

monday august 29 2005
dispatch #3 from ralph in vienna

saturday august 27

Today was the third and final episode of Raoul's tour of the old city. We saw the Medieval jump to Baroque without a Renaissance phase, due to the brief splitting of the Habsburg capital into three sites, Graz, Prague, and Innsbruck. Then we paid a visit to Freud's apartment, where I glimpsed the "couch" on which the master abused his patients. Lots of photos of course, and a bust, which quite reminded me of the late Terence McKenna. Freud belonged to my grandparents' generation, and his cigar paraphernalia and daily costume reminded me of my father. In fact the entire old city, so extensive and intact, provides time-travel to my European roots.

sunday august 28

Today, at last, it is time for my Kepler pilgrimage to Graz. This is where, in 1594, Kepler was dislocated from his dream vocation -- Lutheran minister in Germany -- to his destiny -- school math teacher in the boondocks. It was here, in the summer of 1595, in an elementary astrology course, that he had the second of the three epiphanies that ruled his life and channelled modern astronomy into being: the solar system model constructed from the five Platonic solids. My mission was to see the classroom in which this miracle occurred. A mission impossible, given that the schoolhouse no longer exists. However, Raoul was again my guide. He grew up in Graz, and knew exactly where to look. We succeeded in nosing around in the successor school building, and also found Kepler's apartment. We had lunch in the "Kepler Keller", and Linda took photos of all these places, for my Kepler website.

end #3