

SACRAL ARCHITECTURE

length: 50,4 km
difficulty: MEDIUM
elevation difference: 138 m



THEMATIC CYCLE PATH CIRCUIT

BIKE WITH US TO SEARCH FOR ADVENTURE

It is recommended that you follow the directions as indicated on the signposts to guide you along the Cycle Path.
The use of roads along the indicated cycle path is at your own risk.
Trekking bicycles are recommended for this terrain.
The trail is easy to complete, and well suited for families with children!



LEGEND

- cyklotrasa SAKRÁLNÍ ARCHITEKTURA • Radroute SAKRAL ARCHITEKTUR • cycle route SACRAL ARCHITECTURE
- cyklotrasa EuroVelo 13; ostatní cyklotrasy • Radroute EuroVelo 13; andere Radrouten • EuroVelo 13 cycle route; other cycle routes
- státní hranice; hranice CHKO • Staatsgrenze; Grenze Landschaftsschutzgebiet • state border; border of protected landscape area
- hranice přír. parku; maloploš. chrán. území; hranice: -bod • Naturparkgrenze; Naturschutzgebiet kleinerer Fläche; Grenze; -Punkt • nature reserve; small protected area; border; -spot
- silnice I. třídy; -mezinárodní • Hauptstrasse (Klasse 1); -international • road (class 1); -international
- silnice II. třídy; III. třídy • Landstrasse (Klasse 2); -Klasse 3 • road (class 2); -class 3
- ostatní silnice; neveřejná asfaltka; zpevněná cesta • Nebenstrasse; befestigter Weg • secondary road; paved road
- polní/lesní cesta; pěšina; průsek • Feld- und Waldweg; Fussweg; Schneise • field/forest path; foot path; ride
- vrstevnice po 10 m; výrazná skála; rozhled • Höhenlinien zu 10 m; Felsen; Aussichtspunkt • contour lines (10 m); rock formations; viewpoint
- bunkr; voj. památka zpoplatněná • Kleinkampfbunker; militär. Denkmal • military bunker/light fort; military monument with public access
- kostel; kaple; zvonice; synagoga • Kirche; Kapelle; Glockenturm; Synagoge • church; chapel; bell tower; synagogue
- kříž; pomník; vysíláč • Kirchsensymbol; Denkmal; Sender • wayside shrine; memorial; transmitter
- elektrárna větrná; -fotovoltaická; vodojem; věž nepřístupná • Windkraftanlage; Sonne; -; Wasserturm; unzugänglicher Turm • wind power station; solar -water tower; inaccessible tower
- zámek s průvodcem; -bez; hrad s průvodcem; -bez • Schloss mit Führung; -ohne; Burg mit Führung • -ohne • château with guide; -without; castle with guide; -without
- církev; objekt s průvodcem; -bez; význ. kostel bez prův.; žid. památka • religiöse Denkmal mit Führung; -ohne; grosse Kirche ohne Führung • jüdische Gedenkstätte • religious monument with guide; -without; large church without guide; Jewish monument
- zřícenina s průvodcem; -bez; rozhledna přístupná; -nepřístupná • Ruine mit Führung; -ohne; Aussichtsturm mit Eintritt; -ohne • ruins with guide; -without; observation tower with access; -without
- městská památ. rezervace; muzeum; technická památka s průvodcem; -bez • archit. Schutzgebiet in der Stadt; Museum; technisches Denkmal mit Führung; -ohne • conservation area in city; museum; technical monument with guide; -without
- vykopávky; hradiště; golf • Ausgrabung; Burgwall; Golf • excavation; gord; golf area
- pramen; studánka; jeskyně; jiná přír. zajímavost • Quelle; Brunnen; Höhle; andere Natursehenswürdigkeiten • spring; well; cave; other place of interest (natural)
- jiná zajímavost; infocentrum; zdrav. zařízení • andere Sehenswürdigkeiten; Infozentrum; Gesundheitszentrum • other place of interest; information; health centre
- krytý bazén; koupaliště; možnost koupání • Schwimmhalle; Schwimmbad; Bademöglichkeit • indoor swimming pool; outdoor; natural swimming site

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1:55 000 Mapové podklady © Mapy.cz, s.r.o. **MAPY.CZ** Mapy.cz, s.r.o.

The question of Religion in Austria and Czech

In Austria today 67% (5,4 mil.) profess to hold the Catholic Faith, in 1951 it was 89%. Historically viewed, the country and its people have been deeply marked by religion. The fact that even the smallest village has at least one chapel with a landscape full of sacral sculptures and crosses is testimony to the significance of religion. Wayside crosses are used to mark a crossroads, a special place in the forest, or field's edge. They can be made of wood, stone or metal. Stone crosses are also called Hussite Crosses, Swedish Crosses or Expiation Crosses. A Votive cross was a donation as a pledge/vow or out of gratitude for having been saved from sickness, war, the Plague or another life threatening affliction. Weather and Hail crosses were put up following heavy storms and to protect against weather catastrophes. In the Czech Republic 20% of the population consider themselves believers, 46% do not want to determine the God question, and 34% call themselves Atheists. The Communist dictatorship is often held responsible for this high percentage, but it may also be a result of the often hard and unstable history of the country in which the relationship to the powerful, catholic Habsburg neighbours played an essential role. To this history, sacral buildings bear witness on both sides of the border.

1 Písečné

Písečné is a village with around 560 residents, just one kilometer far from Austria border. It consists of 7 local parts: Chvaletín, Marketa, Modletice, Nové Sady, Písečné, Slavětín and Václavov. In 1366 there is a first reference about Písečné. Until 1945 the majority of locals were German-speaking residents. In 1921 it was over 60%. Another important minority in this area were Jews, who lived in the 3 local districts. Nowadays their remains can be seen: on the one side of river Dyje, on the little square situated east of the village centre and on the row of buildings (one of them used to be synagogue) situated west of the village center. The most significant evidence of Jewish population here is the old Jewish cemetery, with an area of 1,514 square meters and the number of tombstones of 450, all in baroque and classic styles.



2 Dešná

Dešná is a village with 700 residents. It consists of 7 local parts, originating in the 13th and 14th century. These parts were typical settlement on the Czech-Austrian border, with mostly German (Austrian) population and a strong Czech minority. Local church St. Jan Křtítel was built in 1494 like a late gothic building. Entrance hall was renovated in renaissance style and side chapel in baroque style. On the cemetery is a baroque chapel from 1739.



3 Rancířov

The most important monument in Rancířov is the Church of the Assumption of the Virgin Mary. It was originally a Gothic monument, with elements of fortification and wooden gallery. There were several reconstructions and renovations, - the last one is baroque with elements in the rococo style. There are 4 statues in front of this church. Two of them are original - statue of St. Martin and St. Jiří. They are sculpted from eggenbur's limestone. Another two sculptures, - St. Ann and St. Jáchym, are copies of the originals and their place is below St. Martin and St. Jiří. The local cemetery was renovated in 2009 and it is considered a place of reverence, a place of reconciliation between deceased and living residents of this region. They tried to make their living space nicer and better for all ages, but their effort was thwarted by historical events again and again. A big number of small sacral architecture in this area, visible at every step, is the evidence of solicitous care of local people for all generations. Every year Czechs and Austrians hold meetings on border crosses to confirm this friendship.

OTHER THEMATIC CYCLE PATH CIRCUITS



4 Urban area Weikertschlag

By 1230 Weikertschlag was a market town. Much older is the name of the river 'Thaya'. Apparently it originated from 'Taja' that means 'the silent' because she so quietly slinks through the land. The market suffered heavily during the religious wars, and was destroyed by fire in 1755, when nearly the whole square burned to the ground. The school, church and vicarage along with all its documents and chronicles were destroyed.

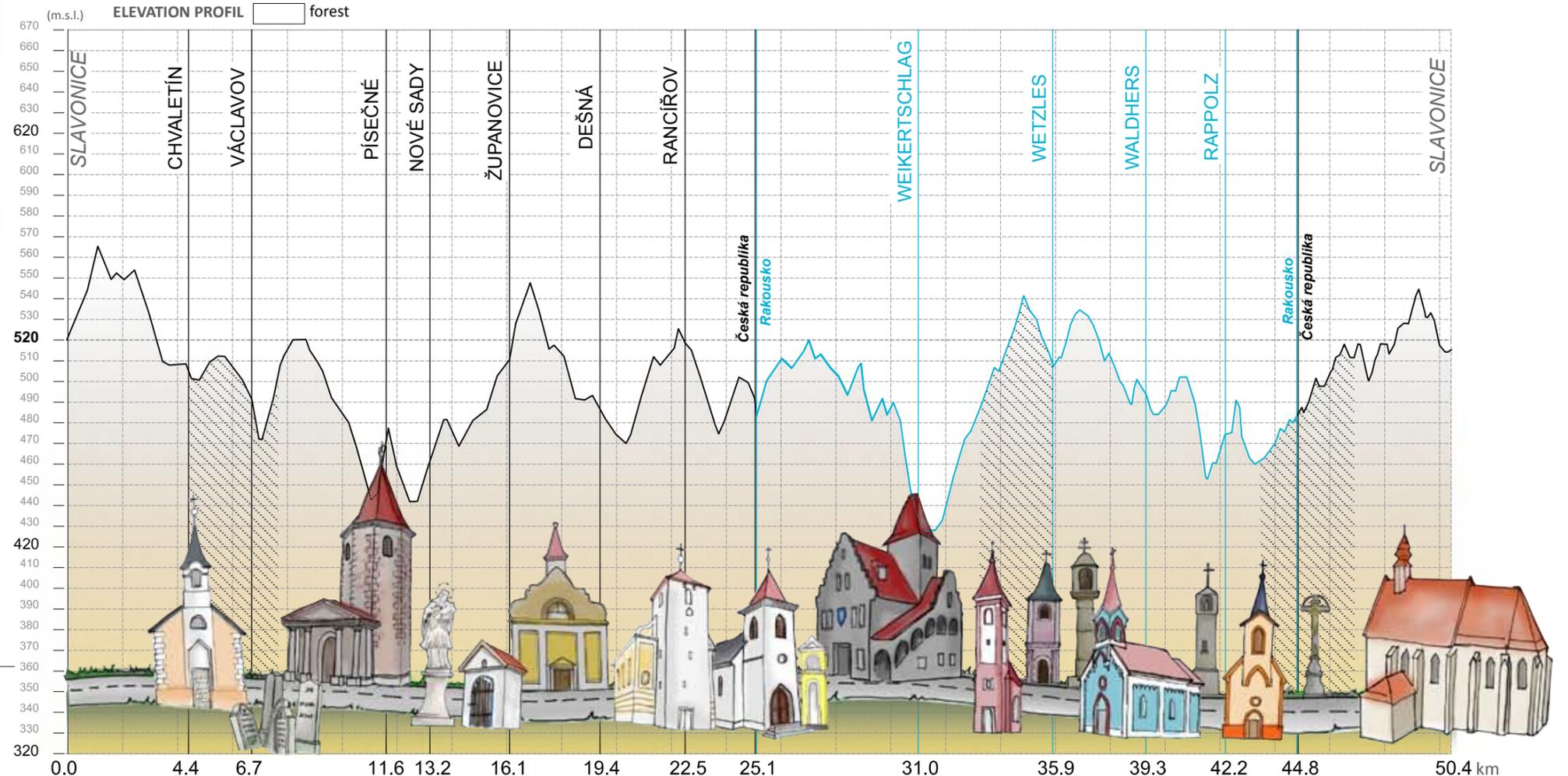
4 Remains of castle Weikertschlag

The castle Weikertschlag was once a mighty fortress situated on what is today called castle mountain. After the house Babenberg became extinct King Ottokar considered himself the rightful owner and wanted to reclaim it even until 1276 from King Rudolf 1st. But, the border fortress remained with the Habsburgs. Today the castle has completely disappeared. The visible ruins come from the Pankratius Chapel which was once part of the robber barons castle.



4 Church of Saint Stephen & Bone house

The Church of the Saint Stephen counts amongst the more charismatic sights. It is one of the oldest in the region (1155). It burned down in 1659 and 1755. The church is a three aisle basilica, with a straight choir finish



and a western tower. In 1760 it was converted into Baroque style. The paintings of the 12 apostles in the middle aisle are lavishly executed as well as the one above the bow depicting the 'crucifixion group'. Above the main altar thrones the holy trinity with clouds and cherubim heads surrounded by tall, adoring angles. In a richly decorated frame we see the altar painting depicting the execution of Saint Stephen. The church tower has a bell house with four bells. The church is surrounded by a well-kept cemetery. Also drawing our attention is the 'Karner' or bone house at the eastern end of the graveyard. The subterranean part of the rotunda- crypt, has 8 meters in diameter and is holding vast numbers of human skulls and bones.



4 Heritage museum in a former City hall

The market and town's square was created by the architect/builder Franz Vogler from Raabs. He also constructed the new town hall in 1932-1933. The plans for the façade were provided by the Government councillor Sigers, free of charge. From 1994 the heritage museum is located here. There are 3 interrelated topics of exhibition: The first is the late and present life of the local people, second is the presentation of local crafts and guilds and third theme is the history of castles, located in the valley of Thaya. Although the museum has only a modest size, there are many interesting and rare exhibits that are worth seeing.



4 Pillory column

In the centre of the village, right on the marketplace stands a testimony to times long gone – the Prangersäule (pillory column, 1735), with the figure of a warrior who colloquially is called 'Prangerhansl'. This warrior is leaning on the sword and under him, on the chain, is hanging the prison ball from stone. It was called- executioner column. It gives right to town to do convict's sentence on the public place. This symbol of discipline gave the town importance and distinguished it from village. All these facts make local people proud, so they hold pillory in high regard. Every unfair merchant, thief, non-payer or fornicator was tied up to column, like a warning for others. Sometimes, the column has small step in the upper half, where the convicted had to stand several metres above the ground. The beginning and the end of sentence was announced by



Saint Koloman, patron of Austria

Saint Koloman was supposed to have been an Irish prince who was imprisoned near Stockerau and executed while on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land. Legend tells he was a prince and travelling preacher. Due to his foreign appearance on his pilgrimage, people, mistook him for a bohemian spy and arrested him. After being tortured he was hung between two murderers on a scrawny bush. As an executed criminal he was not afforded a burial, but even after some time his body showed no signs of decomposition and several miracles occurred. Therefore, he was buried near the monastery Klosterneuburg where miracles continued to happen. He was then relocated to the residence of the Babenbergers in Melk, and buried on the 13th of October 1014. The day is still being celebrated. From 1244 until 1663 Koloman was patron Saint of Austria 'above and below the Ennsriver'. Later, he was replaced by Saint Leopold. Koloman is also patron Saint of those condemned to death by hanging, travellers and livestock. He also gives aid in sickness, trouble with the head and feet, during Plagues, thunderstorms, fire, as well as rat and mice infestations. His symbols are those of a pilgrim – hat, coat, staff, flask) and often is depicted with his hand in a sling.