

# Astronomy in Prague: from the past to the present

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Welcome to Prague. Welcome to this Congress Centre built in a close neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the first Czech dukes (Fig. 1). Its name Vyšehrad means the Upper Town. According to the oldest Czech chronicles, it was here where the legendary princess Libuše ordered her people to found the city of Prague and where she envisaged its glory touching the stars (Fig. 2). It was also here where the canon of Vyšehrad recorded in the first half of the 12th century into his chronicle some observed astronomical and meteorological phenomena.

Centuries later, Johannes Kepler, whose results achieved in Prague have really reached a starry fame, reminded Libuše in his treatise *Somnium seu De astronomia Lunari*, dealing with Lunar astronomy (Fig. 3, cf. Rosen 1967, p. 11): “Stimulated by the widespread public interest, I turned my attention to reading about Bohemia, and came upon the story of the heroine Libussa, renowned for her skill in magic.” Kepler’s own work is a nice example of links between astronomy and history, which he also studied seriously. He



**Vyšehrad – the site of medieval castle**

Figure 1.