of Saint Philip and Saint Jacob that was a part of the Burgesses' Hospice in Krems.

In Krems, at Obere Landstrasse 5, there is a small but prominent Late Gothic doorway. This is the street entrance to the Church of the Burgesses' Hospice. Funded by the income from the vineyards that it owned, the Burgesses' Hospice was run both as a hospital and as a poorhouse and during the Renaissance is reckoned to have had some forty inhabitants. Dedicated to Saint Philip and Saint Jacob, the church was built in 1470 by the parish and the council of burgesses who ran the town. By the sixteenth century, Krems was home to some 2,000 people and during the course of the new century, this doubled. The burgesses were the wealthy and privileged citizens who apart from making civic

decisions, also contributed funds to a variety of causes, such as the maintaining of hospices and the running of churches. The Burgesses' Hospice in Krems was originally founded by Duke Leopold VI some time between 1209 and 1213 and was affiliated with a monastery in Lilienfeld that was founded at the same time.



Krems' first hospice, which was later where the members of the parish choir lived and so is known as "Singers' Court".

At the end of the thirteenth century, the hospice was made an independent charity run by the burgesses of Krems and moved from Pfarrplatz 9, to a location in the vicinity of the Gartenaugasse. During the 1420'ies, the Hussite Wars in Bohemia began to spill over into northern Austria and it was decided that the hospice should be moved to a place within the city walls. As in 1421, the Jewish population of Krems had been expelled, despite the poor state of the houses, the empty ghetto was an obvious choice of location and in 1428, Duke Albrecht V ordered that the old hospice should be demolished and the residents relocated.

THE WAY TO BETHLEHEM

The upper reaches of the Wachau are wooded. Largely unfarmed and with only a few settlements and buildings, shortly before Melk, two buildings on the southern bank catch the eye. The one is a church and former convent, the other was once a castle and is now a majestic and imposing riverside palace. The palace is Schönbühel and the rocks on which the castle was built have shown signs of habitation since the Neolithic.



The riverside palace of Schönbühel.

In 1064 a chapel was built which was used up until 1667. In 1135, a warden of “Sconinpuchele” is mentioned as the owner of the castle and the protector of the region and in this capacity, is said to be subservient to the Bishop of Passau. In 1283 a priest, a “sacerdos Otto de Schönpihil” is mentioned. Schönbühel as a place, existing in its own right, is first mentioned in 1358. In 1419, the castle was acquired by

the Starhemberg family who during the Renaissance were staunch Protestants. In keeping with the general trend in the region, in 1639, the parish and Starhemberg estates were returned to the Catholic fold by Earl Konrad Balthasar Starhemberg. On a rocky outcrop only a little way downstream from the castle, the ardently Catholic Konrad Balthasar, founded a Servite Convent.



The Servite Convent and church at Schönbühel.

The first two monks arrived in 1666 and a year later a service was held. The convent church was built to replace a dilapidated tower which was thought to be infested with evil spirits and which was known as the “Devil’s Castle”. Whenever possible, the gangs of men who floated rafts downstream and who worked with teams of horses pulling barges upstream, would avoid the place. Built in 1668/1669, behind the altar of the church there was a reconstruction of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem.