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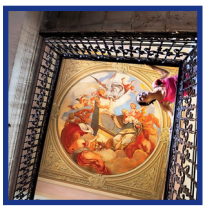

Europe in Budapest

A GUIDE TO ITS MANY CULTURES

Terra Recognita Foundation

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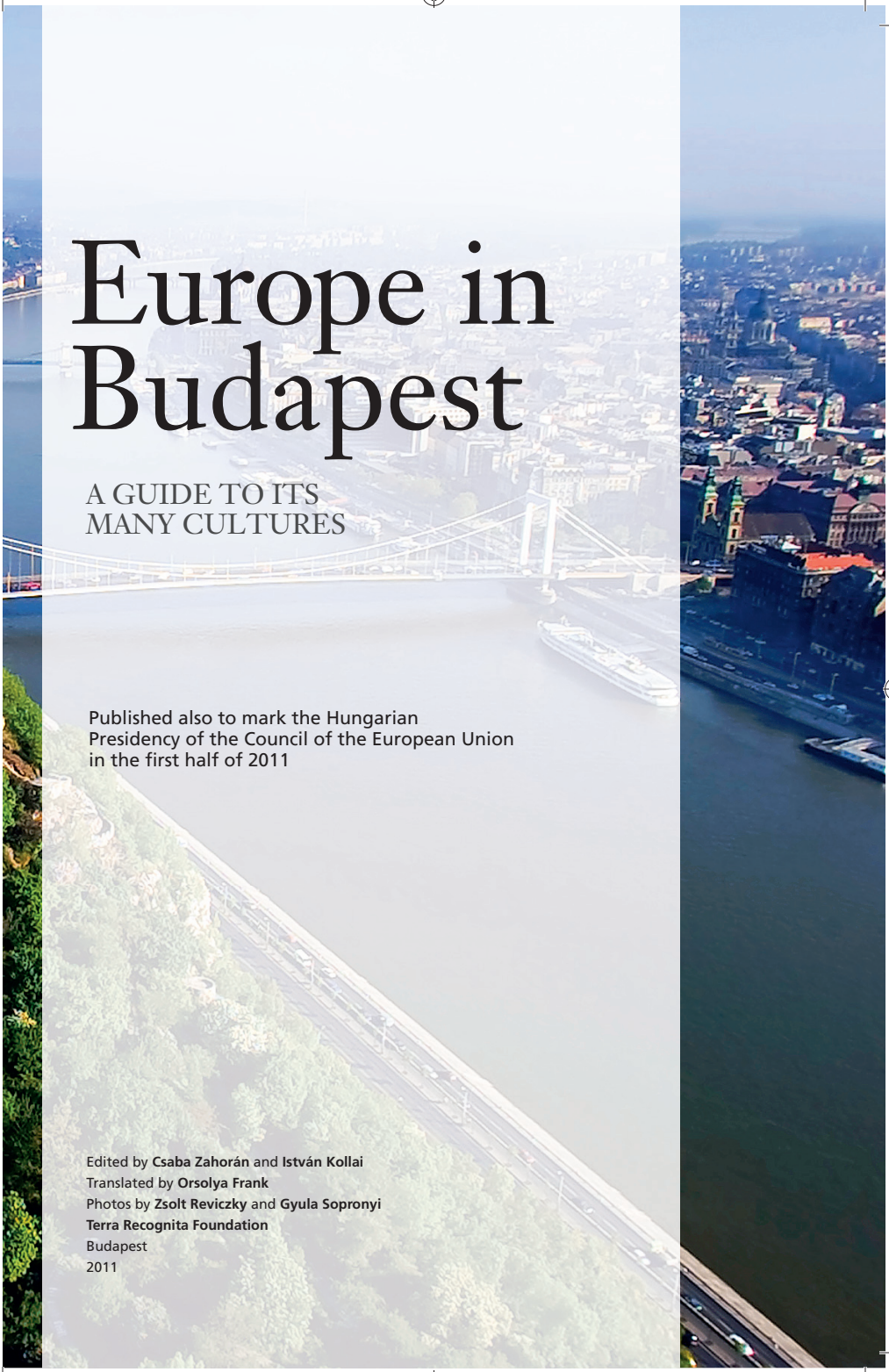

Europe in Budapest

A GUIDE TO ITS MANY CULTURES

Published also to mark the Hungarian Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2011

Edited by **Csaba Zahorán** and **István Kollai**
Translated by **Orsolya Frank**
Photos by **Zsolt Reviczky** and **Gyula Sopronyi**
Terra Recognita Foundation
Budapest
2011

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To the Reader

Welcome to Budapest, the capital of Hungary, a country facing the formidable challenge and honour of holding the Presidency of the Council of the European Union in the first half of 2011.

Welcome to this quite young, and yet old, city, born only 140 years ago as Budapest from the unification of three towns, Buda, Pest and Óbuda (Old Buda), but looking back to the many centuries of their history. Budapest is the capital of a single nation, the Hungarian, but it can boast close ties to several other nations in both cultural and historical terms. Long before the notion and the phenomenon of globalization appeared, this was home to a rich variety of languages, religions and traditions – cultures, if you wish. Just one-hundred years ago, around 1900, when the use of Hungarian had been on the rise for at least half a century, in entire neighbourhoods like Terézváros, Theresienstadt, German was still predominant. Merchants, innkeepers and artisans in picturesque Tabán (bulldozed in the 1930s) would address their clients and guests also in Greek or Serbian. Romanian and Slovak were also widely spoken, especially in the vast industrial areas on the outskirts of the town. Bi- and multilingualism were a commonplace in Budapest more than in London, Paris or Rome at the time. Much of this is gone now, but signs and sites of the one-time diversity still survive.

It is this diversity that this book seeks to draw your attention to. It invites you on a sightseeing tour to explore and discover the rich assets with which different cultures have arrayed Budapest.

The Hungarian capital bears the cultural footprints of indeed all the national, ethnic and religious minorities living in Hungary, often inseparable from Hungarian national culture. It goes without saying that each of Hungary's former or current neighbouring nations will find the touches its own culture has added to the city. But travellers from all Member States of the European Union and from other countries, too, may be surprised to notice the traces of intense and constant cultural exchange.

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Obviously, we had to select from this almost infinite diversity; we made our choices with the ambition of showing:

- The life and culture of all 13 national or ethnic minorities in Hungary;
- The features testifying the cultural influence of other member states of the European Union (which partly coincides with that of the minorities);
- The cultural influence on the city of groups that do not fall into these categories but have evidently contributed to its cultural richness – the Swiss, the Turks, the Gypsies and, last but not least, the now re-flourishing Jewish communities (which usually do not regard themselves as a national or ethnic minority).

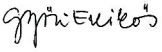
This heritage would represent an immense resource for us even if the Founding Fathers had never thought up the European Union. But then they did, and, as the Treaty on European Union enshrines respect for its cultures and the promotion of their diversity as one of the objectives of the Union, the multi-coloured culture of Budapest receives added meaning in the light of European integration.

As in the case of every culturally diverse European city, the diversity of Budapest is a treasure not only for the nation and the cultures immediately linked to it but also for the European Union as a whole. By augmenting, safeguarding and cherishing this patrimony, we will both create our own identity and promote the European cultural heritage.

This is why the Hungarian Presidency has proposed to raise the awareness of the need to preserve Europe's cultural diversity. The publication of this 'alternative' tourists' guide to Budapest for Hungary's EU Council Presidency is part of that idea. It also supports the motto and the underlying philosophy of the Hungarian Presidency: we want to work for a strong Europe that is close to her citizens, a European integration with a human touch. All assertions to the contrary notwithstanding, for men and women, culture and identity will always have primacy over material concerns, however legitimate and justifiable those may be.

The book has been produced by Hungarian authors, proud of the many different cultures that have found their home in their capital, a city which thereby has by no means become less Hungarian.

We would like to encourage the Reader to feel at home in this many-hued Central European metropolis and discover his or her own Budapest.



Enikő Győri | Minister of State for EU Affairs

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Introduction and Acknowledgments

a | A Budapest street sign

It has been a rather unusual discovery of Budapest, indeed a new exercise in national self-knowledge, that we as members of the Terra Recognita Foundation embarked on when preparing this book. The foundation has a mission to study the past and present life of peoples of Central and Eastern Europe, and it was with this in mind that we approached the past and present of our capital. We tried to peer behind façades that have completely changed, broken gates or high fences, and reveal the former diversity that somewhat escapes the public consciousness of the people of Budapest and Hungary alike, while it is organically part of the history of the city. Moreover, this richness belongs not only to the past; various national, ethnic or religious communities continue to leave their marks on the city and preserve their customs. Our work was initially supported by the Erinnerung, Verantwortung und Zukunft – Geschichtswerkstatt Europa. Later we continued our searches to a commission by the Parliament of the Hungarian Republic. This book has now come out on the occasion of Hungary's Presidency of the EU Council, and shows the Budapest ties of each EU Member State and the nationalities traditionally living in the city. The aim of this book was to represent this diversity in an alternative guide book for foreigners visiting Budapest. It goes without saying that we could hardly have squeezed into it every important sign a given community might have afforded Budapest; we are aware that some are bound to find our omissions unforgivable. Yet, we do hope that our book will not only call attention to the many hues of the city, but also help the reader to get to know them or even discover new ones. Some sites we refer to might seem to have only loose connections with the given national communities, but they are part of the diverse makeup of Budapest and fit to mention.

The book can be used by itself to explore Budapest – it has a map and some discussion of most major sites, but it is perhaps best used in conjunction with traditional guides.

There are thus particular walks we recommend in respect of some sites, as guides usually do; however, we point out many sites

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that cannot be covered in separate walks, thus the tourist will either discover those neighbourhoods for his or her self, or combine the visit with walks suggested by other conventional guides.

We have tried to keep our references as straightforward as possible. Addresses we have given in the Hungarian format because this is how the traveller will encounter them. Thus, in a reference like 'Heroes' Square (Hősök tere; XIV. Dózsa György út 41)', we have given the more or less received or common name in English (if there is one), then in parenthesis the actual Hungarian and its address; the Roman number identifies the District, then follows the name, and the type and number of the public space. Street plates have the number of the district and the name of the neighbourhood at the top, the name and type of public space in the centre, and the bottom row indicates the numbers in the block concerned.

A few Hungarian words need to be grasped to get along. Here is a list:

'Utca' = street;
'Út' = road;
'Körút' = ring road – sometimes rendered as 'boulevard';
'Körönd' = circus;
'Körtér' = circus;
'Fasor' = avenue;
'Kerület' = District (abbreviated in Hungarian: 'ker.')
'Pályaudvar' = railway station;
'Villamos' = tram;
'Villamosmegálló = tram stop;
'Buszmegálló' = bus stop;
'Troli' = trolley bus;
'Földalatti' = underground, M1;
'Metró' = underground, M2 and M3;
'Fogaskerekű' = cog-railway;
'Sikló' = funicular;
'Város' = town.

We have also added maps of Budapest to show the major sites numbered in the text under the same numbers.

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In the course of our work, we have drawn on various sources, excellent books and studies, much good advice, and listing them all would not be fitting for such a publication. We nevertheless wish to express our gratitude particularly to Géza Komoróczy, Andrea Genát, Mónika Tyutyunkov, Gregor Papuček, Anna Kovács, Anna Roxin, Anne Südmeyer, György Diószegi, Koranisz Laokratisz, Péró Lásztity, the recently deceased Vilmos Heiszler, as well as Péter Ács, Krisztián Manzinger, Zoltán Márky, Bálint Ódor, Péter Sárdi, Ádám Szesztay, and Péter Wintermantel for the innumerable times they assisted us. We also owe thanks to the Office of the Parliament and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs for generously funding our work, as well as to Attila Bolgár and László Ördögh for their persistence.

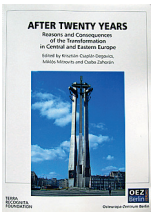
Csaba Zahorán and István Kollai

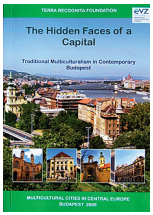
Terra Recognita Foundation was established by young historians, political theorists and economists in 2005 to study the past and present life of the peoples of Eastern Europe and the relations between them and Hungarians and those between cross-border Hungarians. The publications of the foundation are:

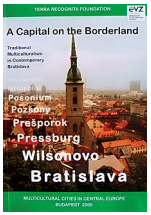
- *Meghasadt múlt – Rozštiepená minulosť* (Shattered Past), Budapest, 2008 (in Slovak and Hungarian);
- *The Hidden Faces of a Capital – Traditional Multiculturalism in Contemporary Budapest,* Budapest, 2009 (in English);
- *A Capital on the Borderland – Traditional Multiculturalism in Contemporary Bratislava*, Budapest, 2009 (in English);
- *After Twenty Years – Reasons and Consequences of the Transformation in Central and Eastern Europe*, Berlin: OEZ Verlag-TRA, 2010 (in English);

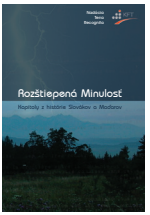
Work in progress

- *Neznámy sused* (The Unkown Neighbour), Budapest-Bratislava, 2011 (in Slovak)









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The Many Hues of Budapest

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE HUNGARIAN CAPITAL

With its 1.7 million inhabitants, Budapest is one of the largest cities in Central Europe today. Like many similar cities, it grew out of three separate towns: Buda, Pest and Óbuda (Old Buda), being formally and administratively united as Budapest in 1873. For over a thousand years, the three towns, Buda in particular, have played a crucial role in Central Europe and the history of the inhabitants of Hungary. However many nations have contributed to the cultural diversity of Budapest in the course of history, these three towns preserved their characteristic Hungarian flavour – enchanting their visitors to our day.



A view from Gellért Hill
The Danube flows through four capitals: Vienna, Bratislava, Budapest, and Belgrade, but it is really only in Budapest that it merges into the townscape, dividing it into two proportionate parts: the hilly Buda side and the low-lying Pest side.

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MEDIEVAL BUDA AND PEST

The various areas which constitute modern Budapest have a history as eventful and vicissitudinous as Hungary itself. Settling down in the Carpathian Basin ('occupying' or **'conquering the homeland'** traditionally in 896 A. D.), the Hungarians founded one of their tribal centres in the area of Óbuda over the ruins of the former Roman city of **Aquincum**.

1 following the coronation at Esztergom of **King Stephen (István) I** (ruled 1000–1038), the first Hungarian king, and the establishment of the Christian, Western-orientated state of Hungary, Óbuda began to function as a royal seat during the reign of **King Béla IV** (13th century). By then, the Kingdom of Hungary covered the entire Carpathian Basin. On the opposite, Eastern bank of the Danube, Pest developed into a commercial and administrative centre, and was granted the rank of a royal chartered city in the 13th century.



a


a


b


b


b

a | Roman ruins in Óbuda (Aquincum) **1**

b | The remains of the amphitheatre of the former garrison town in Óbuda

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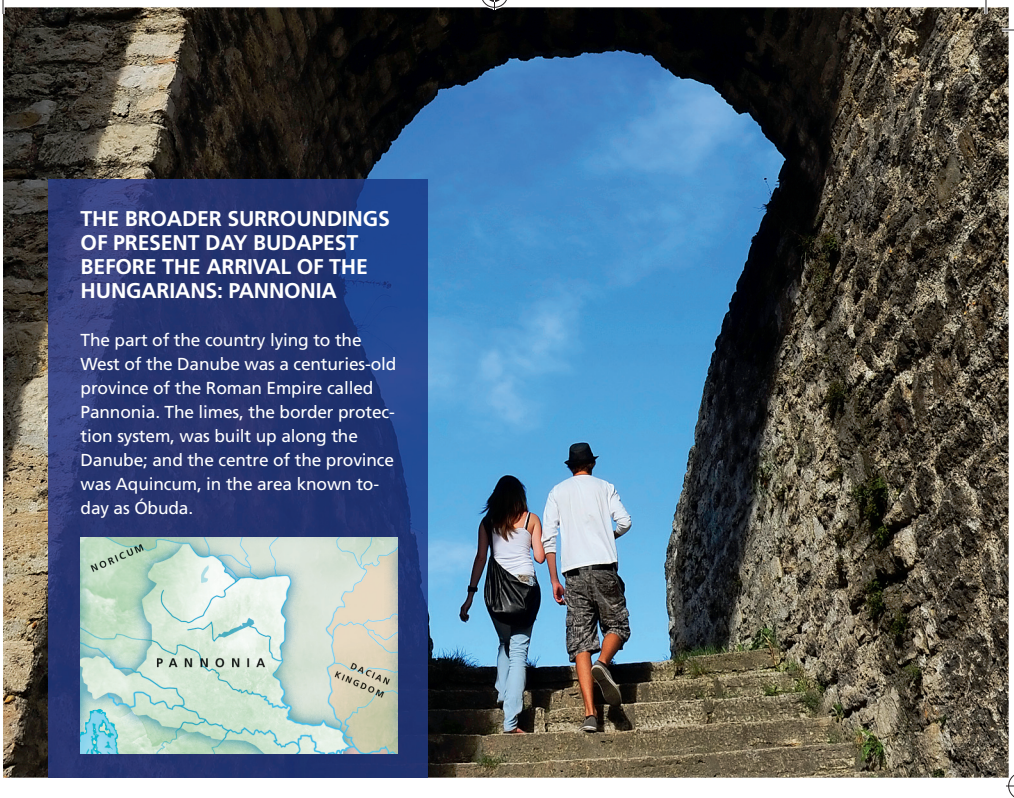


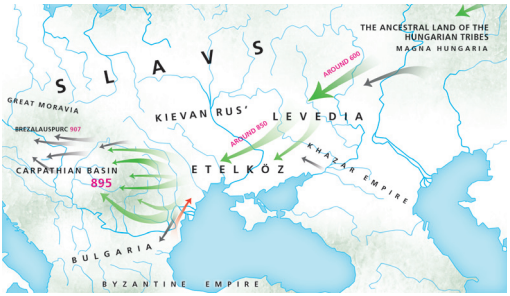
THE BROADER SURROUNDINGS OF PRESENT DAY BUDAPEST BEFORE THE ARRIVAL OF THE HUNGARIANS: PANNONIA

The part of the country lying to the West of the Danube was a centuries-old province of the Roman Empire called Pannonia. The limes, the border protection system, was built up along the Danube; and the centre of the province was Aquincum, in the area known today as Óbuda.

After two centuries of peaceful settlement and Westernisation, Hungary had to suffer a terrible onslaught, the **Mongol or Tartar Invasion (1241-42)**, which devastated the entire country, killing off a considerable part of its population. In an organized effort to defend themselves, people moved up in to the hills, and fortified them. Due to these precautions or to good fortune, the Tartars did not return. However, fortification contributed to the development of towns, and soon Buda would stand out among them as a centre of crafts and commerce. Kings increasingly thought of it as a permanent seat. Flourishing feudalism brought to it prosperity and growth, as well as intensive trade with other European cities in the 14th and 15th centuries. After the Hungarian House of Árpád died

THE MIGRATION OF THE HUNGARIANS

Hungarian is part of the family of Finno-Ugric languages, together with Finnish and Estonian. The original home of Finno-Ugric speaking peoples was in the region of the Ural Mountains, and it is from here that the Hungarians migrated to the Carpathian Basin. In the meantime, their leaders assimilated with the Turkic elite, and therefore Europe came to know the Hungarians as a Turkic people. The Finno-Ugric peoples having separated a long time ago, today's Finns and Hungarians are unlikely to understand a word of each other's speech.



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out, the Anjou and Luxembourg monarchs began major building projects in Buda. In 1408, **Sigismund of Luxembourg**, constructing what might have been the largest Gothic palace of his time, moved his court permanently to Buda. During this period, Óbuda, the older town further north on the west bank of the Danube, was the seat of the queen. Pest was slower to recover from the devastation left by the Tartars, not regaining its royal privileges until the 15th century.

The population of Buda and Pest has been a rich and varied composite since the outset. In the Middle Ages, Germans were the population group which lived here in the largest numbers alongside the Hungarians, but there were several other groups, including Jews and the Böszörménys, a Muslim group particular to Hungary. After Buda became the most important royal seat, many Italian, French and German artists, craftsmen and money-lenders came to provide services to the king. Although the city's ethnic versatility remained characteristic throughout the ages, proportions between different nationalities varied from time to time. Thus, for instance, Jews were banished from the country by **King Louis (Lajos) the Great** in the second half of the 14th century, as they also were from many European countries at the time, though later they would be allowed to return. Then, in 1529, **King John of Szapolya (János Szapolyai)** expelled pro-Habsburg German citizens from Buda, because Ferdinand of Habsburg was claiming his throne.

UNDER THE OTTOMAN YOKE

From the middle of the 15th century, Ottoman expansion began to pose a serious threat to Hungary, whose rulers made every attempt they could to avert the danger. However, after military efforts lasting a century and a half, the Turks managed to break through the southern borders and the central area of the country came under their rule for 150 years, bringing unceasing warfare, pillage and destruction. **Buda was occupied by the Sultan in 1541**, and was turned into a border fortification. The western part of the country came under Habsburg rule, and the royal administration at Buda escaped to **Pozsony** (Pressburg, present-day **Bratislava**, the capital of Slovakia), making it a kind



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of capital. The eastern part of the country, including **Transylvania** ruled by mostly Protestant national princes, opted for semi-independence from the Ottoman Porte with religious freedom rather than Habsburg (Catholic) rule.

Under Ottoman occupation, Buda, with much of its Hungarian population having fled, welcomed a great many immigrants, who were partly Turks and partly Slavs from the Balkans. Jews enjoyed relative peace.

Finally, following concentrated European diplomatic efforts, a **united Christian army re-conquered Buda and Pest in 1686**. However, the long and extremely harsh siege also meant that much of the population of the city, Muslims, Christians and Jews, were killed, and all that remained of the magnificent city of Sigismund and Matthias (Mátyás) Hunyadi perished. Deserted and destroyed, the city had to be rebuilt from the rubble. By the end of the 17th century, the entire area of the Kingdom of Hungary of Hungary was free of Turkish rule. However, the country did not long enjoy the liberation, as it became subjugated under the Habsburgs. This sparked off a long **uprising led by Prince Francis II Rákóczi** – alas, both unsuccessful and devastating.

POST-OTTOMAN BUDA AND PEST

The end of Ottoman rule meant a total change for the population of Buda: its former Turkish, Christian and Jewish inhabitants were replaced primarily by Germans, who settled here either of their own accord or under imperial order. From the South, a new wave of Serbs fleeing the Turks also reached Hungarian cities. They settled in great numbers in the valley between Gellért Hill and Buda Castle called Tabán. This quarter came to be called Rácváros ('Serbtown'), 'rác' being the Hungarian word for a Serb.



a | Royal Palace, Buda Castle

b | Historical map: the Kingdom of Hungary in the 15th century

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The considerable Jewish community of the Turkish era perished completely during the fighting. Survivors of the siege were imprisoned for collusion, and only released on payment of a ransom. In the ensuing period, they were barred from settling in the now 'German' cities of Buda and Pest.

In the early 18th century, Buda and Pest embarked on a course of slow but steady development. Although they gradually re-acquired the privileges they had enjoyed in the Middle Ages, Buda had to struggle to get back its previous rank from Pozsony in the west of the country, which was the effective capital and home to the Diet and the Treasury, as well as from **Debrecen** in Central Hungary, which was an economic stronghold. Buda finally won, most government offices being moved there from Pozsony at the end of the 18th century. Simultaneously, Pest began to prosper, attracting investment in industry and commerce, which in turn drew large numbers seeking a better livelihood.

The dynamic development that Buda and Pest underwent in the 19th century was largely owing to the great number of German, Jewish, Serb, Romanian, Greek, Macedo-Romanian, Slovak, Czech, and various other immigrants, who flocked into the



city, and started businesses, established factories and pursued various trades. As a result, the cultural life of the city was also highly versatile. The different ethnic groups developed their culture not only in isolation but also in close connection and interaction with each other. At the same time, as the centre of a country of many nationalities, Pest-Buda provided an excellent stage for Western, Southern and Eastern Slavonic nations to come into contact with one another.

'Homo monarchicus'

The upper crust of Pest and Buda consisted of not only the local German patricians, but also administrators and army officers from around the entire Empire, whose identity was determined not so much by their national origin, but primarily by their allegiance to the **Habsburg Monarchy**.

a | The Parliament Building, designed by Imre Steindl in eclectic, neo-Gothic style (1884–1902) 2

b | Statue of Lajos Kossuth,leader of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848-1849

c | The Academy of Sciences (1862-65) 4

d | Chain Bridge 5

e | The Hungarian National Museum (1837–47) 3

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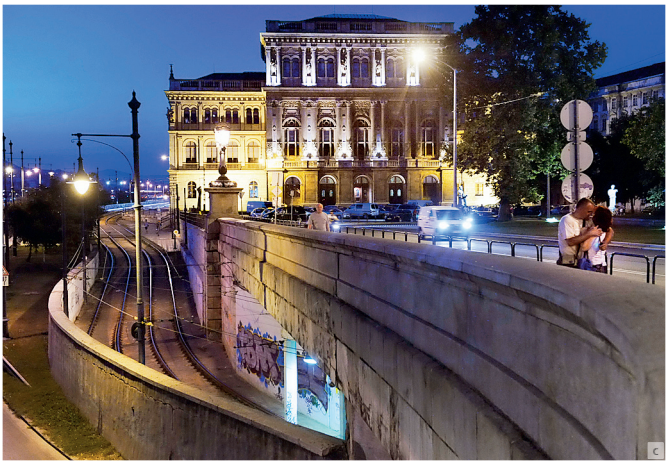
THE REFORM ERA

The two cities assumed a central role in Hungarian modernisation and bourgeoisation in the first half of the 19th century, marked by the establishment of the **Hungarian National Museum** 3 and the **Academy of Sciences** 4 with their seats in Pest, as well as the outbreak of **revolution on 15 March 1848**, which finally brought to Pest even the Hungarian Parliament, now based on popular representation, in July that year.

Earlier on, in 1839, the construction of the **Chain Bridge**, the first permanent bridge to connect the two cities, had also begun, and was completed in 1849. 5 Pest clearly became the capital of the country, although Buda retained its symbolic significance. In 1849, during the War of Independence against the Habsburgs, Buda had to withstand another siege, and this onslaught caused considerable damage in both cities. The liberation of Buda (May 21st 1849) was one the most significant victories of the revolutionary army, who surrendered only to the Russian Army.


b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THE COMPROMISE ERA

Worn out by two decades of passive resistance and authoritarian rule, the Hungarian political elite and the House of Habsburg decided to strike a deal and run the two countries jointly; this was the notorious **'Compromise' of 1867**. The Habsburg Empire was given the name **Austro-Hungarian Monarchy**, and Hungary formally gained equal status with Austria. **In 1873, Buda, Pest and Óbuda were united as Budapest** – a capital of the Dual Monarchy on an equal footing with Vienna.

Whatever one might think of it, the Compromise brought tremendous development to the entire country and Budapest in


a


b


a

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a | The former Palace of Justice, today's Museum of Ethnography 6

b | Rapidly developing Budapest at the turn of the 20th century (Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár – Budapest Collection)

c | The Matthias Church (Mátyás-templom) 7

d | The Fishermen's Bastion (Halászbástya) 8

particular. Small wonder these years are held in the collective memory of Hungarians as the 'palmy days of peace'. Modern-day Budapest emerged at this time with the construction of a whole chain of indoor markets, railway stations, bridges on the Danube, ring roads, and long straight avenues. The grandiose urban design of this period with its new main public spaces (Nagykörút, the 'Grand Boulevard' or 'Ring Road', Szabadság tér, Andrássy út, etc.), has determined the structure of the city up until today. Exuding the true air of a capital city, a whole gamut of impressive public buildings arose at this time, along with residential blocks, some splendid and ornate, others more modest. This was when the **Parliament Building** 2, the gem of the Danube, was built, as was the former **Palace of Justice**, the High Court ('Kúria'). 6 The Buda side likewise changed. The Castle was given a new exterior; the **Matthias Church (Mátyás-templom)** 7 was restored to its 'original' medieval glory, and the **Fishermen's Bastion (Halászbástya)**, so popular with tourists today, was also built behind it. 8

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a | Heroes' Square (Hősök tere) built for the 1000th anniversary of the Hungarian Conquest. The millennial festivities were the highpoint of the prosperity of the Compromise era. 9

b | Historical map: the lands of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918)

c | The Museum of Applied Arts (IX. Üllői út 33-37), one of the finest examples of Hungarian Art Nouveau, a style Budapest is rich in. 10

Along with the transformation of the city, the national character of Budapest also underwent changes. While until the mid-19th century one was more likely to hear German spoken in the streets than Hungarian, as a result of national awakening, first Pest, then Buda became Hungarian so swiftly that it was barely noticed. The process became even more accelerated in the wake of the political settlement of the Compromise. The predominance of Hungarians was partly thanks to the growing number of inhabitants moving into the city who were mostly Hungarian. Indeed, the number of Hungarians gradually exceeded that of other nationalities, even though there was a steady influx of Slovaks, Romanians and other minorities from more distant parts of the country. The national revival, and social and political reforms that had been initiated early in the century by the Hungarian elite proved to be so attractive to Germans, who previously dominated the city, and to the ever-growing Jewish community, that they assumed a Hungarian identity in a process of spontaneous assimilation. The majority of Slovaks, Serbs, Romanians and others were likewise assimilated in the **melting pot of Budapest**. Hungarianization was enhanced by the drive to turn Hungary into a nation state. However, the city prompted many of them to seek a separate, national identity. Germans who assimilated did not entirely abandon their national culture. Indeed, German remained the second language of the Budapest upper and middle classes, including Hungarians and Jews, and continued to serve as a mediator between Hungary and the West almost until the end of the 20th century, when English became the dominant international language.

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Composition of the population of Budapest*

Year	Hungarians %	Germans %	Others %	Total population
1715	19.4	55.6	25.0	12,200
1851	36.6	56.4	7.0	178,062
1880	56.7	34.3	9.0	402,706
1890	67.1	23.7	9.2	560,079
1910	85.9	9.0	5.1	1,110,453
1941	97.0	1.9	1.1	1,712,791
1949	99.1	0.2	0.7	1,590,316
1960	99.1	0.3	0.6	1,804,606
1980	99.2	0.1	0.9	2,059,226
1990	99.0	0.1	0.9	2,016,681
2001	96.4	0.9	2.3	1,777,921
2009	91.2	1.0	7.2	1,712,210

The data for 1715 are estimates; the rest are based on censuses. The fall in the total population from the 1980s is due to a movement into the suburbs around Budapest and a general decrease in the population. Due to urban renewal, the tendency has recently been turned around. Special thanks are due to Péter Őri of the Hungarian Central Statistical Office (KSH) for his help with the data.







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WAR AND TURMOIL

For all its achievements, the 'Compromise' settlement was unable to withstand the shocks of WWI. Revolution broke out, communism was attempted which, in turn, led to counter-revolution. The nationalities disgruntled by post-1867 Hungarian nation-state building and their elites alienated from the Hungarian state separated from the country. The victorious powers approved of this, and ceded two-thirds of the Kingdom of Hungary to newly established states in the **Treaty of Trianon (1920)**. Overnight more than 3 million Hungarians found themselves as minority citizens in none-too friendly successor states. The dismantling of the country of many nationalities also meant that the position which Budapest had occupied in the cultural life of Slovaks, and to some extent of Romanians, would be irrevocably lost and taken over by the new national centres.



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The Aster Revolution had declared Hungary a republic, which was soon overturned by the Communists, who set up their headquarters in the Royal Palace of Buda – as they would again after 1945. Though the counter-revolution restored the pre-1918 monarchy, the Paris Peace Conference forbade the return of the Habsburgs, and so, in the absence of a native Hungarian dynasty, Miklós Horthy became the new head of state as Regent, making use of the Royal Palace for his residence. He managed to consolidate a system both old and new through the good services in the 1920s of his mastermind prime-minister, István Bethlen.

By this time, the most spectacular period of the growth of Budapest was over; though modern architectural styles did appear gradually, the number of construction projects was considerably lower than in the previous period. 11



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WWII was by far the worst disaster for the city. Hungary had not experienced much of the war, but, following the abortive attempt to back out from the war in late 1944, Hitler declared Budapest a military stronghold, with German troops and their Hungarian auxiliaries intended to hold off the storming Red Army. Soviet troops therefore fought their way into the city, street by street, in the winter of 1944–45. The heavy bombardment and fighting reduced the city to ruins. Suffering and shame overwhelmed the city. Not long following the deportation of the Jews from the countryside and the end of the war, the German population was also deported. Many of the wounds inflicted by the war have still not healed – as the bullet holes still visible in buildings attest. The loss of life and property made the once sumptuous city drab and hopeless.



Once more, liberation was followed by tyranny. And once more the Hungarians rose up against it. On **23 October 1956** a revolution broke out and developed into one of the most significant acts of protest against the Communist regime of the Soviet Union. Once again, Budapest had to undergo another siege. The 'urban kids' of Budapest fighting Soviet tanks with Molotov cocktails and stolen weapons became emblematic figures of the struggle.



a | Nagyszeben tér

b | Kassai utca. After the Treaty of Trianon, the names of towns and villages in the lost territories, like Kassa (Košice, Slovakia) or Nagyszeben (Sibiu, Romania), began to appear as names of streets and squares in Budapest – relics of the historical Hungary.

c | Romanian WWII monument in the Rákoskeresztúr cemetery. 154 Recalling sad chapters in the history of Budapest, military cemeteries are the resting places of the many Russians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Poles, British, Americans, and others who died here in the war against the Nazis.

d | The Madách apartment blocks built in the interwar period (VII. Madách tér) 11

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‘Trampled and fettered, Hungary did more for liberty and justice than any other nation in the world over the past twenty years.’

(Albert Camus on the Revolution of 1956)





After the bloody suppression of the 1956 Revolution, Hungarian society desperately wanted to live. People tried to create **little islands of liberty**, and live a culture of liberty. One sign of this was their belaboured and dogged attempts to imitate Western lifestyle – which might now seem a little outlandish. Nevertheless, it was because of these attempts that Hungary began to be called ‘the **happiest barracks’** in the Soviet Block in the 70s and 80s.

Cultural life was also an area where resourceful Hungarians managed to establish for themselves small circles of liberty. For all the strict control the Communist Party had over cultural life, several cultural achievements in the spirit of freedom were pushed through as the nation struggled for a better life. Such an example is the folk-dance movement. Started in the 70s by a handful of musicians playing authentic Hungarian folk music, a nation-wide and even



cross-border network of bands, dance venues, summer camps, and enthusiastic amateur dancers evolved, rekindling and revitalizing the authentic heritage of Hungarian folk music and dancing – not noisily, but meanwhile shaking off the yoke of the Party.

As more and more of these small islands of independence were established in Hungary and Budapest, they could less and less tolerate one-party rule. More and more people expressed their views in defiance of the regime.



By 1989, Budapest came to be defined by mass protests and a cultural life that would no longer tolerate Communist control. This was how **Budapest came to have a central role in pulling down Soviet-style Communism in Eastern Europe** and battling forth pre-conditions of a flourishing multifarious culture: a democratic state.

The development of a free Hungarian culture required new homes and new buildings, as well. The **Hungarian National Theatre** 13, whose original building had been pulled down by Communist urban development wholly insensitive to the national heritage, was built anew on the southern Pest-side bank of the Danube (Nemzeti Színház; IX. Bajor Gizi park 1). Right next door to it, the **Palace of Arts**, a masterpiece of post-modernist Hungarian architecture, now houses a concert hall with world-class acoustics (Művészetek Palotája; IX. Komor Marcell utca 1). In the summertime, the biggest popular music festival in Central Europe, the **Sziget Festival** 14, is organised in the former dockyard of Óbuda (III. Óbudai-sziget, Május 9. park). In Buda, an old factory building was transformed into a cultural venue and a museum called the **Palace of Wonders** which exhibits scientific achievements and inventions in eye-catching and suggestive ways 15 (Millenáris, II. Kis Rókus u. 16–20). Step by step, Hungary is recovering.

a | Hungarian freedom fighter – the Man of the Year in 1956 (b) according to *Time* magazine. In 1957 (c), Man of the Year was Khrushchev who had stifled the same revolution (VIII. Corvin köz). 12

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The first century after the appearance of the Hungarians in Europe was mainly taken up by their incursions, gaining them infamy all over Europe. By the end of the 10th century, the rulers, recognising that their military supremacy was lost, adopted Christianity, and began to build up a Western-style state administration. Their main aids in this were German-Walloon settlers who founded towns, as well as other Western nobles, priests and literati. Besides these, there were also the indigenous Slavic people who had been living here tilling the land before the arrival of the Hungarians, and who also became integrated into the new state, contributing significantly to the success of the Hungarians making a home here. Their positive symbiotic relationship, consisting in mutual service, remained a characteristic of the co-existence of Hungarians and other ethnic groups within the Carpathian Basin.

A Hub of Cultures

a | Statue of Stephen I, first king of Hungary in Buda Castle

b | Ruins of the Pauline Monastery at Budaszentlőrinc



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In many ways it was the Pope who marked out the boundaries of Western Christendom at the time. Just how well Hungary integrated with the European cultural milieu is indicated by the fact that the founder of the state **King Stephen I** and his son, **Prince Emeric (Imre)**, were canonised as early as the 11th century (1083). Besides these, another king and two princesses from the **Hungarian dynasty, the House of Árpád** were canonised.

IN-LAWS OF THE HOUSE OF ÁRPÁD IN EUROPE

For three centuries (1000–1301), the kings of Hungary came from the House of Árpád, who led the Hungarian tribes into the Carpathian Basin. They established themselves among the Christian ruling elite of Europe. The most important means of doing this at the time was to build dynastic relations with ruling families. So their daughters were married to the sons of various European rulers, including the Prince of Bavaria, the Grand Duke of Kiev, the Prince of Poland, the Holy Roman Emperor, a Sicilian Norman Count, a Norman Prince, a Serbian Great Zhupan, an Austrian Prince, a Marquis of Istria and Kraina, a Landgrave of Thuringia, the Prince of Antiochia, the King of France, and a Cuman Prince.

As clerical centres and royal seats, Buda, Óbuda and Pest, the precursors of today's Budapest, played an important role mediating between the Western cultural milieu of the time and Hungary as it was. They helped a peripheral Hungary in linking up with European intellectual and social exchange. Home to both kings and queens, Buda received royal visitors, including the Holy Roman Emperor Frederick I Barbarossa. It had houses of all the major European monastic orders. Hungary was thus integrated into the network of medieval Christendom. One sign of this was the foundation of the **Order of the Pauline Fathers**, the only Hungarian monastic order, which spread throughout Central Europe, one of its most famous houses being the one in Częstochowa, Poland. The order, which is still active, had one of its medieval monasteries in the Buda Hills. 16

After the House of Árpád died out (1301), the Hungarian throne was occupied by **Angevin kings**, the **Polish-Lithuanian Jagiellon dynasty** and the **House of Habsburg** (there were even kings from the **Bavarian House of Wittelsbach** and the **Czech Přemysls**, but they did not manage to acquire power over the entire country). One consequence of this was that Hungary became far more ac-

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tive in the European diplomatic and military arena. For example **Louis (Angevin) the Great** (1342 – 1380, king of Hungary and Poland) led a campaign to Naples, the land of his forebears; while, for **Sigismund of Luxembourg**, Hungary was the hinterland for his acquisition of the title of Holy Roman Emperor and for his campaigns against the Czech Hussites and the Turks.

The Ottoman Empire posing a serious threat to the country from the second half of the 14th century, various efforts were made to organise pan-European armies and transform the southern (Bosnian, Serbian, Romanian) regions into border areas or buffer zones. One such campaign was the **last international crusade**, which Sigismund led against the Turks, but which was defeated at Nikopol in **1396**. Encouraged by the successful Long Campaign in 1443, the great Hungarian commander **János Hunyadi** and the promising young Polish and Hungarian **King Ladislaus I Jagiellon** (Władysław III) led another major anti-Turkish offensive. Sadly, the bravely fighting king perished on the battle field at **Varna in 1444**. To Christendom the Turks seemed invincible. Yet, János Hunyadi routed their army besieging Belgrade (then Nándorfehérvár) in 1456. Lasting for over 300 years, the anti-Turkish wars gave rise to the idea of

a | View of Buda Castle

b | Statue of János Hunyadi


a


b

Hungary being the **'bulwark of Christianity'** – which still captivates Hungarians' consciousness. The image is also used by other peoples in the region whose struggles against conquering Muslims lasted much longer.

THE MIDDAY BELLS

During the siege of Belgrade, Pope Callixtus III ordered the bells of every church to be rung every day at noon, as a call for the faithful to pray for the defenders. However, news of the victory often arrived earlier than the order, and thus the ringing of the church bells at noon transformed into a commemoration of the victory, still observed throughout Europe.

THE POPE EXCOMMUNICATES BUDA – BUDA EXCOMMUNICATES THE POPE

Owing to disputes between the city of Buda and local clerical land-owners, the Pope excommunicated Buda six times in a row around 1300. In response, the citizens of Buda likewise excommunicated the Pope. Eventually the Angevin monarchs granted Buda the rights demanded.

Lacking an heir to the throne, the Hungarian Diet elected as king **Matthias Hunyadi**, the son of János the much-revered victor of Belgrade. Traditionally and arguably, he was one the greatest rulers of Hungary. To buttress the country against the Turks, he conquered parts of Bohemia and Austria, including Vienna. He re-built Buda Castle in the Renaissance style, and made it a centre of humanism. In 1473, only 21 years after Gutenberg, András Hess set up his printing press in Buda to publish the Buda Chronicle – well ahead of such attempts in London, Prague or Vienna. Matthias also founded a library, the **Bibliotheca Corviniana**; with its 2000-2500 volumes, it was perhaps the second largest library in Europe at the time, second only to that of the Vatican.





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a | The Hungarian coat-of-arms

b | A Corvina

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Due to the troubled later history of Buda, the whereabouts of only some 200 of the Corvinae is known. The rest perished, were scattered or looted by the Turkish occupants and taken to Istanbul. By the 19th century, there were only a few of them left in Hungary. Due to a gift made by the Sultan in 1877 and to later purchases, there are now 53 volumes in Budapest.

'Manuscripts will be cheaper now',

exclaimed Lorenzo de Medici upon hearing that King Matthias was dead, 1490.

Matthias invited masters of practically all trades and arts, architects, doctors, scholars, and musicians to Buda from Italy. This is how he wished 'to turn Hungary into Italy,' as a contemporary Hungarian chronicler complained about the royal whim that consumed veritable fortunes.

'Should the king die, we, Italians of Buda, will all perish…'

(From a letter by Bernardo Vespucci, an architect working in Buda under Matthias, to his brother Amerigo Vespucci – the man after whom America was to be named).

At the battle of Mohács in 1526, the forces of Suleiman the Magnificent destroyed the Hungarian forces. **Louis II Jagiellon**, King of Hungary and Bohemia, also fell. After bitter internal struggles, Buda was occupied in **1541**. Under Muslim rule, the only context in which Buda was mentioned in the rest of Europe over the next 150 years was its fall and the failures of Christian troops to re-conquer it. Eventually, on the initiative of Pope Innocent XI, the Holy League was set up in 1684, and the united forces of the Holy Roman Empire, Poland and Venice **re-conquered the city in 1686**.

Ruined and deserted, it took time for Buda and Pest to re-join European exchange. Coronations and Diet sessions were held in Pozsony until the 19th century, and the country was actually ruled from Vienna. The rate of Hungarians within the Carpathian Basin had fallen from 80-85% in the late 15th century to under 40% by the end of the 18th century. The flourishing urban life of medieval Hungary was lost in the mists of time; the populations of cities, including Pest and Buda, diminished. From the 18th century, mostly German settlers repopulated them. Not until the early 19th century did Pest and Buda recover, but then, in the Reform Era and the period of the Compromise, they flourished unprecedentedly.



After Buda, Pest and Óbuda were united as Budapest in 1873, and the new and old city once more became an organic part of European exchange, channelling between Western Europe and the peripheral areas of the Carpathian Basin and Central Europe. Its cultural life thrived, enhanced and variegated by the many nationalities of the multitudes seeking employment in industry, commerce and the civil service from all around the country and abroad.

Immediately after WWII, there was a decline, but hopes of establishing a genuine democracy did bring about a revival of sorts until the coming of the Iron Curtain, which dashed them all. Soviet control and incorporation in the 'socialist camp' walled Budapest and the rest of the country off from the World and the West. It was suffocating. Hungarians sought an outlet first in revolution, then, crushed, in reform and culture.



a | A modernist apartment block from the 1930s (II. Margit körút 15-17.)

b | Prefab estates – monuments to 'Socialist Planning' throughout the city



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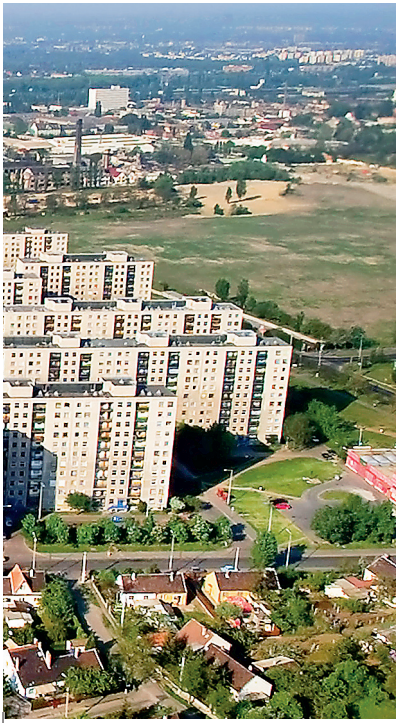
OLYMPIC PLANS IN BUDAPEST

Budapest has participated in the modern Olympic Movement from the outset. The city won the right to hold the Olympic Games of 1920, but this was postponed because of WWI, and eventually the right to host the games was transferred to Antwerp. Having fought on the losing side in the war, Hungary was banned from participation. The country has altogether 159 (160) Olympic gold, 143 (145) silver and 163 (164) bronze medals, which secures it the 8th place on the list of participating countries and the first among those countries which have never held the Olympic Games.



PREFABS

The indelible traces of the socialist regime are its buildings and housing estates, the likes of which can be seen all over Budapest, Hungary and Central-East Europe. They include the, so-called 'Stalinist baroque' edifices of Socialist Realism of the 1950s (XIV. Kerepesi út), but far more frequent are the endless rows of undistinguishable **prefab blocks**. In Budapest, these were mainly built in the outer districts (e.g. Kelenföld, Újpalota, Óbuda, Békásmegyer) between the 1960s and 1980s. They represent on a small scale just how controversially we assess the forty-year period of socialism. For many, moving into a prefab flat with central heating, a kitchen and a bathroom meant genuine progress compared to the lodgings or rural cottages with no amenities they had usually come from. For many, they are an aesthetic scar on the landscape and a social impasse. Inhabited by the less well-to-do, most of the prefab estates are now run-down. Some have been refurbished reasonably neatly.



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MEMENTO PARK

Memento Park (XXII; the corner of Balatoni út and Szabadkai utca) is a reminder of the four decades of state Socialism and Soviet occupation. It features 42 large-scale statues which stood in various public places between 1947 and 1988, but were removed after the collapse of Communism. Often monumental in size, they were meant to immortalize the heroes of the Communist movement and ideology. Several of them commemorated the struggles of the Soviet Army in Hungary, but also the Hungarian members of the International Brigades that had fought in Spain. Memento Park was opened officially on June 27th 1993, the second anniversary of the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Hungary. 17

a | Memento Park 17

b | Trabant and Wartburg (c) for tourists – relics of a Socialist past in Úri utca ('Lords Street', Castle District)

d | Lenin being removed









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As the regime became less harsh, Western contacts began to revive, eventually contributing to the collapse of Soviet-style Socialism. Budapest and its people, from dissident intellectuals to students and factory workers, took a leading role in dismantling the one-party system. With the transformation and the reinstatement of liberties, the city gradually began to shed the scars left by its troubled past. Perhaps desultorily, but certainly driven by a passionate desire to enrich and beautify, many of its quarters have been revived, restored to some of their former glory or gentrified in modern fashion. It is not a process without contradictions, just as linking up with a globalising world has its advantages and drawbacks. The most striking aspect of it, however, is the way the people of Budapest have gone out of their way to breathe life into their multicultural past, to re-generate the genuinely variegated culture it once had, and create new values.









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a | In a Budapest mosque

b | The Hungarian-Chinese Bilingual Primary School



MULTI-CULTURAL REVIVAL

Little did 'building socialism in the name of internationalism' favour a multicultural milieu. Communization meant doing way with or homogenising institutions that had previously promoted the many local traditions. Later, as the socialist regime began to mellow (partly out of fear of another 1956), the various traditions began to reawaken, and a veritable multicultural renaissance ensued after the political transition of 1989–90. The Minority Act of 1993 expressly provides for the cultural self-organisation and autonomy of ethnic communities, and, as a result, a number of minority self-governments have been established throughout the country, including Budapest.

While the traditional multi-cultural character of Budapest is reviving, the appearance of new ethnic communities also became noticeable around the turn of the millennium. The size of the Roma community began to grow in the 1970s, but the anomalies of post-communist transition steadily worsened their social position, and the quarters they inhabit are on the verge of becoming slums or ghettoes. At the same time, Budapest is experiencing considerable immigration. Besides temporary residents, such as expatriates and businessmen, long-term immigrants are also arriving in great numbers, most of them settling in Budapest. According to 2008 data, the number of foreigners living in Budapest exceeds 80 thousand, and their ratio within the population is around 5%. The variegated image is added further colour by

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MINORITY SELF-GOVERNMENTS

In 1993, the Hungarian Parliament passed a law which was the first attempt after the transition to regulate on a comprehensive basis the rights of ethnic minorities, granting them cultural autonomy. Recognising as indigenous 13 communities that have lived in the territory of the country for at least a century, the Act has served as the basis for a system of minority self-governments that pool these, often geographically scattered, ethnic communities, and who run their institutions of cultural and educational autonomy. Minority self-governments are elected by the members of the minority communities. The number of the minority self-governments is on the increase (throughout the country 817 such self-governments were set up between 1994 and 1998, 1,364 by 1998, 1,853 by 2002; 2,049 by 2006 and 2,315 by 2010). Budapest currently has 204 local minority self-governments in its 23 districts, and it is here that all ethnic communities, except Slovenians and Romanians, have the centres of their national self-governments. The individual communities are re-discovering their almost forgotten traditions and customs, reviving their foreign and parent-state contacts and creating new ones. Owing to the activities of these self-governments and other cultural organisations promoting old traditions, the assimilation of non-Hungarian communities seems to be slowing down.

According to the **Hungarian census** of 2001, there were 18,097 Germans, 14,019 Roma, 4,929 Slovaks, 3,410 Greeks, 2,637 Romanians, 2,055 Ukrainians, 1,851 Serbians, and 1,207 Bulgarians living as Hungarian citizens in Budapest. Only estimates being available, the number of Jewish people (Jewish by origin) is believed to be around one hundred thousand.

the Chinese community who came to Hungary in the 1980s and 1990s and the Vietnamese who arrived somewhat later, as well as groups from various Muslim countries. The Chinese community is estimated to be in the tens of thousands. They have several organisations and since 2004 have had a primary school with teaching in both Chinese and Hungarian (XV. Kavicsos köz 2-4). We have reason to believe that, enriching the city as it does, the multi-national versatility of Budapest will have much to offer in the future, too. As the 'historical' or 'traditional' cultures of Budapest are reborn before our eyes, so new communities may arise, contributing to and perhaps even superseding the old ones.



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GERMAN BUDAPEST

The Classical Spirit

Without its German inhabitants, the Hungarian capital would hardly be as we know it today. Already in the Middle Ages Germans played an important role in the life of both Buda and Pest – a phenomenon well known in a number of other Central and Eastern European towns. After the wars against the Turks, these early beginnings were reinforced by the Habsburg Empire and, from 1867, the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. The German-Austrian milieu served as a link between Western Europe and Hungary, and determined the development of the twin towns and their one city in countless ways.

In response to the renewal movement in Hungary in the early 19th century, a spontaneous assimilation process began among the various peoples of Buda, Pest and, Óbuda, particularly on the part of Germans. At the beginning of the 20th century this spread to the villages in the surrounding area. This assimilation process was perfectly voluntary – as is also shown by the fact that the German community has retained an awareness of its ethnic origin, and a large number of people still preserve their native traditions and culture today.

The signs of former German cultural influence exerted by people from Germany or Austria are ubiquitous throughout contemporary Budapest, and range from cuisine through architecture and townscape to the popularity of German as a foreign language. The German cultural and economic presence testifies to the fact that these contacts are not just features of a rich past, but are extremely vivid even today. Rich as Hungarian-German connections are, the following outline can offer no more than a taste of 'German Budapest.'

Hermina Chapel

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GERMAN MAYOR OF BUDA: FERENC HÁZMÁN

A characteristic example of the assimilation of Germans was Ferenc Házmán (1810–1894). Born of German stock in Buda, he assumed various public offices, and successfully did his utmost to Hungarianize (Magyarize) the German geographical names in Buda and introduce Hungarian as the official language in the city council. He then participated in the revolution, and went into exile refusing to swear allegiance to the Habsburgs. Allowed to return after the Compromise, he became the last and widely respected mayor of Buda, proposing unification of the two towns in 1873.



a | Matthias Church in the Castle District 7

b | Linzers

c | Szentháromság utca with Ruszwurm 18

A WALK IN OFEN

The German Church in the Castle District

The Hungarians and Germans in Buda (*Ofen* in German) had separate parish churches as early as the Middle Ages. Most of the inhabitants were Germans, and they used the Church of the Blessed Virgin (more commonly known today as **Matthias [Mátyás] Church**) 7, while the Hungarians went to the Church of Mary Magdalene. The latter was destroyed in WWII, its lonely steeple remaining in its place. The Matthias Church, originally Romanesque, later rebuilt in Gothic style, was swiftly converted into a mosque for Suleiman the Magnificent to give thanks to Allah for his victory in 1541. The Turks gone, it was rebuilt first in baroque style, then, late in the 19th century, in neo-Gothic style. It has been the scene of two coronation ceremonies; first, Franz Joseph was crowned King of Hungary here in the summer of 1867 – for which Franz Liszt, another noted Hungarian with a German background, his father being Hungarian and mother Austrian, but who certainly considered himself 'a faithful son of my Hungarian fatherland', wrote his 'Hungarian Coronation Mass'. Purportedly, the crowd gathered for the event gave him a much louder ovation than the newly crowned king. The other coronation was that of Charles IV, the last Habsburg Emperor and the last king of Hungary, in late 1916.

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Konditorei Ruszwurm

On the way home from church or, for that matter, the coronation, the burghers of Buda might easily have stopped for a cup of coffee and a cake at ***Ruszwurm*** 18 (I. Szentháromság utca 7), still in operation today. By the early 19th century, the excellent reputation of the German restaurateurs of Pest-Buda was a well-established fact not only in Hungary, but indeed even in the Western reaches of the Habsburg Empire. Couriers from Vienna came to fetch pastries from this most famous Buda confectionary, which bore the name first of *Schwabl*, then *Richter*, later *Müller*, and finally *Ruszwurm*, the shop being inherited on the female line.


b

Set up by Ferenc Schwabl in 1827, the café has welcomed its guests with an unchanged intimate ambiance ever since. In spite of two fierce sieges (1849 and 1944–45), it has miraculously retained its original furnishings, modelled on those at Dehmel's – the most famous Viennese café of the time. Müller invented a biscuit, and named it Linzer to honour one of his regulars, Rudolf Linzer, a veteran officer of the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848–49. Today, Linzers are a must in every Hungarian cake shop. Called *Ruszwurm* since 1884, the café was where Ida Ferenczy, the companion to Queen Consort Elisabeth ('Sisi'), used to buy breakfast for the queen whenever she was in Budapest. For more, visit the café's site: www.ruszwurm.hu


c



c

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a | Andrássy German University 19

b | The Thomas Mann Gymnasium

c | The Österreichische Schule

d | The German National Minority Primary School in Pestszentlőrinc

e | The Church of Our Lady of the Snows ('St Mary Major', I. Mészáros utca 1), with the memorial plaque to Széchenyi on the side of the building. This is where 'the greatest Hungarian', István Széchenyi, had his wedding in 1836, and 'the saviour of mothers', Ignác Semmelweis, in 1857. 20

STUDYING IN BUDAPEST IN GERMAN

The ***Andrássy Universität*** Budapest 19 (named after the Hungarian Count Gyula Andrássy, the first foreign minister of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy) was opened in 2002 in the Festetich Palace (VIII. Pollack Mihály tér 3), just behind the National Museum. Sponsored by the governments of Hungary, Austria, Bavaria, and Baden-Württemberg, it is the only university outside the German-speaking world where instruction is offered in German, providing courses in a number of disciplines including Central European Studies. Students mostly come from Central European and German-speaking countries.

Education in German is also available in Budapest at lower levels, e.g. the ***Deutsche Schule – Thomas Mann Gymnasium***, an endowment primary and secondary school (XII. Cinege út 8/c), the Austrian endowment ***Österreichische Schule*** (XII. Orbánhegyi út 39–45) and the ***German National Minority Primary School in Pestszentlőrinc*** run by the local government, dubbed by locals 'the Red School' after its colour.









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A Walk in *Christinenstadt*

Up in the Castle District, having taken our fill of the exquisite views from the Fishermen's Bastion and the imposing sight of the royal palace, we can take a no less spectacular walk on the Western side of the castle. A few blocks down from *Ruszwurm*, Tóth Árpád sétány (promenade) provides a wonderful view of the Buda hills and **Krisztinaváros**, or ***Christinenstadt*** in German, the quarter at the foot of Castle Hill. The original medieval village, Logod, having been destroyed during the wars with the Ottomans, this part of the town began to emerge in the last third of the 18th century. Its ploughed fields and vineyards were marked out for urban development during the national repopulation movement carried out under Maria Theresa (1740–1780). The new quarter was named after Maria Theresa's daughter Archduchess Maria Christina. After the move of government offices from Pozsony to Buda in the late 18th century, the development of the quarter grew more dynamic. The slope at the bottom of Castle Hill was divided into plots which came to be inhabited by a number of government officials and clerks, most of them German, which is why the quarter came to be thought of as an 'officials' estate'.

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a

Krisztinaváros had another boom in the mid-19th century – this was when the main traffic routes of the district, Krisztina körút and Attila út, were built just beneath the Castle. The Tunnel which runs under Castle Hill was also constructed in these years, bringing Pest, previously so hard to access, closer. During the time of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the majority of the population consisted of artisans and office clerks of German origin. Later, however, the rate of Germans dropped significantly, which was due to Hungarians from the countryside flocking into the developing city and the on-going process of the assimilation of the German population.

GERMAN THEATRE IN PEST-BUDA

The spontaneous process of the German population of Buda and Pest gradually becoming Hungarian is exemplified most clearly by the gradual decline of theatre in German. Today we can only see vestiges of a once-lively German theatrical life, even though German companies played a decisive role in the emergence of drama in Hungary, and the oldest indoor theatres of the country were built as a result of German initiative.

The first German troupes of actors appeared in Pest and Buda in the 18th century. During the reign of Joseph II (1780–90), the activity of German theatrical companies made unexpected advances, which was partly related to the fact that the monarch moved important government offices from Pozsony (Pressburg, present-day Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia) to Buda, bringing along great numbers of officials and intellectuals. By the beginning of the 19th century, plays performed in German were available to Buda audiences all the year round.

In 1774, the southern circular bastion of the city wall of Pest, called the Rondella, was converted to offer a permanent home for plays in German, while the former Carmelite Monastery

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became the home of the Castle Theatre of Buda in 1787. Built in 1812, the German Theatre of Pest, with its 3500 seats, was the largest theatre in Central Europe at the time, performing works by e.g. Mozart, Schiller and Shakespeare in German. A fire destroyed the building in 1847. The company resumed its performances, but could not continue after 1889. Meanwhile, the **Castle Theatre (Várszínház)** 21 (I. Színház utca 1–3), which had been the cradle of German theatre in Buda a century earlier, and where even Beethoven had given a concert, was finally given over to Hungarian-language theatre (currently it houses the Hungarian State Dance Theatre).

German theatre thus ceased to be available on a regular basis; only visiting Western European companies performed in German from time to time. Later the political set-up after WWII did not allow any visiting performances – except for the Berlin *Komische Oper* once and the Berliner Ensemble twice. A change of heart was heralded only in 1985, when *Deutsche Bühne* (German Stage), a solely German-language company, was established in Szekszárd, a town in southern Hungary. It has often performed in Budapest, usually at the Thália Színház (VI. Nagymező utca 22–24). In March 1998, the Deutsches Theater Budapest was founded with the declared intention of reviving the centuries-old tradition of German acting in Pest-Buda in a way that follows developments in modern theatrical art. Funded by the embassies of Austria and Germany and various companies in Budapest, it plays to audiences consisting of German expats and lovers of the language. With no permanent home of its own, its performances have been housed by the Várszínház and the Studio Theatre of the Pesti Vigadó.

a | Krisztinaváros – Christinenstadt

b | The Castle Theatre 21



b

PRESERVING GERMAN TRADITIONS: THE POTATO WAKE AND SWABIAN BALLS

Local parish festivals used to play a central role in the community life of the inhabitants of Budapest. This was no different among ethnic German (Swabian) citizens. On the Buda side, the church festivals were given names which alluded to the ripening or harvest of various fruits or cereals. Most of these customs died out during the 20th century, except for the Potato Wake *(Krumpiern-Kiritog)*. The wake has Christian roots as it is celebrated on 26th December, the second day of Christmas, the day of the first Christian martyr, St Stephen, and the potatoes symbolize the stones with which he was killed. However, after 1839, it was celebrated by Germans of the city also to commemorate the great flood which had devastated Pest and Buda in 1838. People living in low-lying areas had taken refuge in the Buda hills where local Swabian farmers offered them baked potatoes and goose lard. The following year the former fugitives met again during the Potato Wake in the taverns of Országút ('Main Highway', now: II. Margit körút) in the Víziváros ('Watertown') quarter. Families would march from one eatery to another wearing potatoes dangling from their buttonholes on national tricolour ribbons, singing and making merry in German and Hungarian. On these occasions, all taverns offered baked potatoes and goose lard free of charge. After WWII, this German tradition of Buda was revived in 1958, the Christian overtones naturally downplayed, and since that time the Buda Potato Wake has been celebrated every year. Since the 1960s, the event has attracted some three or four thousand visitors each year. A new el-





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ement is the election of a Potato King – the title being awarded to the person who has done most for the community in the previous year in the judgment of the wake participants. Recently, he has been given a 'Potato Queen.'

For those interested in German traditions, Swabian balls are regularly organised either by local minority self-governments (e.g. the German Minority Self-government of Ferencváros) or by German cultural associations (e.g. the Free Cultural Association of Swabians in Csepel), but the Budapest Swabian Ball organised by the German Cultural Union is also a tradition.

a | *Schwabenball* in Budapest, 2010 (*Deutscher Kulturverein*)

b | Statue of Semmelweis facing St Roche's Hospital 22

THE PEST MEDICAL SCHOOL

Doctors who had come to Budapest from Vienna greatly contributed to the development of Hungarian medicine and the health service. Owing much to them, a Pest Medical School evolved, raising Hungarian medicine to the highest standards. One of its members, Ignác Semmelweis, often referred to as the 'saviour of mothers', had also studied at the Vienna Medical Faculty, where he had demonstrated the importance of disinfection. Returning to Hungary, he became senior doctor at **St Roche's Hospital (Szt. Rókus Kórház)** 22 (VIII. Gyulai Pál utca 2), and was later appointed professor of obstetrics and gynaecology at Budapest University.
In 1969, on the occasion of the 200th anniversary of its establishment, the Medical Faculty in Budapest adopted the name of Ignác Semmelweis. After the 1970s, the number of foreign students began to increase solidly. Since 1983, the university has been offering medical training in German, and in English since 1989. In the late 1990s, one-third of the university's 4,000 students were foreigners. Currently, nearly 500 of them do their studies in German.



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A WALK IN GERMAN PEST

The Neoclassical Legacy

The architectural heritage of Budapest, the Pest side in particular, has been determined to this day by the work of József Hild (1789–1867), a Hungarian architect of German stock.

Indeed the well-proportioned appearance of Pest in the Reform Age (the second quarter of the 19th century) is largely owing to this highly versatile master of Hungarian Neoclassicism. The private residential palaces he built combine the characteristics of urban middle-class residential blocks and country mansions. He designed over 800 buildings for Pest, most of which were actually built (many after the devastating floods of 1838), though, sadly, only about a hundred have survived. One of his landmark buildings is the **former Maria Theresa Barracks (Kilián Barracks)** 23 on the corner of IX. Üllői út and Ferenc körút, which later became both a central point and symbol of the 1956 Revolution.

Among other places of entertainment, Hild built the former **Hotel Tigris** on the corner of present day Nádor utca and Mérleg utca (District V). He also made the designs for the 1841 reconstruction of the **Császár fürdő (Emperor's Spa)** public baths, a popular watering place to our day. He had an important role in shaping the religious places of Pest; among others, he designed **Hermina Chapel** just off **City Park** 24 **(Városliget**; XIV Hermina út 23), and the façade



a | Hild's Maria Theresa Barracks (later Kilián Barracks, the headquarters of the revolutionary National Guard in 1956) 23

b | Former Hotel Tigris

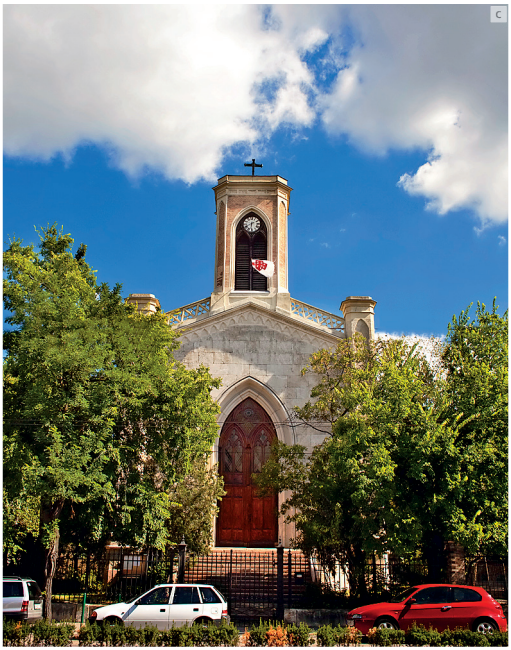
c | Hermina Chapel 24











of the **Lutheran Church** in the very heart of the city (V. Deák tér 4). He made a whole series of plans for **St Stephen's Basilica** (V. Szent István tér). Besides public buildings, apartment blocks built by him are also a common feature in Budapest, such as the **Gross House** 25 (V. József nádor tér 1), the **Károlyi-Trattner House** (V. Petőfi Sándor utca 3), the **Derra House** and the **Marczibányi House** (both in V. Október 6. utca). Neoclassical residential blocks by him may also be found in the narrow streets of Erzsébetváros and Terézváros.

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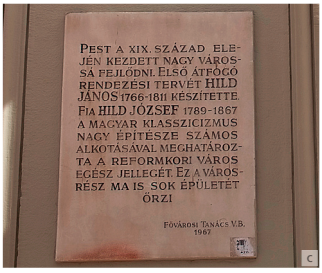
His name is preserved as **Hild tér** in the inner city (District V), while a plaque commemorates both his and his father János's work. (V. Október 6. utca 1). If the Neoclassicist heritage of Budapest is spoken about, the Vienna-born Mihály Pollack must also be mentioned, to whom we owe some of the finest and most symbolically laden buildings in the city – the **Sándor Palace** in Buda Castle (I. Szent György tér 1), formerly the Office of the Prime Minister (1867–1945) and now the Office of the President, as well as the **National Museum** 3 (VIII. Múzeum körút 14), one of the central sites of the 1848 Revolution.



b



c

A GERMAN ENGINEER IN BUDAPEST – ANDRÁS MECHWART

The rapid development of Hungary attracted a great number of craftsmen and professionals from Germany in the 19th century, as well. Their often outstanding achievements are preserved in the memories of both the city and the nation.

One of their number is András Mechwart (b. 1834, Schweinfurt), who arrived in Pest as a graduate engineer. After the death of Ábrahám Ganz, who himself had come from Switzerland to found his smithy, Mechwart took over management of the little Ganz firm, and developed it to being one of largest companies in the country and with world fame. As an inventor and developer, he introduced new roller mills, with which he founded the golden age of Hungarian industrial milling (Budapest would be the second largest milling centre in the world after Chicago by the end of the 19th century). He also started the world-class electrotechnical plant of Ganz. Generations of outstanding engineers grew up under his hand (e.g. the Serbian Nikola Tesla). András Mechwart died in Budapest in 1907. Apart from the many schools around the country bearing his name, Budapest commemorates him with a square with his bust in it (II. **Mechwart Liget [Mechwart Grove]**).



b

a | The Derra House

b | The Gross House

c | Memorial plaque to Hild János and József

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a | The Goethe-Institut in Budapest 26

b | Ferencváros – Franzstadt

A WALK IN FRANZSTADT…

Today's **Ferencváros**, a quarter which lies on the Danube bank and borders the inner city of Pest from the South, was named after King Franz [Francis] I of Hungary (1792–1835) in 1792. It benefited greatly from the industrialisation of Pest. During the 19th century, a number of factories, industrial companies, slaughterhouses, and mills were built here, and the district is also the home of the Great Market Hall, one of the finest examples of the Hungarian Neo-gothic-historicist style. After Franz Joseph Bridge (today's Szabadság híd [Liberty Bridge]) was opened, the inner part of this district became much invigorated. Previously populated mostly by Germans, *Franzstadt* now grew increasingly Hungarian, and lost much of its multi-cultural traditions by the 1920s.

One of the most notable features in the district is its sports club. Founded by local Germans in the grand hall of the Gutgesel Restaurant in Üllői út in 1899, Ferencvárosi Torna Club (FTC, Ferencváros Sports Club) is still an important source of the district's reputation (in spite of problems with hooliganism). The

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team, also called the green-and-whites after the colours of their shirts, has been the most successful and also probably the all-time most popular football team in Hungary. The club is usually referred to as FTC, Ferencváros or Fradi – the latter being a shortened vernacular version of the German Franzstadt.

It was a notable aspect of the post-transformation rediscovery of the district's German past that in 2006 the **Goethe-Institut** 26, operating in Budapest since 1988, moved to one of the most characteristic Ferencváros streets, Ráday (IX. Ráday utca 58) – one that has gained considerable reputation through its rows of restaurants, cafés, bookshops, and galleries.

GERMAN JOURNALISM IN PEST

The *Pester Lloyd*
Founded in 1854, the Pester Lloyd was for 90 years the most significant German-language daily published in Hungary. Though an influential liberal organ for many years with Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, and Joseph Roth among its authors, WWII did not spare it, and it was wound up in April 1945. In 1994, it was re-launched as a weekly, offering reports of political, economic and cultural events in Hungary and Central and Eastern Europe. In 2009, it went completely on-line.

The *Neue Zeitung*
Published by the National Minority Self-government of Germans in Hungary, it is a public-service weekly reporting on the important events and the everyday life of the German community in Hungary.



RELIGION AND THE GERMANS IN BUDAPEST

Most Germans who came to Hungary during the repopulation movement of the 18th century were Roman Catholic. In the second half of the 19th century, however, a great number of Protestant craftsmen and businessmen also settled in rapidly developing Buda and Pest. They first established a German-speaking congregation within the Reformed Church parish of Kálvin tér in Pest in 1859. By the end of the century they managed to build their own church on a plot donated by the municipality on the corner of Hold utca and Alkotmány utca, not far from the Parliament **(V. Hold utca 18–20)** 27.





b

Right next to the romantic, neo-Romanesque church, they also built two apartment blocks – the revenue from the rent paid by tenants served to maintain a hospital and the congregation. Many of the congregation members (e.g. Ábrahám Ganz) had Swiss roots, while the pastors usually came from Germany.

During WWII, members of the congregation were involved in rescuing persecuted Jews in co-operation with the renowned Swiss consul Carl Lutz. In the meantime, the pastor's home was hit by a bomb, and occupying Russian soldiers used the building as a stable. After 1960, the church was turned into a television props warehouse. Nevertheless, services continued to be held in the congregation room, a dissident Hungarian minister preaching freely in German. From government funds, the church was fully renovated after the 1989 transformation. Sunday services in German are attended by 30–50 people, while the bilingual services held every other week in both German and Hungarian are attended by 50–80 adults and 10–20 children. The church also houses important cultural and political conferences and seminars.

Another important German Protestant institution is the **Lutheran Church of Buda Castle** on 'Vienna Gate Square' 28 (I. Bécsi kapu tér). The neighbouring building is the home of the German Speaking Lutheran Congregation of Budapest.

Today, mass is celebrated in German in the **Church of the Stigmata of Saint Francis** (I. Fő utca 41–43), as well as in the **Church of Our Lady** in Soroksár on Easter Sunday, Whit Sunday, the Feast of the Assumption and at Christmas.

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THE HOUSE OF GERMANS IN HUNGARY

The **House of Germans in Hungary *(Ungarndeutsches Kultur- und Informationszentrum, Haus der Ungarndeutschen***, 29 VI. Lendvay utca 22) is the cultural institution of Hungary's German minority under the auspices of the local self-government of Germans in Hungary. Its centre was rebuilt in 2001 with financial resources of the German Federal Ministry of the Interior and is located in the Diplomacy Quarter near Heroes' Square 9 in Budapest. Since that time it has been the centre for the most active German-Hungarian organisations such as the editorial office of *Neue Zeitung*, the Association for German Schools in Hungary (Magyarországi Német Iskolaegyletek Szövetsége, BUSch), a youth association (Union of Germans in Hungary, GJU), the *Jakob-Bleyer-Gemeinschaft* whose objective is mainly the maintenance of the German language as lingua franca amongst the Germans, as well as the German-Hungarian Centre for Culture and Information *(Zentrum)* with its library and the national association for dance ensembles, choirs and traditional choral groups *(Landesrat der ungarndeutschen Chöre, Kapellen und Tanzgruppen)*. Multifunctional, it has many offices, but also a guestroom, a restaurant and a function room, mostly used for the regular cultural events of the German-Hungarian associations.
All of this together is responsible for the cultural profile of the House of Germans in Hungary. There is a wide range of German-speaking events that take place approximately twice a month, such as lectures, book launches, children's events, exhibition openings or wine tastings. All events are closely connected to the living culture of the German minority in Budapest and Hungary, and the House of Germans in Hungary tries to connect these traditions and values with the complex history of Germans in Hungarian history and link all of this with the development of contemporary society.

a | Lutheran Church of Buda Castle

b | The German-language Reformed Church in Hold utca

c | The *Haus der Ungarndeutschen* 29



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GERMAN FLAVOURS IN BUDAPEST

Needless to say, the German aspects of Budapest must include German gastronomy. Although **Dreher beer** is now seen as an 'echte' (genuine) Hungarian brand, the family who developed the brewery to become world famous were of Austrian origin. Antal Dreher Sr. bought a brewery in Kőbánya in the 1860s, and his efforts were continued by his son Antal Jr. However, their dynamically growing company, well on the way to becoming a market leader, was nationalised after WWII, and could only re-acquire the name Dreher after privatisation. It is now owned by the South African SABMiller Group. (X. Jászberényi út 7–11). Anyone interested in German food can visit the **Kolbászda Bavarian Beer Bar and Restaurant** (I. Gyorskocsi utca 6I) or the **Kaltenberg Restaurant and Brewery** in Pest (IX. Kinizsi utca 30–36).



The palmy-days-of-peace atmosphere of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy is evoked by a whole chain of restaurants called ***Wiener Schnitzel*** **(Bécsiszelet)** – this being one of the 'staple' dishes in today's Hungary (VIII Üllői út 16/a; VII. István utca 8; VII. Király utca 69; II. Margit körút 6).



GERMANS IN THE SUBURBIA

Budafok and the Culture of Champagne

The southernmost section of the Buda side of the city, **Budafok *(Promontor)***, has been a part of Budapest since 1950. It experienced a great boom in the mid-19th century. The Törley family, which had originally come from Szabadka (Subotica, now in Serbia) played a major role in this development. The family name was originally Schmierl, but Valentin Schmierl, fighting in the 1848–49 War of Independence, changed it to Bálint Törley. His son József set up the champagne factory in Promontor. It soon grew into one of the best known producers in the Monarchy. After the turn of the century, the Törley family built their magnificent palace in a style reminiscent of French medieval castles. Taken over by the Communists after the war, it now houses the Institute of Radiobiology (XXII. Anna utca 5).

a | Kolbászda Bavarian Beer Bar and Restaurant

b | *Wiener Schnitzel*

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Up to a third of Germans who lived in this area were traditionally wine producers at the turn of the 20th century. However, industrialisation, urbanisation and immigration gradually transformed the ethnic composition of this township, too. The increasing predominance of Hungarians was indicated by the fact that its Latin name, *Promontor,* was replaced with the Hungarian name Budafok at the end of the 19th century. After WWII, most of the Germans were deported; however, German national traditions are beginning to revive again today. The Society for German Schools and Nursery Schools operates under the auspices of the local minority self-government and organises events which recall old traditions, thus promoting the survival of the German heritage.



a

The Youngest District – Soroksár

District XXIII of Budapest, Soroksár, ceded from District XX in 1994, its area being identical with that of the old village of Soroksár which was annexed to Budapest in 1950. Destroyed during the Turkish era, former **Soroksár *(Schorokschar)*** came to be re-populated in the 18th century, when Antal Grassalkovich, landlord of the area, invited Swabian farmers and artisans to settle there. As a result, most of the population were German speakers at the end of the 18th century. Even a century later, the place still retained its German character – at the time of the census of 1890, 60% of its population of 12,000 claimed to be German, but by 1910 they had come to be in a minority.

After WWII, under the pretext of 'collective guilt', over 5,000 Soroksár Swabians were herded into cattle wagons and deported to Germany. They found a new



b

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home in various South German towns and villages. It was only in the late 1960s that they first returned to visit their original home. It should be noted that, as well as deported Germans visiting their former homes, it was in Budapest and particularly at Lake Balaton that East and West German families and friends separated by the Iron Curtain could meet. As the regime thawed and later collapsed, contacts gradually revived, and cultural ensembles, dance groups and choirs, NGOs, church congregations, and educational institutions found twin institutions in Germany. In 1996, the local German minority self-government of Soroksár placed a memorial plaque on the wall of the railway station to remind us all of the deportations which had taken place 50 years earlier.

GERMANS ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF BUDAPEST

Towns and villages around Budapest, particularly in the Pilis Hills, came to have a predominantly German population after Germans had been invited to settle there in great numbers in the 18th century. These places retained their German character right until the middle of the 20th century. After the second half of the 19th century, the structure of the population became significantly transformed due to the industrialisation of Budapest, the expansion of the city agglomeration, the increasing predominance of a Hungarian nationality, and the deportation of Germans after WWII. Even though today no town or village has a German majority in this area, Swabian presence is obviously felt.

The centre of Germans in the region today is **Pilisvörösvár *(Werischwar)*** – this is where we find the only technical school and grammar school where teaching is in the German, the very prestigious Friedrich Schiller Gymnasium and Technical School offering board and lodging, too *(Friedrich-Schiller-Gymnasium, Berufliches Gymnasium und Schülerwohnheim)*. The population of Pilisvörösvár is 12,000, of whom 17%, i.e. 2,200 people are ethnic Germans. According to the last census in 2001, the rate of the German minority was around 10% also at Solymár and at Visegrád.

a | The Törley Mansion

b | A street in Soroksár

c | Plaque commemorating the deportation of the Germans of Soroksár



German education, cultural life and civic initiatives abound in this region. Apart from ethnic centres such as Pilisvörösvár, Solymár and Visegrád, many towns and villages, Pilisborosjenő, Pomáz, Budaörs, Budakeszi Perbál, Zsámbék, Budajenő, Biatorbágy, Budakalász, Pilisszentiván, Piliscsaba, Érd, as well as Pest-side Vecsés and Dunaharaszti, have schools and kindergartens offering German-language tuition. A number of them have local societies for preserving and promoting traditions of Germans in the Buda area.

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a

HABSBURG BUDAPEST

Originating in Switzerland, the **Habsburgs** grew into one of the greatest dynasties in Europe, and had a dominant role in Hungarian history. Their image in the Hungarian consciousness is rather controversial – defined as much by a number of 'national' freedom fights the Hungarians fought against the dynasty as by the integration of modern Hungary in the Western European cultural sphere.

It was in the 15th century that the Habsburgs first managed to be crowned with the traditional crown of St Stephen. The dynasty, however, had to wait until the battle of Mohács in **1526,** the death of the heirless Louis II, to be successful pretenders to the crown, though they could only take possession of the western and northern belt of the country, the central part being occupied by the Ottomans and the eastern parts being ruled by national, Transylvanian princes. After finally ousting the Turks and defeating a Hungarian uprising against them, the Habsburgs gained control over the entire country, ruling it until **1918,** when they were deposed by the revolution at the end of WWI and the dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Several descendants of the House of Habsburg remained in Hungary until 1945. The son of the last Habsburg king Charles IV and 'heir to the throne', Otto, became a noted pan-European politician, later supporting Hungary's full integration into the European Union. His son, György, moved to Hungary and took citizenship in 1993, was appointed Ambassador at Large, and now heads the Hungarian Red Cross, and has even became involved in domestic politics.

There was even a 'Hungarian branch' of the Habsburgs, founded by **Palatine Joseph** (1776–1847). Establishing institutions, claiming the extension of rights and making major donations, he took a leading role in Hun-

a

gary's economic and cultural revival in the first half of 1800s. Through the City Embellishment Committee he founded, he was instrumental in the urban development of Pest and in coordinating the work of Hild and Pollack. The park on Margaret Island was also his achievement. The 'most Hungarian of Habsburgs' is commemorated by a statue in the square named after him 30 (V. József nádor tér). His descendants continue to maintain good relations with Hungary.

It was under the Habsburgs that the medieval royal palace of Buda, which had perished during the Turkish wars, was re-built in the 18th century. Various parts of Budapest were named after their members – e.g. Józsefváros and József körút after Joseph II; Erzsébetváros and Erzsébet körút after Queen Elisabeth (Erzsébet), etc. Originally, the Millennium Memorial on Heroes' Square (XIV. Hősök tere) had statues of Ferdinand I, Charles III, Maria Theresa, Leopold II, and Franz Joseph. These were removed by the Commune in 1919, returned in the inter-war period, and finally replaced, in the 1950s, by statues of leaders of Hungarian uprisings.

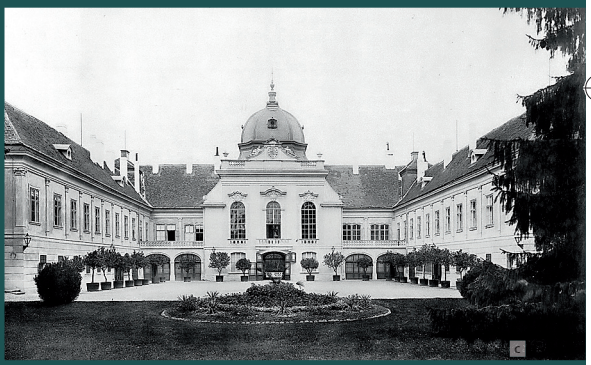

b

The Habsburg past of the country is commemorated by numerous events and institutions. Patronized by Archduke Michael Habsburg-Lorraine, the *Choralis Constantinus* concert series held in Budapest churches between 2008 and 2011 revived the Habsburg court music of the 15–16th centuries with the participation of Hungarian, Polish, Dutch, Austrian, Czech, and Slovak choirs. The Habsburg Royal Ball Room puts on various festive events. Its 18th-century building was once owned by the Poor Clares, and housed sessions of the Hungarian Diet a couple of times (I. Országház utca 28). The history of the Habsburgs in the Central European context is studied and presented by the **Institute of Habsburg History** founded in 2003 (V. Báthory utca 20).

a | Statue of Palatine Joseph 30

b | The Institute of Habsburg History

c | The Grassalkovich Palace at Gödöllő. (BFL XI. 916 13/009 Klösz-gyűjtemény) 159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The Grassalkovich Palace at Gödöllő. 159

The male branch of the Grassalkovich family dying out, Gödöllő Palace was acquired for the royalty, and became a favourite with the Queen Consort Elisabeth ('Sisi'). In the inter-war period, it was a residence of Regent Miklós Horthy. Used by Soviet troops and as a home for the elderly after WWII, it became abominably dilapidated. Soviet troops withdrawing, it has now been restored to its former glory. Gorgeous and redolent of historical meaning, it provides an excellent venue for the **Hungarian Presidency of the EU Council**.

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JEWISH BUDAPEST

An Atlantis and its Re-emergence

The lure of Budapest owes a great deal to its Jewish inhabitants. Indeed, the city as we know and love it cannot be imagined without the multitude of ways in which Jews have contributed to it – a fact tragically and shamefully questioned in the period of the Holocaust. The medieval predecessors of the city, **Buda, Óbuda** and **Pest,** had already had sizeable Jewish communities, but these were swept away by the storms of the wars against the Turks. Later, Jews gradually returned, but were subject to various constraints which were lifted only step by step in the ensuing period. In the wake of reforms by the enlightened Emperor Joseph II, Jewish traders and artisans, formerly restricted to living in Óbuda, began to settle in Pest, too. First they were only allowed to live outside the city walls (e. g. VI. Király utca), where they added to the already existing mix of Greeks, Armenians and Macedono-Romanians. From here they gradually drew closer to the inner city, the centre of trade and business life, populating the outer reaches of Király utca and the neighbouring streets.

The Neologue Synagogue in Dohány utca 33

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A veritable Jewish quarter developed in what was to become **Erzsébetváros** (District VII) and **Terézváros** (District VI). The 26-thousand-strong Jewish population in 1869 meant that every third inhabitant of these two districts was Jewish. By the early 20th century, there were approximately 120,000 Jews living in Terézváros and Erzsébetváros, around two-thirds of Budapest's total Jewish population (200,000 in 1910). Poorer Jews, mostly newcomers from the countryside, tended to settle in these two districts, while upper-middle-class Jews moved in a solid flux to the more elegant quarters of the VI. Andrássy út area and **Lipótváros** (District V). At the same time, the areas neighbouring the traditional Jewish quarter, outer Erzsébetváros, **Józsefváros** (District VIII – a target area for newcomers from the countryside) and **Ferencváros** (District IX) began to have significant Jewish communities. In the 1930s, an increasing number of Jewish middle-class families settled in the villa quarters of Buda, but a new Jewish quarter was also emerging in rapidly developing, modern **Újlipótváros** (District XIII). So attractive was this Bauhaus style district to Jewish people that they accounted for over one-third of its population by the 1940s – well above their rate in districts regarded traditionally Jewish. After WWII, the Jewish population of Budapest continued to move in divergent directions – poorer families to the new housing estates, while the more well-to-do favoured the green belts of Buda.

GHETTOES, 1944-45

After the German occupation of Hungary in March and the Arrow Cross putsch in October 1944, the Hungarian Nazi authorities set up ghettoes. One was the co-called **'Little Ghetto'** or **'International Ghetto'** consisting of 'protected houses' under the auspices of neutral countries (mainly Switzerland and Sweden), the Vatican and the International Red Cross in the Újlipótváros area (District XIII). People with a foreign pass were meant to have found refuge there. Despite the protection, the Arrow Cross regularly committed bloody assaults against them. The other one was the **'Great Ghetto'** set up in the historical Jewish quarter. The area surrounded by Dohány utca, Kertész utca, Király utca, Madách tér, and Károly körút (District VII) was fenced off on 10 December. More than 70,000 people were crowded into 4,500 homes, with sometimes as many as 14 people living in a room. The ghetto was to experience terrible weeks; famine, disease, Arrow Cross raids, and the horrors of the siege of Budapest together demanded thousands of lives. Soviet troops finally liberated the two ghettoes in the middle of January 1945.

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Except for the brief but all the more tragic interval of the Second World War, Pest had never had a ghetto in the sense other European cities had, i.e. an area surrounded by walls and subject to other restrictions. It is, however, justified to talk of a 'Jewish quarter' in the case of Inner Erzsébetváros. This is true even if, at first sight, the residential blocks once or still in Jewish ownership hardly differ from other blocks of flats, if at all. These buildings were designed by noted architects of the period in the fashionable style of the age, and fitted organically into the overall style of the city. The same was true of the majority of middle-class Jews, who gradually assimilated into the Hungarian society of the time. Merging into the environment is even more characteristic of the parts of the city where the Jewish population was particularly numerous (e.g. Lipótváros, the Andrássy út area and Újlipótváros) or around the various places of worship scattered all over Budapest – many of them practically unnoticeable to the uninitiated, as they are hidden in courtyards or are flats in ordinary houses. Yet, Inner Erzsébetváros owes its 'Jewish' character mostly to its large synagogues, the Jewish institutions and the 'infrastructure' required for a Jewish lifestyle: kosher restaurants, bakeries, butcheries



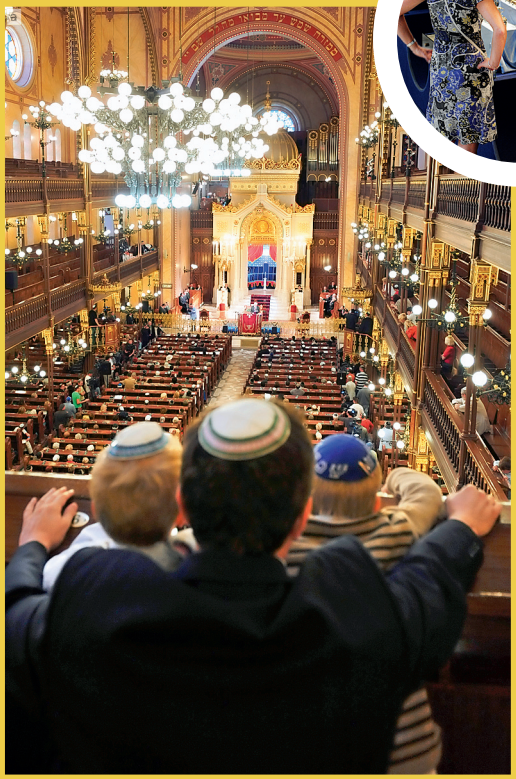
a | At the wall of the 'Great Ghetto'



and confectioneries, wig-makers, and *mikveh* (ritual baths). What makes this part of metropolitan Budapest quite unique is that many of these places continue to be vibrant with life and used on a day-to-day basis by the Hungarian Jewish community – unlike many European cities where they have sadly become a kind of scenery or museum display. Of course, the distressing mementoes of an older Jewish life are not lacking in Budapest either; plaques, sculptures and 'stumbling blocks' sunk into pavements invoke the tragedies of the Holocaust all over the city, but most frequently in the traditional Jewish quarter and the former ghetto.







THE JEWISH TRIANGLE

The part of the city which is often called the Jewish quarter and which stretches roughly from Károly körút to Klauzál tér and from Király utca to Dohány utca is quite different from neighbouring areas, and resembles the historical centre of Pest stretching from the Small Ring Road (Kiskörút) to the Danube. Its narrow streets are far more irregular than is common for Pest, and the blocks of varied styles that flank it are often no taller than one or two stories. The three synagogues in Dohány utca, Rumbach Sebestyén utca and Kazinczy utca mark out the heart of the Budapest Jewish quarter, resulting in an imaginary formation aptly termed 'the Jewish triangle' by Hungarian historian Géza Komoróczy in the book *Jewish Budapest*.

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ORTHODOX, NEOLOGUE AND STATUSQUO

Uniquely in all Europe, the followers of the Jewish faith in Hungary split into three different organizations after the **General Jewish Congress of 1868-69**. The Congress called for reform and modernisation along 'Neologue' lines, which the Orthodox wanting to hold on to the old traditions rejected, and seceded from the Congress. A third group would follow neither tendency, wanting to retain the conditions before the Congress. They came to be known as 'Status quo ante' or 'Statusquo'.

With its oriental, Moorish style, the most conspicuous and largest among them is the **Neologue Synagogue in Dohány utca** 33 (VII. Dohány utca 2). This is the main place of worship for Hungarian Jews. The building seats three thousand, and is the largest synagogue in Europe (second only to Emanu-El in New York in a worldwide comparison). Its famous organ was played by the likes of Saint-Saëns and Franz Liszt, and it is an important venue for the Jewish Summer Festival every year. Akin to the synagogue in style, the wing attached to it houses the Hungarian Jewish Museum – few know that the house that used to stand in its place was where Theodor (Tivadar) Herzl, the father of Zionism, was born.

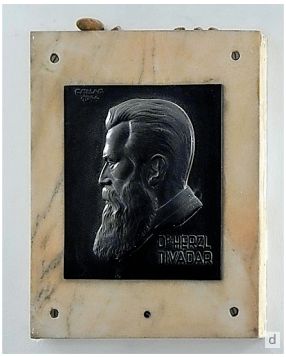
Behind the museum on the Wesselényi utca side, a line of arcades and a new synagogue were built. **Heroes' Temple** honours the Jewish soldiers who died in WWI. In the small square just outside the temple, a silver coloured weeping willow, erected in 1991, commemorates

a | The Neologue Synagogue in Dohány utca 33

b | The Jewish Museum

c | Heroes' Temple

d | Memorial plaque to Theodor Herzl



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c

the hundreds of thousands of Holocaust victims, with a different name engraved onto each of its nearly thirty thousand leaves. The arcaded **Court of Heroes** is a similar place of commemoration, being the graveyard of the victims of the last few months of the war. This was where one of the gates of the Great Ghetto stood during the war; a plaque commemorates its liberation. The Wesselényi utca façade of the neighbouring **Jewish cultural centre, Goldmark Hall,** has relief decorations complete with the symbols of the twelve tribes of Israel (VII. Wesselényi utca 7).

If we walk round the neighbouring block, we get to Síp utca, and find the 19th-century building housing the headquarters of **Budapest Jewish Community** and the **Alliance of Jewish Communities in Hungary (MAZSIHISZ)** at no. 12. As a general representative of Hungarian Jewry, the Alliance has an active role in the country's public, religious and cultural life. The Síp utca building is home to the offices of the rabbis and trustees of the community, the Chevra Kadisha (charity and funeral society), and a number of other associations.



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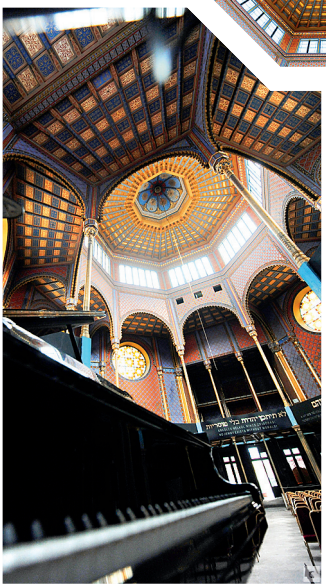



Only two blocks away from Síp utca, in narrow Rumbach Sebestyén utca, we find the **Statusquo Synagogue**, built likewise in a Moorish, oriental style between 1870 and 1872 34 (VII. Rumbach Sebestyén utca 11-13). The synagogue itself is behind the ornate, twin-turreted street front – an apartment block in fact, which used to house the rabbis' homes and several schools. After WWII, the synagogue could only function until 1959. Abandoned, it became dilapidated, and eventually the community sold it. Though partially restored and returned to the ownership of the community, its future remains uncertain. According to plans, when fully restored, the building will house, besides a place of worship, a museum and a restaurant.

a | Holocaust Memorial (by sculptor Imre Varga)

b | The Court of Heroes

c | The Statusquo Synagogue in Rumbach Sebestyén utca 34

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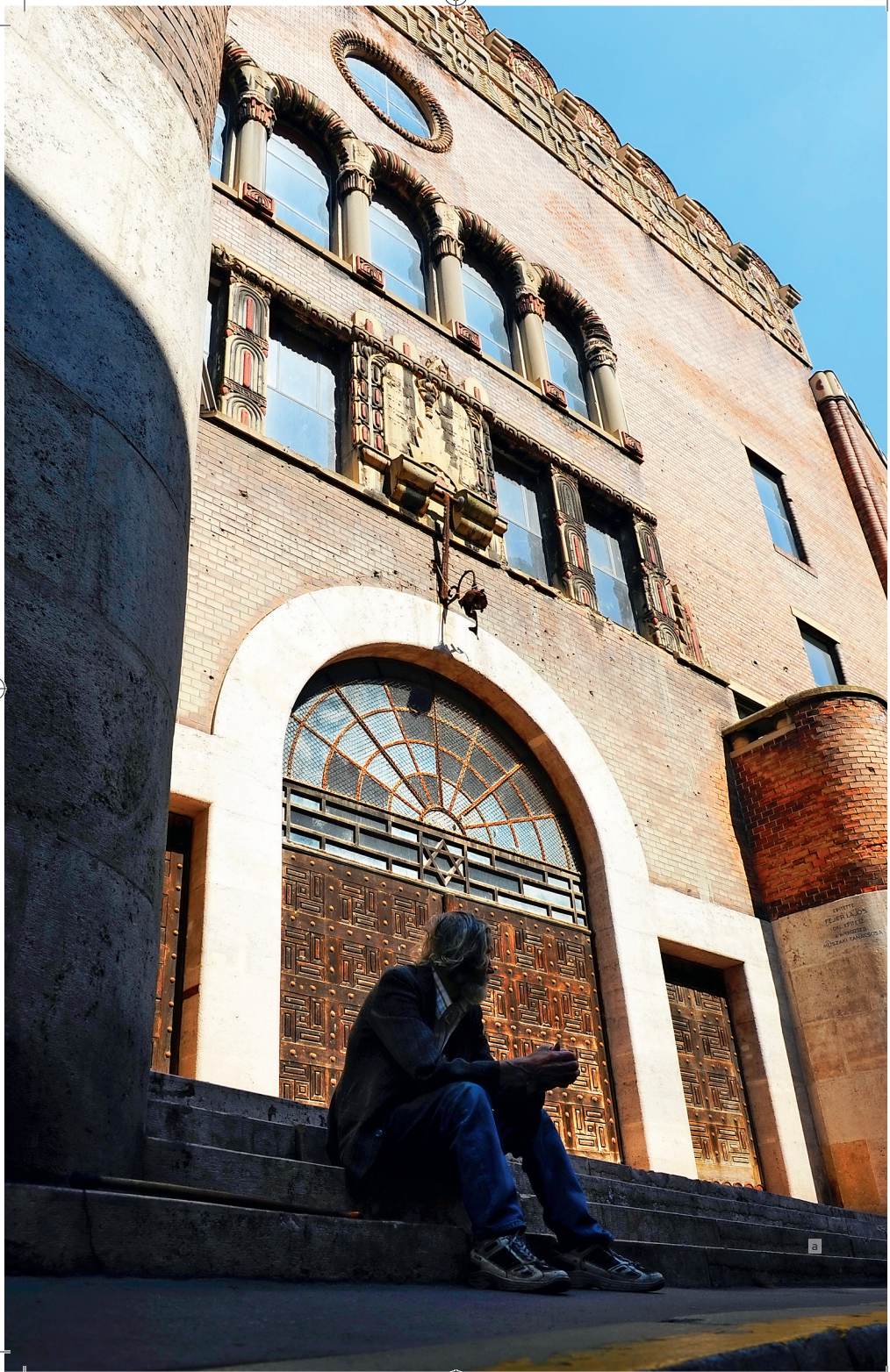

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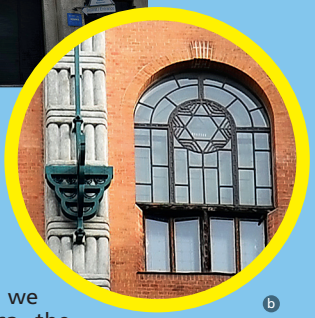
Two blocks down Dob utca, we turn into Kazinczy utca, and reach the **Orthodox Synagogue** (VII. Kazinczy utca 27-29). 35 This is an area where Orthodox Jews clustered, creating a small 'orthodox quarter', somewhat like the Jewish quarters of the world that are surrounded by walls and secluded from the outside world. The synagogue in Kazinczy utca is still the most important place of worship for the Orthodox community of Budapest. Completed in 1913, it is one of the most characteristic examples of Hungarian synagogues and an outstanding example of Hungarian Art Nouveau architecture.



It was also home to various educational establishments between 1917 and 1948, now commemorated by a plaque on its wall. The entryways in this courtyard lead to offices and homes owned by the community, and to the orthodox kosher restaurant Hannah. It is also where the matzo bakery once functioned. A passage leads to the 1912 building at the other end of the block, housing the headquarters and the assembly hall of the Orthodox Community (VII. Dob utca 35).





a | The Orthodox Synagogue in Kazinczy utca 35

b | The headquarters of the Orthodox Community

A WALK IN THE JEWISH QUARTER

Via Holló utca we reach **Király utca,** the main artery of the Jewish quarter. Quite a grey spot only a few years ago, Király utca is undergoing a spectacular transformation. Traffic has been seriously restricted, new shops and pleasant cafés are opening day by day, and several major development pro-

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jects are also underway. This has clearly breathed new life into an area which only recently seemed to be declining, but some less appropriate projects seriously jeopardise the area's architectural heritage.

Once Jews amounted to between one quarter and one third of the population in this area, indeed, in some blocks more than half of the inhabitants were Jewish. Little does the eclectic exterior of present-day Király utca betray much of this Jewish past – apart from a few signs like the reliefs on the façade of **Prandtner House** at no. 11, proclaiming the trade of its former owner, silversmithing.

One of the most characteristic buildings in the street is **Pekáry House,** on the corner of Csányi utca and Király utca. Although the owner of this three-story romantic, neo-Gothic block, the one-time City Vice Captain Imre Pekáry, was not himself Jewish, by the end of the 19th century the majority of the tenants were, and the building also housed a Jewish bachelors' club and prayer house.

In one of the side streets off Király utca, the courtyard of Vasvári Pál utca 5 hides a modest **Orthodox prayer house and yeshiva** (study house) built in 1889, the house on the street front being added later. The synagogue and yeshiva are now used (since 1992) by the Chabad-Lubavitch Hasid Community.







a | Kazinczy utca in the 'Jewish Quarter'

b | Pekáry House on the corner of Csányi utca and Király utca

c | 'Gentrification' in Holló utca

d | The unfinished avenue behind Madách blocks

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The traditionally Jewish section of Király utca ends at Nagymező utca. If we turn down Csányi utca, one block away, we come to Klauzál tér, the one-time centre of the Inner Erzsébetváros. Until the indoor markets were built, this square was the largest food market of the city.

Not far from Klauzál tér, on the corner of Wesselényi and Kertész utca, stands the building of the former Jewish community Secondary School for Boys. It housed the Ghetto Hospital during the tragic period of WWII. Since 1990, it has again become the home of a Jewish institution, the **Masoret Avot Endowment School,** funded by Hungarian, American, Canadian and Israeli Jewish communities. The school is run by the Jewish community, and offers students an education in Judaism and Hebrew, as well as a kosher diet.

It is worth strolling along the lovely narrow lanes between Király utca and Dohány utca (**Kazinczy** and **Holló utca**) for a feel of the former shops and workshops, mainly jewellers and silversmiths, that lined them. Unfortunately, some of these old buildings have recently been demolished. The apartment block at Holló utca 4, once owned by the Jewish Orphanage for Boys, is noted for having been the **home of Ignác Goldziher**, famous scholar of the Orient and secretary of the Pest Jewish Community; a plaque on the building commemorates him.

Today, the area is changing rapidly. A great part of Holló utca has indeed disappeared, the old buildings being replaced by massive and rather out-of-context modern apartment blocks. While some of the new buildings are more of a good fit than others, it is hard to see this kind of 'gentrification' as anything but an example of crude interference (see Anna Perczel's *Unprotected Heritage*).


c

METROPOLITAN THREAT

The Jewish quarter of Pest has come under serious threat several times throughout its existence. The most serious jeopardy came from plans to create an Erzsébet Avenue, which would have cut through this dense urban tissue, but these were repeatedly thwarted. Less visible but more harmful was post-War and Socialist neglect, the area becoming dilapidated. By the turn of the millennium, reconstruction could no longer be deferred. Sadly, this has all too often meant massive demolitions and the construction of large new buildings, threatening the entire character of the quarter in spite of the fact that, being a buffer zone to Andrássy út, the area has been under UNESCO protection since 2002. Various NGOs (e. g. the **Óvás! Egyesület** [Protect/Protest Society]) have promoted urban preservation and restoration of crucial buildings. Under their pressure, several buildings that were marked out for demolition have been declared protected buildings, but the question remains unsettled to this day.


d

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‘NEW JEWLAND’ OR A NON-JEWISH JEWISH QUARTER

We must make special mention of the northern part of the former Lipót-külváros [Leopold Suburb] in District XIII, which, had mainly been an area of factories, warehouses, mills, allotments, and large industrial halls until the early 20th century, and which underwent spectacular development in the 1930s. In barely more than a decade, there emerged an entirely new, modern and uniformly regulated quarter with modern Bauhaus apartment blocks and a spacious park along the Danube bank (Szent István park). This new quarter mainly attracted middle-class professionals: artists, engineers, doctors, and teachers.

Designed and inhabited by a markedly high proportion of Jews, the new quarter **Újlipótváros** was referred to as a kind of ‘new Jewish quarter’ from its very inception onwards. According to Hungarian historian Gábor Gyáni, the Jews who had settled here between the two World Wars mainly did so as an escape from the closed world of the traditional Jewish quarter. The new district they shaped purposely lacked marked signs of their Jewish background. Today, however, an interesting contrary process can be observed as a growing number of Újlipótváros inhabitants, indeed Jews throughout Hungary, rediscover and recreate their Jewish identity. Though without any particular Jewish identity, today’s young urban professionals among whom it has become more and more fashionable to live in this quarter pride themselves on the Jewish aspect of their locality, which is sometimes ironically dubbed ‘Új-Zséland’, which is a pun on Új-Zéland (New Zealand) and ‘zsé’, meaning ‘dough’ and implying Jews.

Though discretely tucked away, Jewish life has its reminders in Újlipótváros, too: a **conservative synagogue** at Hegedűs Gyula utca 3 built in 1911 and re-built in 1927, as well as an **Orthodox prayer house** at Visegrádi utca 3 established in the post-war years.

a | XIII. Szent István park, Újlipótváros

b | Flódni (Café Noé) (Wesselényi u. 13.)

c | Kosher food shop



a





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KOSHER PIZZA AVAILABLE

There is much to remind one of the long tradition of Jewish life in Budapest, particularly in the old Jewish quarter, which even the less attentive visitor may notice easily. Thus, for example, we come upon wigmakers' workshops in Kazinczy utca and Dob utca near the Orthodox synagogue. There are also a number of Jewish restaurants; Salamon is a glatt-kosher restaurant in Nagydiófa utca, kosher food is served in King's Hotel Mehadrin, as well as in the restaurants Carmel and Hannah in Kazinczy utca, but the nearby pizza shop also bears a sign stating 'all foods are kosher.' You can also find kosher cake shops. Fröhlich's Patisserie, its walls decorated with pictures of Jewish life, stands in the place of the old kosher bakery in Dob utca, and has been serving customers since the 1950s.


b

There are plenty of kosher food shops (Dob utca, Arany János utca), Jewish gift shops and book shops – one of the most recent examples being the newly opened Polish Jewish bookshop Austeria.



c

The ground floor of the headquarters of the Orthodox Community houses a kosher butchery, while the rather unspectacular building at Kazinczy utca 16 contains the only public ritual baths *(mikveh)* of Budapest. The baths, originally opened in the interwar period, were repossessed by the Orthodox community in 2001, and a Hasid plumber from New York was commissioned to supervise the renovation project (see Judit N. Kósa's *The Old Jewish Quarter of Budapest*).

The Jewish character of the headquarters of the Alliance of Hungarian Jewish Communities in Síp utca is highlighted by reliefs over the ground floor offices, nor is it an accident that the residential complex built on the neighbouring plot, right next to the Dohány utca synagogue, is called Herzl Passage.

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JEWISHNESS TODAY

During the Communist era, questions of Jewishness and anti-Semitism were glossed over or treated as taboo. Most of those who lived through being deprived of their basic rights and the horrors of the Holocaust sought to forget what had happened to them, nor did the regime favour any profession of a religiously founded Jewish identity. While many opted for emigration, others decided to resume the way of assimilation and secularisation that had commenced earlier, but was broken by the anti-Jewish persecutions. Inspired by the changes in the 1980s and multi-culturalism, however, many began to rediscover their Jewishness. One expert on the subject, the sociologist András Kovács, points out in his study 'Jewish Groups and Identity Strategies in Contemporary Hungary' that there is a relatively wide scale of different attitudes among Jewish people regarding their own Jewishness in present-day Hungary. These range from strict adherence to religious traditions and a traditional lifestyle to a vague consciousness of family background which does not in any way influence lifestyle on a day-to-day basis. The Jewish identity of a Hungarian Jew today may be based on a determination to maintain the tradition, a sense of ethnic-national continuity, a sense of honour about the memory of forebears, an attachment to Jewish culture, or a sense of familiarity and safety in a Jewish context. Although only a small portion of Hungarian Jews are affiliated with the Jewish community, this number is enough to justify speaking about a **genuine Jewish life**, and offers a chance for the renewal of Jewish identity in Hungary.

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Jewish educational institutions have a major role in retaining and reviving Jewish identity. Currently, there are three Jewish secondary schools in Budapest: the **Masoret Avot Endowment School** in Wesselényi utca follows the Orthodox tradition; the **Lauder Javne Community school** (XII. Budakeszi út 48) combines Jewish identity with independent educational principles; and, named after one of the best-known Neologue rabbis of the 20th century, the **Sándor Scheiber Primary and Secondary School** (successor to the Anna Frank Grammar School) supplements the Hungarian national curriculum with Jewish subjects (XIV. Laky Adolf utca 38-40).

The institutions which traditionally co-ordinate Jewish religious, social and cultural life include the **Alliance of Jewish Communities in Hungary,** the **Autonomous Orthodox Israelite Community of Hungary (Magyarországi Autonóm Orthodox Izraelita Hitközség)** as well as a number of other organisations. The Chabad Lubavitch Jewish Educational and Training Society was founded in 1989, which went on to establish the **Statusquo Unified Israelite Community of Hungary (EMIH)** in 2004. (V. Károly körút 20) There is also a fourth community, the **Sim Shalom Progressive Jewish Congregation** which was registered in 1992. After moving to various sites, they recently established their synagogue at IX. Ráday utca 9. This small community of 'reformed Jews' raised no little outcry by ordaining a female rabbi.

The various Jewish organisations have lively magazine and book publishing enterprises (Remény, Egység, Szombat, etc.), they run schools and nursery schools, and actively organise the life of the communities. Among the more spectacular events organised by EMIH are erecting the Jewish tent at the Sziget Festival or the public Chanukah festivities.

The work of these institutions is supplemented by a number of youth organisations and NGOs. Venues with an effervescent Jewish cultural life are the **Bálint Jewish Community House** 36 (VI. Révay utca 16), which was opened in 1994, and is maintained by Mazsihisz and the American aid organisation JOINT; as well as the **Spinoza House** at VII. Dob utca 15, 37 best known for its series of events 'Spinoza Jewish Weeks.' In 2010, the **Israeli Cultural Institute** was opened at VI. Paulay utca 1, with a mission to present and promote Israeli culture. 38 From a wide range of cultural events, mention must be made of the Jewish Summer Festival, with its concerts, exhibitions, book launches and readings, which has been organised annually since 1998, enlisting many venues inside and outside of Budapest, or the Jewish street festival **'Vircsaft'** held in Kazinczy utca. No listing of Budapest's Jewish cultural events would be complete without reference to memorial events such as the **'March of Life'** – a torch march commemorating the victims of the Holocaust held on 16 April every year.



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a | The former Jewish Grammar School

b | The Angyalföld synagogue 31

Special flavours within the rich Jewish life of Budapest are represented by the various **alternative movements** (e.g. Marom Budapest, the Budapest Jewish Theatre and the Maszorti Budapest) and places of entertainment (Café Sirály in Király utca). Alternative tendencies strive to find or re-interpret Jewish identity, while the various alternative websites (such as www.judapest.org or www.pilpul.net) address Jewish young people in a fresh and youthful tone.

The Jewish world of today's Budapest is extremely rich and varied. By offering a few flashes of its colours our aim has been to illustrate why in late 2007 the correspondent of the *Los Angeles Times* reported that Budapest is experiencing a genuine Jewish Renaissance, particularly when compared to Jewish communities in other parts of Europe.

THE JEWISH HERITAGE IN OTHER PARTS OF PEST

After WWI, the Jewish community was afflicted by a whole series of disasters such as anti-Jewish legislation, systematic persecution and waves of emigration, which caused the community to shrink considerably. This was made worse by assimilation and the general tendency of secularisation, so that by the second half of the 20th century the previously bubbling Jewish life of the capital began to decline. Several synagogues were closed. A formerly busy web of societies and institutions, together with the Jewish population which used them, is only remembered today on account of their vacant or transformed buildings and closed cemeteries. Although Jewish life has been going through a rebirth since the 1980s and particularly since the transition of 1989, many of the buildings haven't been restored to their original owners.

One of the most opulent streets of Budapest, **Andrássy út**, has, at first sight, very little to do with Jewishness. This boulevard, built in the 1870s and 1880s, however, owes a great deal to the richer strata of Budapest Jews.

Almost 60% of the owners of the blocks flanking this gorgeous avenue were Jewish and so were many of the investors and architects. There are not many signs to indicate this any more. One of them, The **Orthodox Synagogue in Dessewffy utca** (VI. Dessewffy utca 23), which is more than 120 years old and is still functioning, is tucked away in the courtyard of an insignificant building.

Testimonies to the one-time Jewish life of **Outer Erzsébetváros**, the area of the district beyond the Nagykörút (Ring Road), include the former **National Institute of Jewish Deaf and Dumb People** in Bethlen tér and the adjoining synagogue (VII. Bethlen Gábor tér), but the **Budapest Lutheran Grammar School** 107 (VII. Városligeti fasor 17-21) also had a high number of Jewish students. Many of them became famous in later years, such as the Nobel Prize-winner Jenő Wigner and János Harsányi; as well as János Neumann, György Lukács, Theodor Herzl, Aurél Stein, and György Faludy.

On the edge of District XIV, we find the former **Jewish Grammar School** (ELTE Radnóti Miklós Primary and Grammar School, XIV. Cházár András utca 10), which was completed in 1932 and which was the most state-of-the-art school building in Budapest at the time. At present it houses one of the country's most prestigious public gram-

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mar schools, while much of the ornamentation of the building retains its Jewish past.

The **Angyalföld synagogue** on Dózsa György út, built in the early 20th century, is today a sports club – its one-time culture hall now serves as a place of worship 31 (XIII. Dózsa György út 55). In nearby **Zugló** was the home of the former **Chevra Kadisha Charity Hospital** (XIV. Amerikai út 57), now the National Insitute of Neurosciences, but the charity hospital of Mazsihisz still functions right next door.



a

Gradually becoming the new centre of Pest in the early 19th century, **Lipótváros** was the neighbourhood where rising middle-class Jews traditionally sought to settle, and several of its now historic buildings are associated with the Jewish community. This is where the house of the Pulitzer family, originally from Moravia, once stood (V. Hild tér), and where József


a


b

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Pulitzer lived for a few years before going on to building a career as a journalist and newspaper publisher in the United States. In the wall of nearby V. Arany János utca 6-8, a memorial plaque reminds the passer-by of the noted Indian and Central Asian explorer Aurel Stein.

Around the turn of the century, there were plans to build a massive synagogue in Lipótváros, which would serve as a Jewish counterpart to St Stephen's Cathedral (Basilica), but eventually they did not materialize. Far more real is the sculpture composition consisting of **sixty pairs of shoes** lined up along the Danube Bank (Gyula Pauer, 2005), which commemorates the victims shot and thrown into the river by Arrow Cross militia.

The Rabbinical Seminary of Hungary was built in Inner Józsefváros in 1877. It has been an important centre for the Neologue movement housing several educational and cultural institutions, including a library with a significant collection of Judaica and the National Jewish Teacher Training College. This is where the Jewish Community Grammar School moved to after the 1950s – later to be called Anna Frank Grammar School. Today, the building houses the **Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies**. 39 (VIII. the corner of present-day Somogyi Béla utca, Gutenberg tér and Bérkocsis utca).

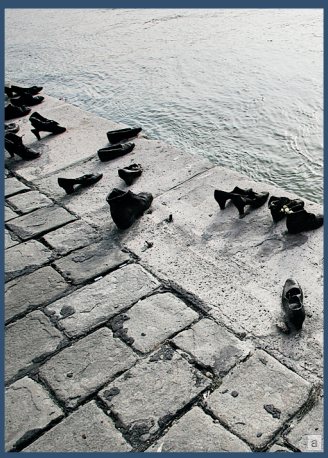
a | Shoes on the Danube bank

b | The Jewish Theological Seminary – University of Jewish Studies 39

c | A 'Stumbling Block' in a pavement


a


b


a



c

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Outer Józsefváros (District VIII) was the home primarily of Jews of more modest means – craftsmen and market stallholders. The more well-to-do lived in Népszínház utca and Nagy Fuvaros utca, the less fortunate around the Józsefváros Railway Station and the market in Teleki tér. In the early 20th century, this latter square was a kind of port and safe haven for the poorest Jews who had just moved in from the countryside, or for 'Poles' and Hasidim from Galicia. After a while, however, Jewish life became rather active in this quarter, too, with numerous prayer houses, kosher bakeries, butcheries and greengrocers. All of this went on well into the mid-1950s, and yet, Józsefváros is not commonly thought of as a Jewish quarter.

Nagy Fuvaros utca 4 is a perfectly ordinary block of flats, but, up the flight of stairs, a simple door marked with a star of David opens into one of the most prestigious places of worship in the quarter, the **Neologue Synagogue,** which was opened in 1922 and still functions today.



a | The Neologue Synagogue in Nagy Fuvaros utca

b | Former Neologue Synagogue in Kőbánya 39

c | The Synagogue and Holocaust Memorial Centre in Páva utca 40



a

The heritage of Jewish life is obvious not only in the inner city but also in several of the outskirts such as **Újpest** (District IV) or **Kőbánya** (District X). Újpest, which did not become part of Budapest until 1950, had a Jewish population, the majority of whom perished in the Holocaust – their tragedy is commemorated by reliefs on the garden wall of the **Újpest synagogue** (IV. Berzeviczy utca 8). Beautifully restored to its earlier glory, the former **Neologue Synagogue in Kőbánya** 32 (X. Cserkesz utca 7-9) offers a striking vista: its domed and turreted Art Nouveau building stands in stark contrast with the surrounding mass of prefabricated housing blocks and suburban houses. Built in 1909–1910, it served as a place of worship even after the Holocaust, but the community died out by 1960s. It was then used as an exhibition hall, a warehouse and a theatre. Finally, in 1989, a Pentecostal Congregation bought and restored it, renaming it 'All's Temple.'

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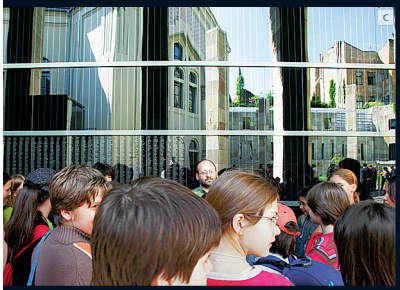
One of the important memorial spots of the Budapest Jewish community is the **Synagogue and Holocaust Memorial Centre** 40 at IX. Páva utca 39. Designed by Lipót Baumhorn, this Ferencváros synagogue was built in the 1920s. It came to be used as an internment camp in 1944–45, and services were only offered occasionally after the war. Dilapidated, Mazsihisz donated it to the Holocaust Documentation Centre and Memorial Collection Public Foundation. After renovation, the synagogue was re-born and a new set of buildings attached. The mission of the Memorial Centre is to present, research and process the history of the period of persecutions, to facilitate the integration of this historical material into the school curriculum, and to pay homage to the victims.





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a | The synagogue in Újlak

b | The synagogue of Óbuda and its re-consecration in September 2010 41

c | The Shofar sounded: 'Awake, sleepers from your sleep, and slumberers arise from your slumber.'

JEWISH HERITAGE IN BUDA

Although the Buda side also has buildings of Jewish relevance, owing to a different course of historical development, there are far fewer surviving mementoes here than in Pest, and those that remain are less spectacular. The Jewish communities that once lived in the Castle District would be long forgotten today save for a few memorial plaques and ruins, and only a few of the other Jewish institutions and synagogues in Buda operate with their original functions.

In **Buda Castle,** there were two synagogues in what is today Táncsics Mihály utca (former Zsidó utca, meaning 'Jewish Street') – the **'Great Synagogue'** at 23 and the **'Small Synagogue'** with parts of the original façade still visible at 26.

After the Ottoman occupation, it was not until the end of the 18th century that Jews were allowed to settle in the chartered cities of Buda and Pest. The first Jewish community of the modern period within the area of today's Budapest emerged in **Óbuda** (Old Buda), on the estate of the Zichy family. Flourishing at the turn of the 18th and 19th centuries, this was one of the greatest Jewish communities of Hungary – aside from the one in Pozsony (today Bratislava, Slovakia). The town centre was in Zsidó utca (today Lajos utca), with the imposing classicist synagogue at Lajos utca 163 built in 1821. 41 The surrounding houses were demolished in the 1970s, while the abandoned synagogue was used as a studio by Hungarian Television. In 2010, the Unified Israelite Community of Hungary (EMIH) had it restored to use it as place of worship once more.

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On the **Újlak** bank of the Danube, a residential block embraces a highly ornate synagogue to form a unique architectural ensemble (II. Frankel Leó utca 49). Still in use, the neo-Gothic synagogue was built in the place of an earlier one, and was originally surrounded by low buildings. The offices and tenement block of the Buda Community were built around it in the late 1920s, the walls displaying a number of Jewish symbols. The synagogue was restored in 2000.

In South Buda, there are only traces left of the Jewish life of the past. As late as 1936, the thriving **Kelenföld (Lágymányos)** community built an imposing new synagogue – one perfectly modernist in style, yet obviously Jewish. In 1950, however, it was nationalized, and rebuilt to obliterate all its Jewish features (XI. Bocskai út 37). The reviving Jewish community of the area has established a new synagogue in Károli Gáspár tér.

Cemeteries are perhaps the most telling sites of a community and well worth visiting. The mournful splendour of the Jewish graveyards of Budapest proclaim both the vivacity and tragedy of this great community. The oldest one among them is in Csörsz utca on the Buda side (XII. Csörsz utca 49). It functioned until 1961. There is also a disused one in Salgótarjáni út on the Pest side (VIII. Salgótarjáni út 50). Still in use, the Kozma utca cemetery (X. Kozma utca 51) is the largest one; its mortuary and many of its tombs and mausoleums were designed by noted architects. Its Shoah memorial bears the names of tens of thousands of Jewish victims.











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The Heterogeneous Orthodoxy of Budapest

Sights associated with Orthodox Christianity are a special feature of Budapest. Orthodox Christians with different national backgrounds, Serbs, Greeks, Romanians, Bulgarians and Macedo-Romanians have been living in the Hungarian capital since the Middle Ages. In many cases, they have lost their national identity, retaining only their religious affiliation today. In the past, these communities had defined the identity of entire streets and quarters, mostly in Tabán and several streets in the inner city (e.g. V. Váci utca and Szerb utca). Their traces may be found in other parts of Budapest, too, just like in a number of places outside the city (Szentendre, Ráckeve, Beloiannisz, Halásztelek).

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Making the Queen Bee

SERBS



a

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There has been a Serb community in Hungary for at least six centuries, from the Middle Ages onwards. The places in Budapest that are connected with the Serbs, who are Orthodox Christians, lend a characteristic atmosphere to certain areas of the city. At certain periods, the Serb community defined the entire atmosphere of some streets and quarters, such as Tabán in Buda, and Váci utca and Szerb utca in Pest. Not only did the Serbs lend an interesting patch of colour to the Hungarian capital, but Buda and Pest were also important for the Serbs themselves, and it crops up in their folk songs, ballads and epic poetry rooted in medieval times and in their modern literature. In the early 15th century the Serbian **Prince Stefan Lazarević** had a palace in the Castle District of Buda 42 (I. Országház utca 9) as he was an ally of King Sigismund (Zsigmond) of Luxembourg. Several Serbian noblemen and commoners also settled in Buda. This is the period to which the first recorded Serbian high priest in Buda, Metropolitan Sava, dates back. Serbian presence was marked during the period of the Turkish occupation (1541-1686). It was at this time that the Serbian Orthodox Diocese was established in Buda, a Serbian Orthodox church having already existed in Buda before the Ottomans. After the expulsion of the Turks, **a new wave of Serbs arrived in Hungary in 1690**. Several thousand people fleeing from Serbia, including Kosovo, found refuge in Buda and Pest, and settled there, particularly in the Tabán area – the valley between Buda Castle and Gellért Hill.

'SERBTOWN' – RÁCVÁROS (TABÁN)

The word Tabán (the Southern section of District I) is probably Turkish or Arabic in origin, and comes from the words Tabahane, Tabakhane (Debaghane) referring to the tanners and skin dressers living in the area. From the late 17th century, it was referred to as **'Serbtown'** (**Rácváros**; in Serbian: Taban, *Budimska dolnja varoš*) due to its majority Serbian population. Although the area was destroyed during the siege of Buda in 1686, the quarter soon revived, and



a | The Lazarević Palace in the Castle District 42

b | Tabán

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the Serbs of Tabán established their own council. Within a few years, they built a stone Serbian Orthodox Church dedicated to St Demetrius, public baths, an isolation hospital for infectious diseases, and a chapel were erected. Not far from the Church of St Catharine of Alexandria, which had been converted from a jami (mosque) and was given to the Catholic Illyrians, the Orthodox Serbs also built themselves a new church in the middle of the 18th century. For a long time, the majority of the local population was Serbian, occupied in industry, vine-growing and commerce, as well as shipping and ferrying. The former Serb character of this area today is marked by the name of the **Rác fürdő ('Serb Baths')** at the bottom of Gellért Hill and by the stone cross with a Serbian inscription commemorating the former 'Serbtown'. 43

THE QUARTER THAT VANISHED

In the rapidly growing Budapest of the 19th century, the future of Tabán provoked ever more debate. Although its narrow, winding streets, poor rustic squares, atmospheric restaurants and taverns were popular among the inhabitants of Budapest seeking entertainment or a romantic walk, this neglected area did not fit into plans for modernisation and lacked appropriate sanitation and hygiene. After prolonged planning, urban reconstruction finally reached Tabán in a wave of city planning in the **1930s** and a modern watering complex was supposed to take the place of Serbtown. As soon as demolition began, however, the area, doomed to destruction, became the haunt of artists who set out to record for the last time the atmosphere of this unique corner of Budapest.



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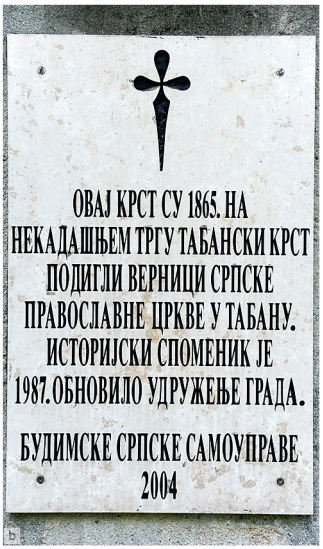
b



b

a | Serbian inscription in Tabán

b | The stone cross with Serbian inscription in Tabán

c | View of Buda Castle and Tabán around 1914 (Fővárosi Szabó Ervin Könyvtár – Budapest Collection)

d | and today

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c



d





PENNY ROMANCE

'Deep in their heart, the people of Tabán think very poorly of people making trips from Pest in search of cheap romanticism, and look down on men in love who hope to win their ladies through such two-penny tricks as a walk in Tabán. However, they have grown accustomed to the idea that their extremely dirty streets, which equally lack the value of historical heritage and business prospect, are going to be pulled down. For years now, Tabán has been living on the fact that it will be demolished, just like a shop which is advertising a never-ending, yet irrevocable closing down sale. Tabán is sought out by visitors from Pest not because it exists, but because for years it has been rumoured to be doomed.'

Sándor Márai



The major part of Tabán soon vanished, the area was turned into a park, but the plans for the bathing complex were swept away by WWII. Some of the buildings that survived the siege of Budapest in 1944–45 were also pulled down leaving hardly anything to remind us today of former Rácváros. Döbrentei utca and a few houses or segments of streets are the only reminders today. St Demetrius' Cathedral, the Serbian orthodox bishop's seat, was damaged in the siege. Sadly and grotesquely, it fell victim to the showdown between Stalin and the "chained dog of imperialism", Tito, the Yugoslav premier, and was demolished. It was rumoured to have been in the way of the fireworks to be held on Stalin's birthday (1949).

The history of the quarter is presented in detail by the **Tabán Museum** 44 (I. Döbrentei utca 9) next to St Catharine's Church (Szt. Katalin-plébániatemplom; I. Attila út 11), and it is also worth taking a look at the lovely old building at the foot of the Castle 45 (I. Szarvas tér 1). **The Aranyszarvas ('Golden Stag')** Restaurant which operates here was a veritable literary hub for Serbs at the beginning of the 19th century, where an effervescent

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literary life attracted writers and poets such as: Jakov Ignjatović, the first Serbian writer of realistic novels, Jovan Pačić, officer, classicist poet and aquarelist; Sima Milutinović Sarajlija, the celebrated romantic poet of the 1830s whom the Serb youths of Buda made Poet Laureate, and the philologist Vuk Stefanović Karadžić (1787–1864), who created modern literary Serbian – he is commemorated by a statue opposite the restaurant. Not only were Buda and Tabán the favourite meeting places of Serb intellectuals, they were the birthplace of many outstanding figures, including the 19th-century painter Mihajlo Živković and composer Kornelije Stanković the creator of modern Serb national music. **The Royal Hungarian University Press of Buda** published a great number of books in Serbian.

THE SERBS OF PEST

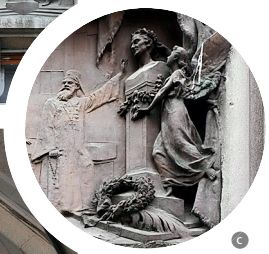
Another important Serb quarter, somewhat smaller than that in Buda, emerged in the southern part of inner Pest (District V), in the streets surrounding the Serbian church, stretching through the area between today's Kálvin tér and Fővám tér (Veres Pálné utca, Nyári Pál utca and Váci utca). Its history began as far back as the time of the Turkish occupation, when Serbian traders and craftsmen settled there. Mementoes of this period are scattered in the streets nearby, and are all within the range of a pleasant walk.

During the early 19th century, Pest and Buda were the home of a large and influential Serbian community, which lavishly sponsored Serbian culture. This is how the first Serbian cultural and

a | The 'Golden Stag' (Aranyszarvas) Restaurant 45
b | The Tabán Museum 44
c | The Tekelijanum (Tökölyanum) 46









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scientific society, ***Matica srpska*** ('Parent Body' [Queen Bee] of the Serbs), was founded in Pest, in 1826, before Belgrade and Novi Sad. This was the model for other societies of learning established by the Slavs of Eastern and South-Eastern Europe. The Serbian institution ***Tekelijanum*** **(Tökölyanum)** founded by Sava Popović Tekelija (or, in Hungarian: Tököly Popovics Száva) in 1838 also played a significant role. Its centre was in a neo-classical building, which no longer exists, and which was also a college for Serbian youths studying at Pest University and the headquarters of *Matica srpska*. At the beginning of the 20th century, a far larger building was raised in its place 46 (V. Veres Pálné utca 17-19), which remained in the service of Serbian culture and education right until it was eventually nationalised under Communist rule in 1951. Reliefs on the façade of the building commemorate events from the life of Sava Tekelija and the history of the institution. In 1997, ownership of part of the building was restored to the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Buda. Reconstructed step by step, it now houses the Hostel Tekelijanum Palace, the exhibition rooms of portraits of the





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Serb bishops of Buda, the studios of the internet Radio Ritam, and the offices of the Serbian Institute, which researches into Serbs in Hungary.

Back from the next corner runs **Szerb utca** (*Raitzengasse* in German, i.e. 'Serbian Street'), dating back to the early 18th century. Here, surrounded by high walls and a lovely churchyard, we see **St George's Serbian Orthodox Church**, built in 1695-1697 on the ruins of a former Serbian church that had been built during the Turkish occupation. This small baroque church is a picturesque and quiet spot amid the hustle and bustle of inner-city Pest. A few years ago it was elevated to the rank of a bishop's seat. 47 Only a few paces away, a memorial plaque at Veres Pálné utca 36 pays homage to Mihajlo Vitković (Vitkovics Mihály in Hungarian, 1778-1829). He was a writer in both Hungarian and Serbian, and was a great organiser of both the Hungarian and the Serbian literary scenes, running a lively literary parlour at his house. A true cultural mediator, he is a recognized man of letters in the history of both literatures. As a successful lawyer, he participated in the foundation of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1825.





St George's Church in V. Szerb utca 47





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a | The Serbian Primary and Secondary School in Rózsák tere

b | The headquarters and residential block of the Serbian Orthodox Congregation of Pest 48

c | The building of the former St Angelina Orthodox Christian Ladies' Seminary Association



In neighbouring Váci utca, the traditional main street of Pest, we find two further buildings with Serbian relevance: the headquarters and residential block of the **Serbian Orthodox Congregation of Pest** 48 (V. Váci utca 66) and, opposite, the building of the former **St Angelina Orthodox Christian Ladies' Seminary Association**, which was established on the model of the Loreto Sisters (V. Váci utca 63). Its façade bears a mosaic by one of the greatest figures of Serbian realist painting, Paja Jovanović. Nearby, on the corner of Károlyi Mihály utca and Irányi utca, we have the **Café Central (Centrál kávéház)**, one of the most important literary meeting places in Budapest at the turn of the 20th century, and thus, due to the vicinity of many Serbian institutions, a focal point for young Serbs in the city. Pest, later Budapest, was the centre of the Serbian press of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy; this tradition is continued by the current Serbian weekly, *Srpske nedeljne novine*.

There are various Serb mementos in Budapest which are beyond the former walls of Pest. One is the ancient spring, ***Ilijina voda* (Elijah's Well)**, in the gardens of the Hungarian Museum of Sciences in VIII. Ludovika tér, which belonged to the Serbian diocese in the Turkish period. 49 Even in our day, the Serbian com-

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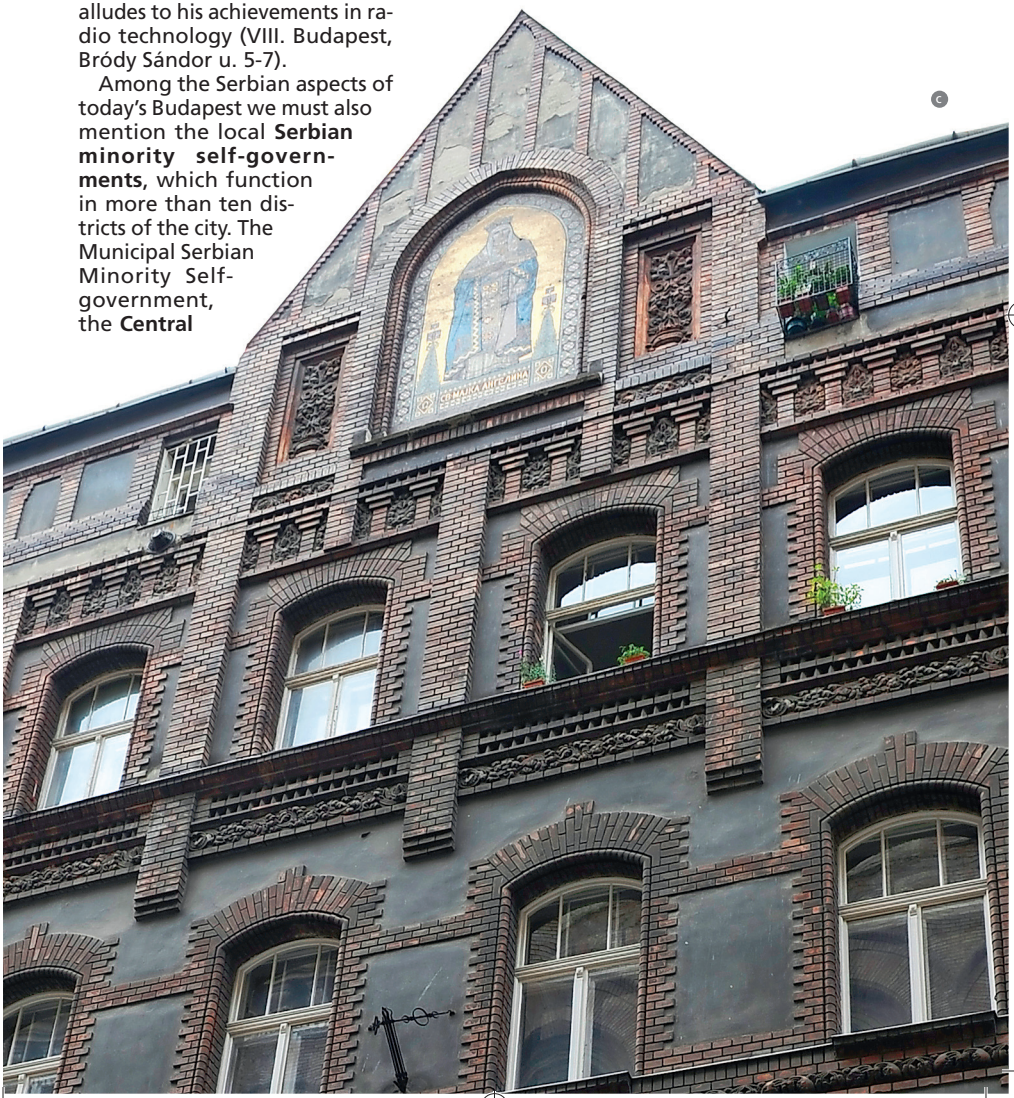
munity visit and celebrate the well on St Elijah's day (2 August according to the orthodox calendar). A neoclassical building over the well was raised at the turn of the 19th century – restored in 1990 by the Society for the Protection of the City. Its Cyrillic inscriptions draw attention to the Serb traditions related to the well.

It is less known that the world-famous Serbian inventor **Nikola Tesla** (1856-1943) first worked in Budapest. His bust is in the Hungarian Radio building, and alludes to his achievements in radio technology (VIII. Budapest, Bródy Sándor u. 5-7).

Among the Serbian aspects of today's Budapest we must also mention the local **Serbian minority self-governments**, which function in more than ten districts of the city. The Municipal Serbian Minority Self-government, the **Central Serbian Library** and the **Serbian Culture Club** with its weekly regular programmes are at V. Falk Miksa utca 3. Tuition in Serbian is offered at the **Nikola Tesla Serbian Primary and Grammar School** at VII. Rózsák tere 6–7. The **Serbian Theatre of Hungary** is a true Serbian cultural centre seated at Nagymező utca 49 – a street often dubbed 'Pest Broadway'. The company also performs at various other Serb-inhabited settlements both in Hungary and Serbia.



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SERBS IN THE AREAS SURROUNDING BUDAPEST

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Szentendre

Serbian past is redolent not only in the capital city; and if we have spare time, it is a good idea to make an excursion to nearby **Szentendre (Serbian: *Sentandreja*)**. 50 This charming little baroque town by the Danube is easy to access by suburban railway (HÉV), and a short and delightful boat trip will also get us there. Boats leave from the Vigadó Boat Station and run according to a regular time table from spring till autumn.



After losing its population during the Turkish wars, Szentendre was re-populated by Serbian settlers in the 1690s. It developed into one of the centres of Serbian cultural life, and the **seat of the Serbian Orthodox Diocese of Buda**. Though only a few hundred have remained of the some twenty-thousand Serbs in the township, there are seven Serbian Orthodox churches, and a number of historical monuments that testify to their former presence, including the merchants' houses of the inner city – the overall effect lends a Mediterranean ambience to a town which is a favourite with painters.

The various churches were named by the faithful after different locations: people from Belgrade built the Orthodox Bishopric Cathedral ***Beogradska***, which towers over the centre of the town; those from Opovo built ***Opovačka***, those from Ćiprovci (now in Bulgaria) built ***Ćiprovačka***, people from Požarevac built ***Požarevačka*** in Kossuth utca; ***Preobraženska*** or ***Tabačka*** **Church** (Church of the Transfiguration) on Vujicsics Tihamér tér was built by the Serbian tanners guild, who also erected a 'Tanners' Cross' on the hill above church. The square and well in it are named after the ethnic Serbian composer Tihomir Vujičić (Vujicsics Tihamér). In Fő tér, we find a glorious baroque Memorial Cross and the ***Blagoveštenska*** **Church** (Church of Annunciation) both built by the Serbian Merchants' Guild. Next door to the church, there is the building of the former Serbian teacher-training school, which was a public museum for half a century, but its return to the Serbian Diocese is under way. There are a number of other mementoes of Serbian life, including: the **Serbian Orthodox Museum of the Orthodox Diocese of Buda** (Pátriárka utca 5) with its library and archives, as well as the bishop's residence; the **house of Evgenije Dumča** (Jenő Dumtsa), the first mayor of Szentendre; the **birthplace of the Serbian writer Jakov Ignjatović** and his bust; and the cross on the 'Tsar Lazar Square' (Lázár cár tér) on the Danube bank, commemorating the Serbian monarch Lazar, whose relics were brought here by the Serbian refugees coming to Szentendre in 1690. Apart from the increasingly large numbers of Hungarians, there were Roman Catholic southern Slavs, Dalmatians, Germans, Slovaks, and Jews who moved to the township. Serbs of the town uphold their customs in many ways, perhaps the Wake of 19 August is their greatest festivity. A week after the Wake, on the Day of the Assumption of

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the Virgin Mary, they celebrate a liturgy at the spring of ***Stara voda*** (the Serbian name meaning 'Old Water') on the outskirts of the town. They also remember events in their history, such as the Battle of Kosovo (1389) on Vidovdan (28 June) and their flight on Dan Seobe (19 November). Szentendre also hosts a Serbian Artists' Art Colony organised annually in August.

Those wanting to satisfy their tastes should visit the Corner Restaurant (in Lázár cár tere opposite the quay) for Serbian delights and the world-famous Szamos Cafe (Dumtsa Jenő utca 14) for marzipans and pastries, which was founded by Mátyás Szamos – a Szentendre-born Serb (Mladen Savić was his original Serbian name).



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Ráckeve

Ráckeve (Serbian: *Srpski Kovin*), a town which is the home of Hungary's most important Serbian church monument, is also easily within reach of the contemporary tourist by suburban railway from the capital. 51 In the mid-15th century, a group of Serbian merchants and craftsmen who fled from the Turks from the city of Kovin, which lies along the lower stretch of the Danube, settled at the southern end of Csepel Island in the Danube. The **Church of Our Lady**, built by this community in the 15th century, is the only Gothic Orthodox church in the world. Its interior is divided into three parts in line with the Byzantine tradition: the sanctuary, the nave and the vestibule (*'pronaos'*). The sanctuary faces East, separated from the nave by an *iconostasis*. The central nave built during King Matthias Corvin's reign was consecrated in 1487; the bottom level of the bell tower, as well as the two side chapels adjoining the Southern side of the church, were built by Italian masters. The church was first painted in 1514, then again in the second half of the 18th century. Its Byzantine-style frescoes were restored by masters from the Balkans. It survived the Turkish wars and even WWII, when a shell went through its roof, but miraculously did not go off. The monastery was abolished during the time of Maria Theresa in the 18th century, but it was re-opened after the year 2000 by the Diocese of Buda. Church services are held in the Serbian language every day, although there are less than 10 Serbs living in Ráckeve today – 70-75% of the Serbs of Hungary left the country after WWI for the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, the later Yugoslavia. A wake celebrating the dedication of the church is held annually on 28 August, when great numbers visit the Serbian monastery of Ráckeve from nearby Serbian villages (like Lórév [*Lovra*], the only village with a Serbian majority in Hungary and Szigetcsép [*Čip*] along the Danube). During the summer the church is also open for tourists.

Ráckeve offers another impressive sight. The **baroque palace** built for **Prince Eugene of Savoy (Savoyai Jenő)**, the great Austrian-French military leader who dealt decisive blows to the Turkish forces in the employ of the Habsburgs.

a | The Orthodox Church Blagoveštenska in Szentendre and its iconostasis 50

b | Frescoes in the Serbian Orthodox Church of Our Lady in Ráckeve 51

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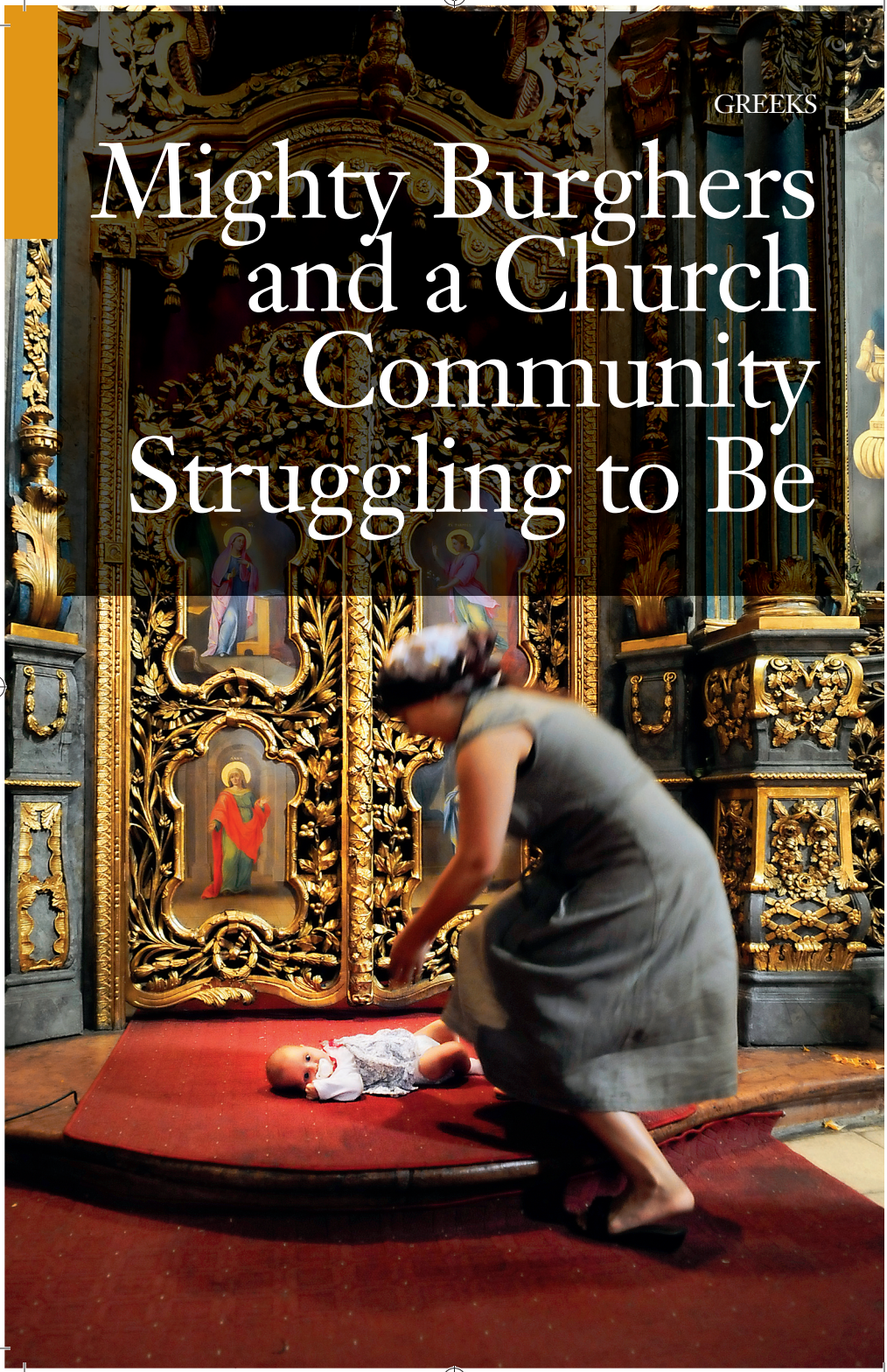
Mighty Burghers and a Church Community Struggling to Be



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Roaming around the inner city of Pest, we find signs of the presence of another old and important Orthodox community – the Greeks. The late baroque (Zopf) style Greek Church in V. Petőfi tér by the Danube hardly passes for an Orthodox church at first sight. The **Orthodox Church of Our Lady** was built by Greek and Macedo-Romanian tradesmen who had settled in Pest in the 18th century. 52 179 families, headed by Demeter Argiri, purchased the plot in the square today called Petőfi tér, and this became the home of the Greek Church and the neighbouring Greek Courtyard. The church was consecrated in 1801 by the Orthodox bishop of Buda, as Miklós Jankovics), who was also a Greek, born in Naxos, and who painted a number of other Greek churches in Hungary (Eger, Miskolc). The two steeples and today's façade were built on the basis of a design by Miklós Ybl in 1873. In the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Greek Church of Pest belonged to the jurisdiction of the Patriarchate of Karlovci in Serbia, but the Greeks were extremely eager to shake off the control of the Serbian Diocese of Buda. Priests of the Greek congregation of Buda had always come from the ranks of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, as did Anthimos Orphanides, active in Pest between 1912 and 1928. In 1931,



| The Orthodox Church of Our Lady 52





Dyonysios Popovich (his original name was Papayannius), who was born in Kozani, Greece. The stately Baroque *iconostasis* of the church is the work of Nikólaosz Ioánnu Talidórosz (also known

the congregation inserted the word 'Hungarian' into its name, but the language of the liturgy remained Greek right until the end of the 1940s. In the 1950s, however, the Patriarchate of Moscow gained control over the church and the congregation.

In V. Galamb utca, directly behind the church, stood the so-called Greek Courtyard, the centre of Greeks living in Budapest, where, for the greater part of the 19th century, a Romanian school also operated. This is also where Romanian teachers and priests lived. In a small park opposite the Greek Church, stands the memorial erected 'in memory of noted Greek citizens of the city of Buda-Pest', not far from the monument which pays homage to Armenian victims of WWI.

A period of rejuvenation in the Greek presence in Hungary ensued at the time when, from April 1948 onwards, thousands of Greeks, most of them children, fled from the Greek Civil War to find a safe haven in Hungary. The refugees settled at various points of the country: partly in Budapest and partly in a new town founded on the estate of the Sina family at Iváncsa, Fejér county. In 1952 the village was named **Beloiannisz** after the Greek Communist leader Nikos Beloyannis.

Today there are around 3,500 Greek people living in Hungary, about 2,000 of them in Budapest. The Greeks of the second wave of immigration, who arrived in the late 1940s (and organised their minority self-governments), think particularly highly of the receptive mentality of the Hungarians. One expression of their gratitude was a book they

a | Greek memorial in V. Petőfi tér

b | Memorial plaque to Pál Haris





The Greeks of Hungary are commemorated by the name of a small, atmospheric old street in the inner city of Pest – **Haris köz**, which runs between Váci utca and Petőfi Sándor utca. The memorial plaque at Haris köz 5 pays homage to Greek Chief Consul Pál Haris (Harisis), who played a particularly important part in Greek-Hungarian relations in the field of education, economic co-operation and diplomacy.

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published in 2006 under the title *Köszönjük, Magyarország* (Thank You, Hungary). By now, the first (17th–19th-century) and the second (20th-century) waves of Greek immigrants have also found their way to each other; they share a common flow of history, and realise that knowing and promoting tradition and the understanding of this past are an important factor in their preservation.

Just how valuable and productive the presence of the Greek community has been throughout the centuries was demonstrated by an exhibition entitled 'The Greek Heritage: The Greek Orthodox Diaspora in Hungary in the 17th to 19th centuries' at the Budapest History Museum in 2009, with the co-operation of the Greek-established Orthodox Hungarian Church Community of Budapest and the Foundation for Greek Culture.

The Orthodox Hungarian Church Community defines itself as the legal successor to the Greek congregation which was established in the late 18th century. Their activity, carried out in the name of historical continuity and the safeguarding of values, was rewarded with the prize 'Pro Cultura Minoritatum Hungariae' in 2009.

GREEK AND MACEDO-ROMANIAN CITIZENS IN PEST-BUDA

Macedo-Romanian tradesmen of mostly Greek nationality or culture, whose companies traded for a decent profit of 4% (e. g. the **Bekella, Lyka, Nákó, Sacelláry, Tekedzisz/Takácsy** families) contributed abundantly to the development of Buda into a town with an urban, middle-class milieu in the Reform Era. The **Sina (Szinasz)** family, as well as a number of other families, had come from **Moschopolis *(Voskopojë)***, now in Albania, and settled in Vienna. Their businesses and estates, however, tied them with a thousand threads to Hungary. It was **György Szina** who, together with Count István Széchenyi, worked out the plans for financing the Chain Bridge. His son, **Simon Sina**, was a generous donor, supporting Hungarian national institutions, as well as cultural and academic life. He made donations to the Hungarian National Museum, the National Club, the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, and the National Theatre. He also contributed to promoting rail and steam boat transport. Some of his donations were for charity (hospitals, orphanages, the Institute for the Blind, nursery schools). He also gave a sum to support the building of the Greek Academy. A great many Macedo-Romanian families, however, expressly supported the Romanian Orthodox church. The **Mocsonyi (Mocioni)** family were known partly as supporters of Romanian cultural life and partly for their political activity. The name of the **Sacelláry** family is preserved in the name of the palace that was built, for the wedding of Irén Sacelláry and József Törley, in Budafok near the Törley Palace at the end of the 19th century.

Tradesmen from the Balkan Peninsula are hard to classify according to 'nationality'. Owing to their complex origin, culture and religion, both Greek and Romanian historians claim them as their own. In fact, these families and their heritage connect, rather than separate Greeks and Romanians.

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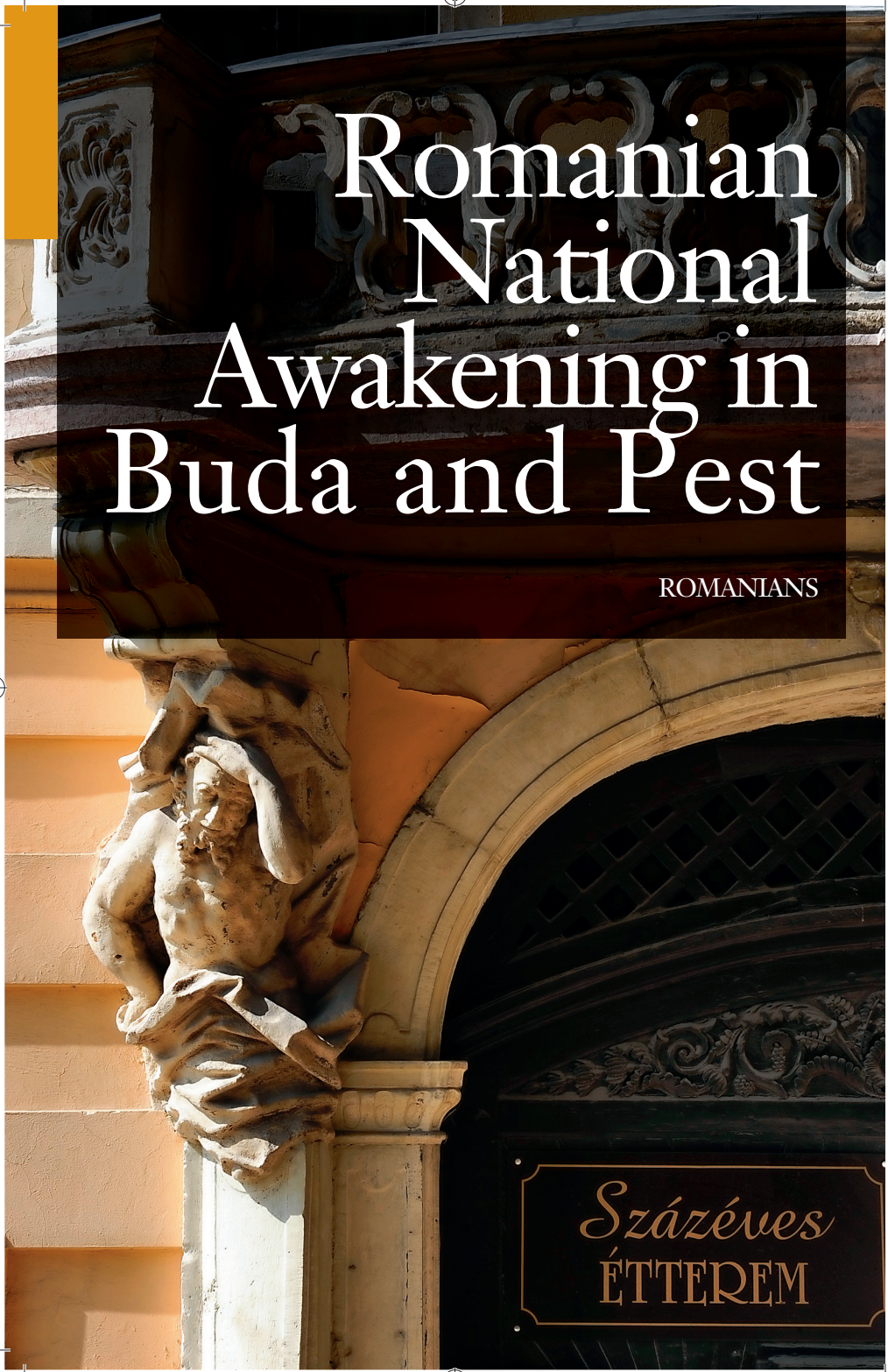
Romanian National Awakening in Buda and Pest

ROMANIANS



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The presence of Romanians in the Hungarian capital is due largely to the fact that **Transylvania**, where they have made up a considerable part of the population for centuries, was an area of Hungary until it was dissolved at the end of WWI. To a certain extent, this is why Buda was one of the hubs of Romanian intellectual life in the 18th and 19th centuries. Three noted Greek Catholic Romanian intellectuals worked here as editors (and censors): **Samuil Micu-Klein, Gheorghe Şincai** and **Petru Maior**. Called **the 'Transylvanian Triad'**, they were major driving forces behind the rise of modern Romanian national consciousness. The Royal Hungarian University Press published important works in this context – indeed, there were more Romanian books produced here at one time than in Bucharest. Maior's chef d'oeuvre, *The History of the Beginnings of Romanians in Dacia* was also published at Buda in 1812, to become 'a veritable Bible of the seething period of National Awakening', as the Hungarian historian Ambrus Miskolczy writes in his study on the subject. The activity of the Transylvanian school in Buda is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the building at I. Országház utca 3 in the Castle District. 53 If we walk about in the inner city of Pest (District V), we must, in connection with Romanians, mention the Greek and Macedo-Romanian merchants who lived here in the 19th century, and who owned a number of houses in **Vörösmarty tér** and **Váci utca**. The building at V. Vörösmarty tér 2, for instance, used to be owned by the **Mocsonyi (Mocioni)** family, while that of V. Váci utca 21 belonged to the **Argiri (Argyr)** family. A further example is the old baroque building in the small street that connects the Danube Bank with Váci utca 54 (V. Pesti Barnabás utca 2) – one of the last remains of old Pest. This building, now the **'100-year-old Restaurant' (Százéves Étterem)**, was owned by the Macedonian

a | Plaque to the 'Transylvanian Triad' in the Castle District 53



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a

Grabovszky family in the 19th century. **Atanáz Grabovszky**, who sponsored both Romanian and Hungarian cultural initiatives, ran a Romanian literary parlour here. This was often visited by, among others, Eftimie Murgu, a famous Romanian historian and politician who urged Hungarian-Romanian cooperation (and lived for a while at XII. Városmajor utca 17), and also by **Emanuil Gojdu (Gozsdu Manó)**.

Only a few blocks down, on the corner of Southern Váci utca and Nyáry Pál utca, a plaque calls our attention to the fact that this is where the periodical ***Familia***, founded by the Romanian writer Iosif Vulcan, was edited. The inscription also informs us that the first published poem by Mihai Eminescu, who is regarded as the greatest Romanian poet, also appeared in *Familia*. 55 Another scene of effervescent Romanian cultural life was at V. Veres Pálné utca 11 nearby, where the literary journal ***Luceafărul*** **('Morning Star')** was edited. In the first years of the 20th century, the editor-in-chief of this magazine was the poet **Octavian Goga**, who also lived here. It was published by the Petru Maior Circle founded in 1862. Regulations for the circle were drawn up by the writer



b

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Ioan Slavici, who was a student in Pest at the time, as we learn from Mária Berényi, the director of the Institute of Romanians in Hungary, in her study about Romanians and Macedo-Romanians in the Hungarian capital.

Mementos of Romanian life are found not only in the inner city. At VII. Holló utca 8, we find the chapel of the **Romanian Orthodox Congregation of Budapest** consecrated in 1900. 56 Designed by József Hild, the building was purchased by the Gozsdu Endowment in the 1880's. Now owned by the congregation, the building, together with other buildings in the area, recently came under threat of demolition due to the urban development project for the reconstruction of Erzsébetváros. In the event, it escaped, and the chapel was restored. A plaque on the wall commemorates the founder. The congregation has around 400 members, of which some 50-60 take part regularly in Sunday services. In the neighbouring district, at VIII. Mária utca 10, lived the physician and biologist **Victor Babeș**, who taught and did research in Budapest for a number of years.

Romanian cultural life in Budapest was also quite lively around the turn of the 20th century, but, like that of the Slovaks, it gradually lost importance after the breakup of historical Hungary and the loss of territories with a Romanian population.

a | The former Grabovszky House in Pesti Barnabás utca 54

b | The memorial plaque commemorating the magazine ***Familia*** 55

c | The chapel of the Romanian Orthodox Congregation of Budapest 56



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The Disputed Legacy of Emanuil Gojdu



Emanuil Gojdu (Gozsdu Manó) was born in 1802 of Macedo-Romanian parentage in Nagyvárad (Oradea, Romania). After completing his law studies, he started work in Pest, first as an intern for the ethnic Serbian lawyer and poet Mihály Vitkovics, then in his own law firm. By the time of the Reform Age (the second quarter of he 19th century), he was a noted attorney. Gojdu, who saw himself as a Hungarian (a 'Hungarus', i.e. a citizen of Hungary) with a Romanian ethnic identity, championed the propagation of the Hungarian language, and, at the same time, supported Romanian culture by sponsoring the publication of Romanian works at the Royal Hungarian University Press. A well-earning attorney, he invested his wealth in property development. The most significant of his investments, **Gozsdu-udvar (Gojdu Courtyard)**, is a large arcaded complex connecting Király utca with Dob utca. In fact, the Courtyard was built after Gojdu's death, between 1901 and 1904, by the Endowment bearing his name. In line with his last will, the Endowment also offered grants to Romanian students from Hungary who were of the Orthodox faith to promote their studies.









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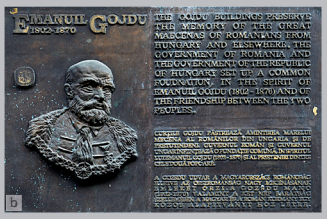

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Recently, the Gozsdu-udvar has figured quite often in the media because of a dispute between Hungary and Romania. This difference in opinions has been an ongoing issue for many years, the crux of the problem being that, in 1952, the governments of the two countries agreed to mutually waive all property claims against each other, including the Gozsdu-udvar. After the 1989 post-Communist political change, the buildings were privatised, which became a matter of dispute. Although a few years ago it seemed that the situation around it would come to a reassuring conclusion, and a joint Hungarian-Romanian Gojdu Public Endowment could emerge and be run in co-operation, the issue has now ground to a halt. It is hoped that the legacy of such an emblematic person in promoting amicable relations between the Hungarians and Romanians will cease to be the subject of such prolonged dispute. As far as the buildings are concerned, they have recently been renovated. The Király utca façade now conjures up the time when it was originally built, while the chain of quadrangles connected by a passageway has been reconstructed in a modern style. 57 (VII. Király u. 13.)


a

ROMANIANS IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

Even today, there are several hundred, or, according to some estimates, several thousand citizens of Romanian nationality or speaking Romanian living in Budapest. There is a **Romanian Minority Local Self-government** in almost each of the 23 districts of the city, and one at a municipal level since 2006. The National Self-government seat is in Gyula, close to the Romanian border. The minority self-governments offer a varied array of cultural, artistic and language teaching programmes, as well as cultural events often entailing the participation of compatriots from Romania or other countries. The Municipal Romanian Minority Self-government runs its own website (http://www.fovarosiromanonkormanyzat.eu/), and events of the life of the community are reported regularly by the printed and electronic media in Romanian and Hungarian.

NGOs of the Romanian minority play a considerable role in the Hungarian capital. Their oldest organisation is the **Romanian Association in Budapest**, which has been functioning without interruption for 30 years. A recently established theatre group called ***Luceafărul*** offers performances in two languages in a cellar theatre in the inner city and elsewhere. Further organisations that deserve to be mentioned include the **Cultural Society for Romanians in Budapest** (XI. Torbágy utca 2 V/6); the **Association for Romanians in Budapest** (VI. Rózsa u. 48. II/18/A); the **Romanian Orthodox Women's and Youths' associations**; and the traditional folk dance ensemble ***Cerbul de Aur*** (Golden Stag, www.cerbul.hu/).

a | The Gozsdu-udvar (Gojdu Courtyard) 57

b | Plaque to Emanuil Gojdu

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The ‘Bulgarian Wheel’ Working

BULGARIANS



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An officially recognised minority today, Bulgarians came to Hungary in three major waves; the first one in the 14th, the second one late in the 17th century, but the most important one was the last one in the 19th and 20th centuries, when they came as market gardeners, **'Bulgarian gardeners' (bolgárkertész)** as they were called. Bulgarians had an internal administration of their own, their own court (arbitration council), and they founded the Association of Bulgarians in Hungary in 1914.

The first Bulgarian Orthodox congregation was established in Ferencváros, IX. Lónyay utca. This is where they furnished their first chapel, and their first Bulgarian school in 1918. After WWII, the school moved to its present premises in the elegant old building at VI. Bajza utca 44. 58 The **Hristo Botev Bulgarian-Hungarian Bilingual Primary and Secondary School** is the only Bulgarian-Hungarian bilingual school in the country. Since February 2008, it has also served as the home of the Bulgarian Bilingual National Minority Nursery School run by the National Self-government of Bulgarians.







The Hristo Botev Bulgarian-Hungarian Bilingual Primary and Secondary School 58

A LITTLE BYZANTIUM IN OUTER FERENCVÁROS

However, during the interwar period the Bulgarian congregation grew too large for the chapel in Lónyay utca, and built a new church on a plot donated by the municipality in IX. Vágóhíd utca in 1930. 59 With its three naves and Byzantine cupola, the **Bulgarian Orthodox Church of St Cyril and St Method** is the only church in Hungary in a Bulgarian Byzantine style. The church

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a | The Bulgarian Orthodox Church of St Cyril and St Method in Vágóhíd utca. 59

b | The Bulgarian Wheel at Halásztelek

c | The Bulgarian Culture House with the bust of Hristo Botev

was modelled on a number of Orthodox churches in Bulgaria – among them the St Alexander Nevsky Cathedral in Sofia and the famous church of the Bachkovo Monastery. Important in architectural history, this church is also the **centre of the Central and Western European Diocese** of the Bulgarian Orthodox Church, and the **seat of the Metropolitan Simeon**. The church is a unique and colourful feature in this drab, industrial area, but not very long ago this part of the town was on the edge of the gardens rented by the Bulgarian gardeners. Working in Zugló, but mostly in southern Pest, Outer Ferencváros and Soroksár, these gardeners used the ancient irrigation technique of Mesopotamian origin to grow vegetables, and thus gained a leading position on the vegetable markets around Pest. They are commemorated by Bolgárkertész utca (Bulgarian Gardener Street) in **Zugló** (District XIV).

Opposite the church at Vágóhíd utca 61, we find the **Bulgarian Culture House**, with a bust of the 19th-century poet and freedom fighter Hristo Botev in front. Bulgarians in Hungary built this cultural centre by themselves in 1957. This was doubly significant at the time. On the one hand, the Communist authorities did not officially recognise them as a minority, and therefore creating a cultural centre for themselves was a ma-







jor achievement. Secondly, they built it from donations given by the members of the community, which was an outstanding instance of self-management and preservation of identity by a national minority in the context of the impoverished and debilitated Hungarian society of the 1950s. The **Association of Bulgarians in Hungary** continues to function today. In 1982, a hotel and a restaurant were added. The Bulgarian community celebrates its main festivals in the Bulgarian Culture House, such as **Midwives' Day**, the **Liberation of Bulgaria** from Turkish Rule, **Day of St Trifon the Pruner**, and the **Day of St Demetrius of Thessaloniki**. The greatest Bulgarian holiday is 24 May, the **Day of Slavic Literacy and Bulgarian Culture**, traditionally celebrated by the Bulgarian community in the Youth Camp on Sváb-hegy ('Swabian Hill', District XII).







The **Municipal Minority Self-government of Bulgarians** has been functioning in Budapest since 1994, and most districts of the city also have their own Bulgarian Local Minority Self-governments. According to the 2001 census, 784 people in Budapest claimed to be of Bulgarian nationality, 755 marked Bulgarian as their mother tongue, and 961 people claimed that they were attached in some way to Bulgarian culture or traditions. Apart from the above, **Bulgarian cultural traditions** are persevered by various other organisations, including dance groups (e.g. *Jantry, Martenica*), bands, as well as the alternative theatre Malko Teatro. Also, the Bulgarian Institute has been working in Budapest for over 70 years (VI. Andrássy út 14).

There are a number of towns and villages in the vicinity of the capital where descendents of Bulgarian immigrants live, such as Szentendre, Érd, Dunaharaszti, Szigetszentmiklós, Rácketve, and Lórév. In the village of **Halásztelek on Csepel Island**, a memorial to Bulgarian Gardeners (the **'Bulgarian Wheel'**) was inaugurated in September 2007, on a square on the corner of Kisgyár utca and Somogyi Béla utca. 60 This irrigating wheel, built by a Hungarian master, is perfectly functional, in working order, and stands as a fine tribute to the Bulgarian immigrants who established the village in the early 20th century.

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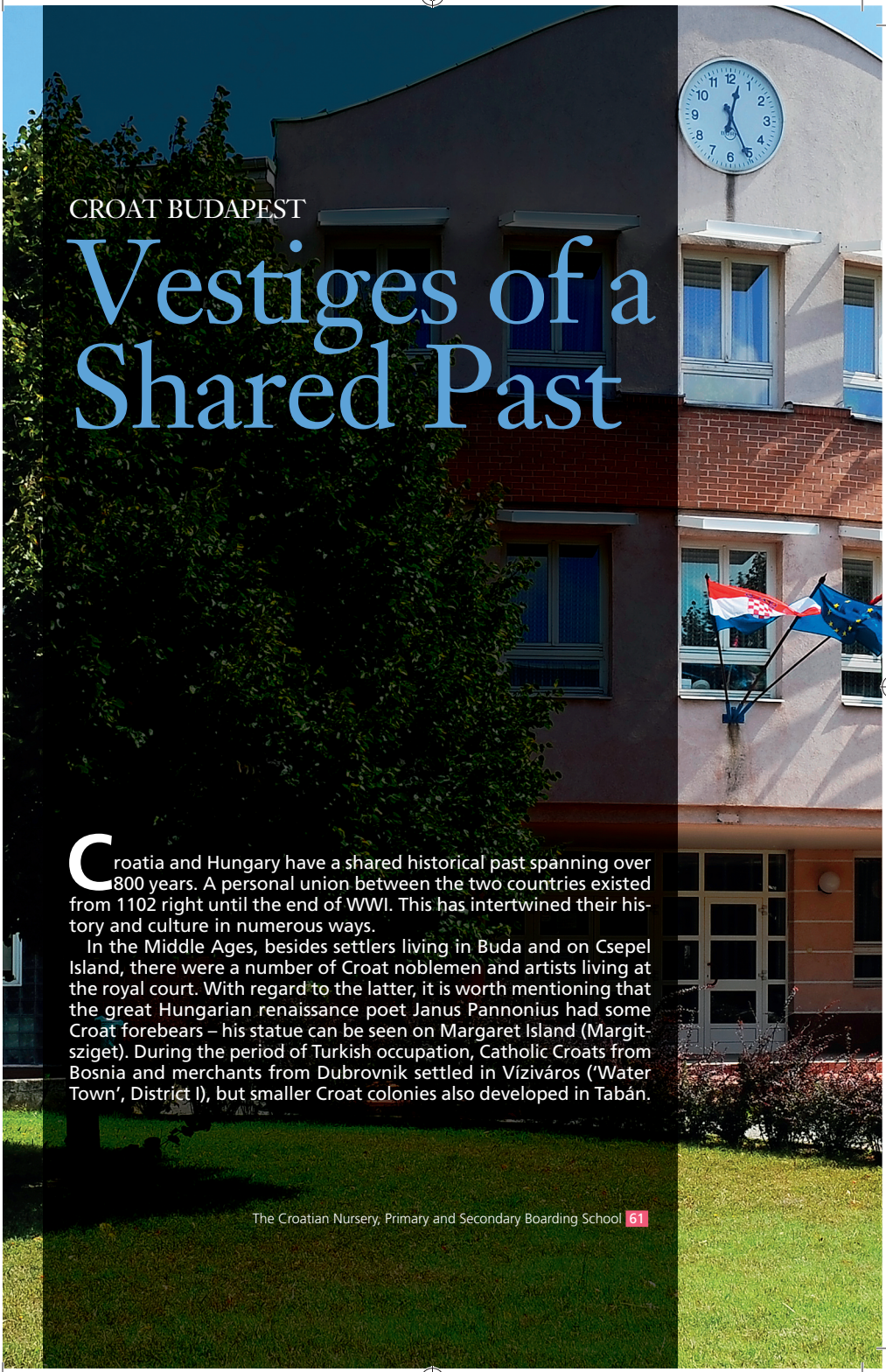
CROAT BUDAPEST

Vestiges of a Shared Past



Croatia and Hungary have a shared historical past spanning over 800 years. A personal union between the two countries existed from 1102 right until the end of WWI. This has intertwined their history and culture in numerous ways.

In the Middle Ages, besides settlers living in Buda and on Csepel Island, there were a number of Croat noblemen and artists living at the royal court. With regard to the latter, it is worth mentioning that the great Hungarian renaissance poet Janus Pannonius had some Croat forebears – his statue can be seen on Margaret Island (Margitsziget). During the period of Turkish occupation, Catholic Croats from Bosnia and merchants from Dubrovnik settled in Víziváros ('Water Town', District I), but smaller Croat colonies also developed in Tabán.

The Croatian Nursery, Primary and Secondary Boarding School 61

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Two towering examples of intertwined Croat-Hungarian history are **Miklós Zrínyi (in Croatian: Nikola Zrinski)**, who died valiantly at Szigetvár besieged by Suleiman the Magnificent in 1566, and his great grandson, also **Miklós Zrínyi**, who, besides being a great general and statesman, wrote an epic poem about his ancestor to encourage Hungarian unity against the Turks – a classic work in both Hungary and Croatia. Indeed, both men are revered as national heroes in both countries, with equal justification. The statue of Zrínyi the defender of Szigetvár stands on VI. Kodály körönd in Andrássy út, 62 and that of Zrínyi the poet-general is at the entrance to main building of the University of National Defence named after him at X. Hungária körút 9–11.

Franciscans were also attended by Croat students in great numbers. Run by Croat Franciscans from Bosnia, Studium Generale, a college set up in Buda, became the most significant centre of Croatian culture and scholarship in the 18th century.

After the wars against the Turks, Croats played a significant part in rebuilding Hungary. In Tabán, as well as in the town of Szentendre to the north of Buda, Croats lived side by side with Serbs, while Croat artisans organised themselves into separate Croat (Illyrian) guilds, keeping their books in Croatian. There were a number of Croat goldsmiths and jewellers in Buda in the 18th century. Croat burghers generously funded culture and the arts – the **Church of the Stigmata of St Francis (Szent Ferenc Sebei)** 63 (I. Fő utca 43) was built largely from their donations. Buda had several Croatian primary schools; and the Latin-speaking secondary schools established by the



a | Church of the Stigmata of St Francis (Szent Ferenc Sebei) 63

b | Bust of Károly Knézich

c | The Franciscan Church at II. Margit körút 23

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The Croatian Culture Circle in Buda

Buda had an outstandingly important role in general Croatian cultural history. Founded by Croat Franciscan monks, the **Buda Culture Circle** included the best, seminal Croat minds of the time, such as the linguists **Stjepan Vilov** and **Lovro Bračuljević**; the historians **Mirko Pavic** and **Grgur Cevapović**; as well as highly versatile scholar **Matija Petar Katančić** (1750-1825), who was the founder of both Hungarian and Croatian archaeology, and produced the first full translation of the Bible into Croatian. He is buried in the **Franciscan Church** at II. Margit körút 23, where a plaque commemorates him in Croatian. Though Buda lost its earlier role in Croatian cultural life by the middle of 19th century, **Ljudevit Gaj**, the reformer of Croatian orthography, had his book on the rules of correct spelling printed in the Hungarian capital.



b

With the rise of modern-day nationalism, Croats and Hungarians sometimes found themselves on opposing sides. Hungarian national consciousness had particular difficulties in coming to terms with the Vienna-incited attacks led by **Josip Jelačić**, the Ban of Croatia, during the 1848–49 Revolution. Yet, to counterbalance this, there was **Károly Knézich (Knezić)**, a major general in the Hungarian revolutionary army of Croat origin, who was martyred in 1849. His bust stands in front of the Croatian Nursery, Primary and Secondary Boarding School (VI. Kántorné sétány 1-3, just behind IKEA). 61

From the second half of the 19th century, the Croats of Buda and Pest gradually assimilated into Hungarian both as a language and an identity, although there were Croatian-speakers in Tabán and Csepel Island as late as the 20th century. The majority of Croats now living in Budapest moved to the city from other areas of Hungary after WWII.


c

Croats in Hungary after the Breach

The dissolution of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy at the end of WWI meant a major breach in traditional Hungarian-Croat ties. Tens of thousands of ethnic Hungarians and Croats became minorities on the other side of the border. After WWII, Hungarian-Croat inter-ethnic relations deteriorated further as a result of Soviet-bloc politics; schools in the Croatian language in Hungary also declined. To make things worse, Hungarian authorities identified Croats with Serbs and Slovenians, terming them as one unified 'South Slavic' minority due to the existence of Yugoslavia. However, with the transformation of 1989, the old ties have begun to be repaired. The declaration of the independent Croatian Republic in 1991 meant that ethnic Croats living in Hungary now had a mother country of their own, as well. Eventually, three schools teaching in Croatian were established – one in Budapest.

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The **Association of Croats in Hungary**, with its headquarters in Budapest, was founded in 1990. It pools the population of six Hungarian regions, has a 6000-strong membership, and receives funds from the national budget. The **National Croatian Minority Self-government** was founded on 1 April 1995, with its seat at VIII. Bíró Lajos utca 24. According to the 2001 census, Hungary has a Croat population of 15,000, of which 771 people live in Budapest. 630 named Croatian as their mother tongue in the Hungarian capital. At the local elections of 2010, 692 people signed up for the Croatian minority voting list from 21 districts of Budapest.

CROAT POINTS IN BUDAPEST



One of the elegant inner-city streets of Budapest, **Nagymező utca**, is the home of different Croatian institutions, including a publishing house and a research institute. 64 At Nagymező utca 68, **Croatica Publishers** bring out the weekly *Hrvatski Glasnik*, the cultural periodical *Pogledi*, the *Hrvatski kalendar*, and a book series of Croat writers in Hungary. This is also where the internet radio channel *Croatica Radio* has been broadcasting in Croatian since 2005 (http://radio.croatica.hu). The publishing house was founded by the National Croatian Minority Self-government and the Association of Croats in Hungary in 1999.

Established in September 2004, the **Academic Institute of Croats in Hungary** has its seat at Nagymező utca 49. Projects of the institute include the analysis of the changes that have taken place in the culture, society, language, customs, and identity of the Croat minority in Hungary in the 20th century, as well as the drawing up of a bibliography of Croatian literature in Hungary between 1945 and 2000. In 2005, they also launched a book series under the title *Biblioteka Nova*. The founders were the National Croatian Minority Self-government, the leadership of the Association of

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Croatian Academic Researchers and the Department of Croatian Language and Literature at the University of Pécs.



Memories of a Common Past

The fact that Hungary and Croatia had a common national framework for many centuries is held in both the Hungarian and the Croat public consciousness as an emphatic but essentially neutral fact. Hungarians might once in a while to refer to the fact that 'once we had a seacoast', symbolising the country's former status as a medium power. The city of Rijeka (Hungarians having used the Italian name 'Fiume'), which belonged to Hungary independently of the Croatian autonomous state before WWI, is retained particularly in the national memory. This was also the period when the so-called Hungarian medium coat-of-arms was used, which had the current Hungarian shield in the centre, and shields of its partner countries around it, including that of Croatia and Rijeka.

The shields of the 'adjacent parts' around the current Hungarian shield stand for the following:

- The three leopard heads for Dalmatia (current Croatian coast);
- The red and silver chequer for historical Croatia;
- The black weasel between two rivers for Slavonia (present-day Eastern Croatia) – note weasel in Croatian is 'kuna', also the name of the country's official currency;
- The two-headed eagle pouring water into the sea for Fiume (Rijeka);
- The mythological Turul ('falcon') of the Hungarians, the Sun and the Moon of the Szeklers (free Hungarians) and the seven bastions of Saxons for Transylvania.

RELIGION, CULTURE AND EDUCATION IN THE CROATIAN LANGUAGE IN BUDAPEST

Throughout history, the Catholic Church has played a considerable role among Croats in Hungary. Thus, regular church services in Croatian are offered in Budapest – at the inner-city Szent Mihály templom (St Michael's Church), V. Váci utca 47/B, the 1st and 3rd Sunday of every month at 17:00 – as well as Szombathely and Pécs. 65 Croatian education has two institutions in Budapest: the **Croatian Nursery, Primary and Secondary Boarding School** in District XIV (with 45 nursery-school children and 205 students in 2010–2011) and the Department of Croatian at the Faculty of Arts of Eötvös Loránd University.

The cultural life of Croats in Hungary is co-ordinated locally with funding from the local Croatian minority self-governments. Budapest associations include the **Fáklya Croatian Ensemble**, which aims to present Croatian dance and musical traditions, as well as the ***Tamburica*** dance society. It should also be noted that Hungarian Radio and Hungarian Television regularly broadcast programmes in minority languages, including Croatian.

a | 'St Michael's Church' (Szent Mihály templom) in Váci utca 65

b | The Hungarian medium coat-of arms – walled up in the period of Communism (left of the tunnel at the Buda end of Chain Bridge)

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From the 'Biggest Slovak City' to Mass Once a Month and After

SLOVAKS

ARRIVING, STAYING AND LEAVING

Slovak people have been present in the Hungarian capital for centuries. It was in the 19th century, however, that they came in greater numbers to earn a living in a city modernising and growing rapidly. The area they set out from was Upper Hungary, which included the entire territory of present-day Slovakia. Indeed, after a while, Budapest came to be dubbed the **'biggest Slovak city'**. Already in the middle of the 19th century, there were more Slovaks living in Buda and Pest (approximately 5,500 people) than in towns which lie in the area of present-day Slovakia, and whose population is now almost entirely Slovak, e.g. Liptószentmiklós (Liptovský Mikuláš), Turócszentmárton (Martin) or Zsolna (Žilina). Later, the Slovak community of Budapest increased even further; according to official statistics, the city had some 27,000 inhabitants who spoke Slovak as a mother tongue in 1890; however, according to estimates, the number of Slovaks reached 80,000 at the turn of the century. At the same time, the Slovak population, like various other groups, rapidly assimilated to the increasingly patriotic Hungarian majority of Budapest, which seemed both expedient and appealing.

Slovak Village Museum in Pilisszentkereszt (Mlynky)

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During the time of the great constructions of the **Dualist era (1867-1918)**, alongside masses of factory workers, domestics and craftsmen, a great many Slovak seasonal workers and bricklayers also came to Budapest from the Northern counties of the country, particularly from Liptó county. Arriving with people of different ethnic or national backgrounds, Slovaks mostly settled in **Józsefváros,** but a considerable number also lived in the industrial area of **Lipótváros** and in the villages surrounding the capital, where the first Slovaks had arrived after the period of the Ottoman occupation of Hungary.

Not all of Budapest's Slovaks were working-class – their ranks included professionals, artists, businessmen, and politicians. In the first half of the 19th century, the University of Pest had a particularly high number of Slovak students. When government offices and eventually the Hungarian Parliament were moved from Pozsony (today: Bratislava, the capital of Slovakia) to Buda and Pest, a part of the elite of the Slovak national intelligentsia also came along, and began to establish printing and publishing houses, daily and weekly periodicals and cultural societies, as Anna Kovács, the authority on the subject, states in her many works.

After the dismemberment of historical Hungary following WWI, the Slovak culture of Budapest also began to decline, since young and middle-aged Slovaks and the almost entire Slovak intellectual elite left for the newly established Czechoslovakia. The Slovaks who remained behind in Budapest underwent even more rapid assimilation. To top this, Czechoslovakia insisted on a population exchange after WWII, resulting in tens of thousand of Slovaks having to move to that country. As a result of the processes mentioned, the Hungarian census of 2001 recorded just 18,000 people claiming to be Slovaks by ethnicity, of whom around 1,500 lived in Budapest.

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A WALK IN SLOVAK BUDAPEST

Ján Kollár's Lutheran Congregation

If we wish to discover traces of Slovak presence in Budapest, we need to start our walk at one of the main hubs of Budapest: V. Deák tér. On the Northern side of the square, we see an impressive neoclassical building, the oldest and largest Lutheran church in the city. 66 Its construction began in 1799, but it was not consecrated until 1811. For a long time, this church was jointly used by **Slovaks, Germans and Hungarians**. One of its priests was Ján Kollár (1793-1852), who invented the notion of cultural pan-Slavism, and is regarded as an outstanding thinker and writer by both Slovaks and Czechs.



The Apostle of Cultural Pan-Slavism

Ján Kollár saw Slavs as one single nation, and considered the various Slavic groups as so many tribes that had once spoken one and the same language. This way, he divided Slavonic languages into main and sub-dialects. The four main dialects he admitted were Polish, Czech, Russian, and Southern Slavonic. Writers in the sub-dialects, he claimed, should follow the relevant main dialect, which meant, in his view, that Slovaks should transfer to literary Czech, as he himself wrote in Czech. After the Revolution of 1848–49, Kollár obtained a professorship in Vienna, and died there in 1852.

Kollár had long wanted to separate the Slovak Lutherans of Pest from the predominantly German congregation. Finally, he obtained permission for a breakaway from King Francis I in 1833. He then raised funds for building a Slovak Lutheran church, but did not live to see its completion.

A memorial plaque to **Abbot Šimon Klempa** (1811-1903) is to be found in the Church of Saint Teresa of Ávila 67 (Avilai Szent Teréz templom; VI. Pethő Sándor utca 1, near Oktogon), who served there until 1886. He edited the *Katolícke Noviny*, the first Slovak-language newspaper, in Pest in 1849.

The Slovak Lutheran Complex in Rákóczi út

If we walk along V. Károly körút, behind City Hall, within a few minutes we come to Astoria. If we then turn left into busy Rákóczi út, we walk past the **Budapest Slovenský inštitút** 68 **(Slovak Institute**; VIII. Rákóczi út 15), which contributes actively to the intellectual life of the city by hosting exhibitions, academic conferences, lectures, book launches, etc. If we walk further on towards Blaha Lujza tér, we see the massive, old architectural ensemble of **St Roche's Hospital (Szt. Rókus Kórház)**, complete with a chapel, which was opened in 1789. With its 207 beds, the first public hospital of the city was a modern establishment for its period. According to the records of its construction, many Slovak masons worked on it.

a | Lutheran Church in Deák tér 66

b | St Roche Hospital (Szt. Rókus Kórház)

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If we walk further along Rákóczi út, past Blaha Luzja tér, and look carefully up at the rooftops, we notice the cross of a church spire above (at VIII. Rákóczi út 57/a). 69 This is the steeple of the church built in the mid-1800s by the break-away Slovak Lutherans who left the Deák tér congregation. It stood in the middle of a yard with the pastor house and what was then a Slovak Lutheran school on either side. To secure funds for maintenance, the congregation built an impressive neo-Romanesque ensemble around it (the **Luther House**). Building costs, however, were proving too high, and the congregation gave the builder a 60-year lease on the building. Later, in 1952, the Communists nationalised it. In the 1960s, even the church was sold, and later converted to fulfil various functions, including a martial-arts club (the so-called 'Sports Temple'). All the Slovak congregation now has is a pastor's flat, a chapel and some minor bits of property. Its membership has dwindled considerably – to around 50.

a | The erstwhile doorway of the former Slovak Lutheran Church behind the 'Luther House' 69

b | The memorial plaque to Milan Hodža 70

c | Plaque commemorating the Slovak inhabitants of Józsefváros at the beginning of Tavaszmező utca. 72

d | St Joseph's Church (Szent József templom) in Horváth Mihály tér 71



a



b

Memorial plaque to Milan Hodža

Returning from the church-turned-martial-arts centre to the Nagykörút (Ring Road), we take the south-bound No. 4 or 6 tram, and get of off at the next stop, Rákóczi tér (Józsefváros, District VIII). Here we find a memorial plaque to another notable Slovak personality, **Milan Hodža** (1878–1944). He started his career in journalism in Budapest, in 1897. He edited and founded the newspaper *Slovenský denník* and the weekly *Slovenský týždenník*. He was also the most significant of a number of Slovak politicians who were elected to the Hungarian Parliament at the turn of the 20th century. As aide to the Archduke Franz Ferdinand, the Habsburg heir to the throne who was later assassinated in Sarajevo in 1914, he made a proposal to reorganize the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy on a federalist basis. When Czechoslovakia was established, Hodža occupied various ministerial posts, and eventually became prime minister (1935–38). He died in exile. His memorial plaque can be seen on the building at VIII. Rákóczi tér 3. 70

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Slovak Józsefváros

In the late 19th century, this quarter of Budapest counted as the centre of Slovaks living in Pest. Their community life revolved around **St Joseph's Church** 71 **(Szent József templom**; VIII Horváth Mihály tér). Today, the only manifestation of Slovak life in Józsefváros is that Mass is celebrated in Slovak on the first Sunday of each month. The street behind the church, Tavaszmező utca, used to be called **Szlovák utca ('Slovak Street')** – a fact now commemorated by a plaque. 72







Nearby, Slovaks had several restaurants, cafés and pubs to meet in. They also had societies, associations and editorial boards functioning in these places – centres of a vibrant Slovak social and cultural life.

Ján Bobula and the Legacy of Slovak Masons

Among the many waves of Slovak workers employed on the burgeoning building sites of Budapest in the second half of the 19th century, came a young brick-layer's assistant, **Ján Nepomuk Bobula** (1844-1903). Talented, he rose to fame as a major architect-contractor and a member of Parliament. He supported a political movement, the 'New Slovak School' (*Nová škola slovenská*), which promoted the coexistence of the Slovaks and the Hungarians on the basis of reconciliation and equality. He also sponsored periodicals and publishing ventures.

As an architect and contractor, he contributed significantly to Budapest's cityscape. Among others, he built the University Medical Clinic (VIII. Üllői út 26), the first public grammar school in the city (today Imre Madách Grammar School; VII. Barcsay utca 5) and his own mansion at VI. Andrássy út 62 – today a conference centre. 73 On the

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a | The Bobula Palace in Andrássy út 73

b | The headquarters of the National SlovakLocal Government 74

100th anniversary of his death (2003), a memorial plaque was unveiled on the wall of the building. He also **supervised the construction of the Parliament Building** and the apartment block of the Serbian Orthodox Congregation at V. Váci utca 66.

Several buildings in Budapest laud the work of Slovak masons, who were held in high esteem for their expertise (e.g. the Parliament Building, the Opera House or the National Museum). Apart from bricklayers several sculptors came to work in Budapest from Upper Hungary – any of them Slovaks.

SLOVAK LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

The **Municipal Slovak Minority Self-government** was founded in 1996. Its headquarters, along with those of several other minority self-governments, has its seat at V. Akadémia utca 1. Slovak minority self-governments operate in another 14 districts of Budapest. The Municipal Slovak Minority Self-government publishes the monthly *Budapeštiansky Slovák*. It also supports a number of NGOs and societies, such as the **choir *Ozvena***, the **Club of Slovak Old Age Pensioners** or the ***Lipa* Folk Ensemble** which collects Slovak folklore in Hungary, and conserves and presents their wealth of national dances.

The **National Slovak Minority Self-government** building 74 (XI. Fadrusz utca 11) houses several **Slovak institutions**, including a small Cultural Centre, the Vertigo Slovak Theatre and the Slovak Documentation Centre. The mission of these institutions is to promote the cultural life of Slovaks in Hungary and to organise various events and programmes. The National Minority Self-government publishes the national Slovak weekly *Ľudové noviny*, which was founded in 1957.



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Growing out of the Slovak State Primary School founded in 1949, the **Slovak Nursery, Primary and Secondary School** provides bilingual education and board 75 (XIII. Lomb utca 1-7). Since the 1990s, it has been maintained by the Municipality of Budapest.

Slovak minority self-governments operate throughout the country, particularly in the counties of Pest, Nógrád, Komárom-Esztergom, and Békés.



Slovaks around Budapest

Several towns and villages in the vicinity of Budapest have Slovak traditions, such as Nagytarcsa, Maglód, Pilis, or Ecser. Their local choirs and dance groups work to preserve the traditions of their forebears. Perhaps the most significant of these is the village of **Pilisszentkereszt *(Mlynky)*** lying to the north-west of the capital, among the Pilis Hills. After the devastations by the Turks, this village was revived in the 18th century by Slovak and German settlers. Today it is easily accessed from the city by suburban railway or by bus. With a majority ethnic Slovak population, it has a Slovak primary school, a Slovak Village Museum, and it is the home of the Pilis Folk Dance Ensemble which regularly stages folklore shows.
A few villages which had a predominantly Slovak population are today parts of Budapest. One of these is Cinkota (District XVI), where the main street is still called Szlovák út. If we visit the market of nearby Sashalom, another quarter of Budapest, we will frequently hear stallholders speak in the local Slovak dialect.



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Rivalry and Respect

CZECHS IN BUDAPEST

The Czech and the Hungarian nations have many historical and cultural connections and parallels, indeed their histories have been intertwined through centuries. Their countries being neighbours until the end of WWI, Czechs and Hungarians often perceived each other as rivals. This was how Matthias (Mátyás) Hunyadi and George (Jiří) of Poděbrady saw each other in the second half of the 15th century. However, from time to time, the two countries became allies (e.g. at Visegrád in 1335), and there were also periods when they lived in the framework of a common state under a Jagiellon or a Habsburg monarch. Thus it is no wonder that the Hungarian capital is rich in mementoes of these historical encounters. For example **Czech Saint John of Nepomuk** enjoyed a strong cult in Hungary – the oldest public sculpture in Budapest is of him (erected in 1721). It is presently displayed on Csepel Island.

Statue of St George Slaying the Dragon 76

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a



b

SAINT GEORGE SLAYING THE DRAGON – FROM PRAGUE THROUGH BUDAPEST TO CLUJ

An outstanding piece of 14th-century Hungarian gothic art, the statue of **St George Slaying the Dragon** by the Kolozsvári brothers (Márton and György), which stands in **Prague Castle**, connects Prague with Budapest and the town of Kolozsvár (Cluj-Napoca, Romania), and also the Middle Ages with the modern period. On the occasion of the Hungarian Millennium (1896), duplicates were made of it. Two copies were erected in Budapest, one in Buda Castle under the Fisherman's Bastion 76 (Halászbástya; District I), the other in the 'Mulberry Gardens' (Epreskert), which form the area around the studios of the Academy of Fine Arts (VI. Bajza utca 41), and there are replicas also in the National Museum and the Budapest University of Technology and Economics, as well as in Béke tér, Szeged. A further copy was erected in the sculptors' home town, Cluj (then in Hungary).



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CZECH PEOPLE IN HISTORICAL BUDAPEST

Made up of Czech officials, servicemen and businessmen, a major Czech community developed in Buda and Pest in the 19th century. They established various Czech societies, the most prestigious of them being **the Czech Club (Česká beseda)**, hosted by the 'Industrial Yard' (Iparudvar) for a long time at VI. Bajcsy-Zsilinszky utca 21. 77 At the end of the 19th century, the largest Czech club in the city was the **Sokol Athletics Club**, with its gymnasium in the Hungarian National Gymnastics Society (now the building of the Pázmány Péter Catholic University; VIII. Szentkirályi utca 26). Its chairman was the notable architect **František Novák**, designer of the former building of the Athenaeum Press and the residence of its owner, Gusztáv Emőkei Emich (VIII. Horánszky utca 16).

Architects with Czech Roots

Besides František (Ferenc) Novák, the architect and contractor **Lipót Havel** was also of Czech extraction, even though he was born in Pest. Active at the turn of the 20th century, he is noted for constructing a number of major public and residential buildings, such as the University of Technology 78 (XI. Műegyetem rakpart 3-9); the 'Art Hall' in Heroes' Square 80 (Műcsarnok, XIV. Hősök tere); the 'Comedy Theatre' 79 (Vígszínház, XII. Pannónia utca 1); and the building of the former 'High Court' 6 (Kúria; today the Museum of Ethnography, V. Kossuth tér 12), as well as the Zichy palace (VIII. Lőrincz pap tér 2).

a | The 'Industrial Yard', the home of the Czech Club in the 19th century 77

b | Statue of St George Slaying the Dragon below Fisherman's Bastion (Halászbástya) 76

c | The former High Court (now: Museum of Ethnography) 6

d | The University of Technology 78

e | The Zichy palace

f | The 'Comedy Theatre' (Vígszínház) 79









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Another significant Czech personality living in Budapest was the caricaturist **Karel Klíč** (1841-1926), well known for the cartoons he made for the Hungarian comic paper *Borszem Jankó*.

At the end of the 19th century, a number of Czech banks established branches in Budapest. Czech-Hungarian financial institutions also emerged, the headquarters of the **Czech-Hungarian Industrial Bank** (Cseh-Magyar Iparbank) being at. V. Nádor utca 6. 81 The building itself is a typical example of modern, early 20th-century Hungarian architecture.

In the period of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867-1918), a considerable number of Czech artists visited Budapest, among them the famous composer Antonín Dvořák, who gave a very successful concert in the Budapest **Opera House** 82 (VI. Andrássy út 22). The building of the Opera House now has József Ispánki's sculpture (1961) of the other great Czech composer, Bedřich Smetana, on it. The celebration of the Millennium in 1896 (the 1000th anniversary of the Hungarian occupation of the Carpathian Basin) also attracted hundreds of Czech visitors, brought by special trains and ships from all over the Czech lands.

a | The 'Czech-Hungarian Industrial Bank' 81

b | Sculpture of Bedřich Smetana on the Budapest Opera House 82

c | Memorial plaque to Anton Straka 83









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After WWI, the number of Czechs living in Budapest significantly decreased, the activity of the Czech Clubs declined, but other events of Czechoslovak relevance continued to take place in the city. The building of the Czechoslovak Embassy was in Rákóczi út. This hosted the club for members of the Budapest Czech community, and this is also where **Anton Straka**, the most important figure of Czech-Hungarian cultural relations in the interwar period, worked. He was a Cultural Attaché, and published an anthology of Czech poetry in Hungarian. His memorial plaque was unveiled on his former house in Budapest (XIV. Amerikai út 37) in 2003. 83





Since the dissolution of Czechoslovakia in 1993, the main venue for Czech culture in Budapest has been the **Czech Centre** (***České centrum***), the official cultural representation of the Czech Republic (VI. Szegfű utca 4), hosting Czech cultural events, book launches, film screenings, exhibitions of Czech artists, concerts, academic conferences, and performances. 84

From the Czech New Wave to the Order of the Knights of Beer

Czech culture, particularly **Czech literature and cinema**, became very popular in Hungary in the 1980s. The admirers of Czech culture established clubs in Budapest, the first one being 'Amicus Club', and the second one, still active, is the **'Bohemia Circle of Friends'** (Bohémia Baráti Kör), which regularly organizes Czech cultural events, for instance Czech balls, and it publishes the magazine *Bohémia* with articles on the cultural and natural assets of the Czech Republic and on Czech-Hungarian cultural and historical contacts. Until recently, the annual **'Bohemia Festival'** of Czech culture was also held in Budapest, featuring Czech theatre performances, concerts, etc. A Czech Film Week is also organised in the cinemas of Budapest every year.

More recently, Czech cuisine and, of course, Czech beers have become very popular in Budapest. A group of lovers of Czech beers established the **'Prague Order of the Knights of Beer'** (Prágai Sörlovagrend). There are also a number restaurants offering Czech beers and meals. The first such restaurant in Budapest was the Prague Švejk Restaurant, which closed not long ago, while today fine Czech and Moravian beers and meals are served in two pubs: the 'Ferdinand Monarchy Czech Brasserie' (Ferdinánd Monarchia Cseh Sörház, VI. Szív utca 30) and the 'Pest Ale Hall' (Pesti Sörcsarnok, V. Vámház körút 16).



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Friendship out of the Ordinary

POLES IN BUDAPEST

The friendship of Poles and Hungarians is proverbial. It is a long-standing tradition, spanning a thousand years of close political, cultural, military, and economic ties.
The Hungarian and the Polish state emerged nearly simultaneously at the turn of the 10th and 11th centuries, and the two neighbouring states had practically no conflicts for centuries. Indeed, throughout history, these two peoples have experienced threats to the other as threats unto themselves, freedom to the other as their own freedom. Both have their version of the proverb expressing it.

The Poles this one:
Polak, Węgier — dwa bratanki,
i do szabli, i do szklanki,
oba zuchy, oba żwawi,
niech im Pan Bóg błogosławi.

In English:
Pole and Hungarian brothers be,
Good for fight and good for party.
Both are valiant, both are lively,
Upon them may God's blessings be.

The Hungarians this one:
Lengyel, magyar — két jó barát,
Együtt harcol s issza borát.

In English:
Pole and Hungarian — two good friends,
Joint fight and drinking are their ends.

Naturally, Budapest is replete with signs of this –
some more prominent, others waiting to be discovered.

Copy of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa and the Polish Eagle in the Rock Chapel

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A WALK IN POLISH BUDA

Carved into the side of Gellért Hill in Buda, the **Rock Chapel** of the Pauline order has a marked Polish aspect: a copy of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa and the Polish heraldic eagle are placed conspicuously on its walls. 85 The Paulines, the one monastic order founded by Hungarians (1250), were the ones who had established the most important place of pilgrimage in Poland, the Jasna Góra ('Bright Mountain') Monastery in Częstochowa in 1382. Its widely-venerated, famous treasure, the holy icon of the Virgin Mary– considering the golden *fleur-de-lis*, the emblem of the Hungarian Angevins, painted on the Virgin's veil– was probably brought there by the Pauline monks from Hungary. In 1786, however, King Joseph II of Hungary disbanded a number of monastic orders, including the Paulines, and it was only in the interwar period that their successors could return to Hungary with the help of their Częstochowa brothers. During WWII, when Poland collapsed under German and Soviet attack in autumn 1939, over a hundred thousand soldiers and civilians fled to Hungary, with full assistance by the Hungarian government, though the country was considered Germany's ally. In Budapest, they were offered regular mass in Polish at the Pauline Rock Chapel. This is commemorated by a plaque in the chapel opposite the copy of the Black Madonna and the Polish eagle.


a




a



Nearby, on the other, northern side of Gellért Hill, in Döbrentei tér in the part of town called Tabán, the **bust of Ludwik Zamenhof** (1859–1917) is worth visiting. The Polish-born physician invented the Esperanto language; and a street is named after him District XVII.

There are several other places of Polish relevance on the Buda side. One of the most important military and political leaders of Poland after it regained its independence in 1918 was **Józef Piłsudski** (1867-1935). At XII. Apor Vilmos tér 1, his bronze relief memorial had been put up in 1936, but was destroyed after 1945; it was replaced in 1993. 86) Another famous freedom fighter, **Tadeusz Kościuszko**, who fought against the Russians for the independence of his country in 1794, has a street named after him in the District I (I. Kosciuszko Tádé utca). Not far from the Buda head of the Chain Bridge, we find the bilingual **memorial plaque of Polish doctors** 87 (I. Fő utca 11-13) who offered medical assistance to refugees during WWII. High ranking ministerial official **László O'sváth** had an instrumental role in making arrangements for the Polish refugees – he is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the former Home Office in the Castle District (I. Országház utca 28-30).



Arguably the best-known Polish memorial in Hungary is **Józef (József) Bem's statue** on the square named after him on the Buda bank of the Danube between Margit híd and Batthyány tér 88 (II. Bem tér). He was one of the most successful military leaders of the Hungarian War of Independence in 1848–49. He had participated in the Polish uprising of 1830-31, then successfully reorganised the Transylvanian Hungarian army in 1848, and re-conquered the majority of Transylvania from the Imperial troops.

a | Copy of the Black Madonna of Częstochowa in the Rock Chapel (where a and memorial plaque includes a long list of places where Polish refugees lived trough the war, a considerable number of which now belong to countries adjacent to Hungary) 85

b | Statue of Józef Bem, 'Father Bem' to Hungarians – the Polish solidarity demonstration here sparked off the 1956 revolution 88

c | Relief memorial of Józef Piłsudski 86

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From the second half of the 19th century, the figure of József Bem became a **symbol of Hungarian-Polish friendship**. Thus it was no accident that, as one of the first events of the Hungarian revolution in October 1956, students who sympathised with the political changes taking place in Poland marched to Bem tér to demonstrate their solidarity, chanting 'Poland shows the way, let us follow the Polish way!' Photographs and film footage of the demonstration at Bem tér have gone round world proclaiming the courageous desire of Hungarian youths for liberty. In the second half of the 1980s, before the changes, Bem tér was again the scene of demonstrations. And, again, hundreds gathered to commemorate the victims of the tragic air crash near Smolensk on 10 April 2010, including Polish president Lech Kaczyński and his wife.

a | The Memorial Park of the Martyrs of Katyń 89

b | Bust of József Wysocki

c | The memorial plaque to lieutenant colonel Mieczysław Woroniecki 90

d | Plaque to József Antall Sr. (V. Ferenciek tere 9, the wall by the church) 93



a

Further north along the Danube, at the Buda head of Margaret Bridge, we find another memento of Polish relevance: the **Przemyśl Memorial** (II. Germanus Gyula park). The military of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy had built a huge fortress in the Polish city (the third largest in Europe at the time). During WWI, the Russians launched bloody offensives against the fortress in 1914–15, which was finally surrendered, tens of thousands of soldiers fell or were taken captive, including many Hungarians – the memorial commemorates them.

North of Margaret Bridge, Óbuda (Old Buda) is associated with Poland through an old link: King Louis (Lajos) the Great of Poland and Hungary from the House of Angevin donated the former castle of the town to his mother, the Polish Elżbieta (Erzsébet) Łokietek – hence the Polish eagle in the **coat-of-arms of Óbuda**. From this time onwards, Old Buda was an important queen's estate. Here, at the juncture of Nagyszombat utca, Szőlő utca and Bécsi út in District III, we find the **Memorial Park of the Martyrs of Katyń** set up in 2010, the first one in the world outside of Poland to commemorate the over 20,000 Polish army officers murdered by the Soviets in 1940 (a sculpture is also planned to be erected here). 89



b

Poles and Hungarians in 1848

Apart from Father Bem, there were a number of other Polish officers involved in the **Freedom Fight of 1848-49**, hoping that Hungary's liberty would also bring liberation to Poland. A separate Polish legion was set up to fight on the side of the Hungarians. Its commander was **General Józef Wysocki**, whose bust is in the garden of the National Museum (VIII. Múzeum körút). Another Polish **general, Henryk Dembiński** (spelled Dembinszky in Hungarian), was the commander-in-chief of the revolutionary army for a while – several streets are named in tribute to him in Budapest (Districts VII, XV and XVIII).

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A WALK IN POLISH PEST

Pest likewise has a wealth of Polish places of remembrance, many of which can be reached by the No. 2 tram that runs along the Danube. On the wall of the present Ministry of Agriculture, opposite the Parliament building (V. Kossuth Lajos tér 11), we find the memorial plaque to lieutenant colonel **Mieczysław Woroniecki**, who fought in the 1848-49 Hungarian War of Liberation, and was later executed by the Austrians (at a spot not far from here). 90 A few metres further, we notice the memorial to ensign **Konrad Kazimierz Rulikowski**, who also died a martyr having deserted the Russian army he came with and changed over to the Hungarians' side.

A Polish refugee in Hungary during WWII, **Henryk Sławik** issued false documents to Polish Jews in Hungary, thereby saving about 5,000 people. His memorial plaque is nearby, at V. Garibaldi utca 13. 91

Moving further south towards the Pest head of Chain Bridge (Lánchíd), opposite the building of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, we find a bilingual plaque to József Bem, stating that the general lived here in November 1848 92 (V. Akadémia utca 1).

A further connection with Polish refugees is the bilingual plaque bearing the name of **József Antall Sr.** on the wall of the apartment house he once lived in at the Pest head of Elisabeth Bridge 93 (Erzsébet híd; V. Ferenciek tere 9). Antall, father of the country's first elected Prime Minister after the communist era (József Antall, 1990-1993), did a great deal as Head of Department at the Home Office to procure shelter and assistance to Poles who had fled to Hungary; he was also active in the rescue of Jews, for which he was posthumously honoured by Yad Vashem.

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Further away from the Danube, Hungarian-Polish military relations are commemorated by the plaque dedicated to Polish King **John (Jan) III Sobieski**, who fought in the anti-Turkish wars of the late 17th century 94 (IX. Sobieski János utca 44). The memorial to Polish legionaries in Népliget 95 (District X) pays homage to the brotherhood in arms between Hungarians and Poles. It was erected in memory of the soldiers who fought in Polish legions during the War of Independence in 1848-49 and WWI.



Polish religious mementoes in Budapest

Walking along the Corso of Pest, we will easily find the **'Inner City Parish Church of Our Lady'** (Belvárosi Nagyboldogasszony Főbléniatemplom) in Március 15. tér. In the church garden to the north of the building, there are the figures of two Polish-Hungarian saints. The daughter of King Béla IV, **St Kinga**, married Polish Prince Bolesław the Shy, and was active in introducing salt mining in Poland in the 13th century (e.g. at the famous salt mine of Wieliczka). **St Hedwig,** or **Jadwiga** of Poland, was the daughter of King Louis the Great, and, as the ruler of Poland, she married Grand Duke Jogaila of Lithuania (later Władysław II Jagiełło), beginning several centuries of Polish-Lithuanian union. Patron saint of Poland, St Hedwig is highly venerated by Poles. 96 Other common saints have their images in the **'Polish Church' of Kőbánya**. Apart from the one in the Rock Chapel, there is a copy of the Black Madonna, holiest relic of the Poles, above the altar of the **'University Church of the Birth of the Virgin Mary'** 97 (Egyetemi Kisboldogasszony templom; V. Egyetem tér). A further clerical association is the full-scale **statue of Pope John Paul II** outside the Catholic Church of Rákoshegy 98 (XVII. Szent István tér).
As leader of the Catholic Church, the former Archbishop of Kraków paid official visits to Hungary on two occasions (1991 and 1996).

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Naturally, Polish influence on Hungarian arts and sciences also has its mementoes. On the façade of the Opera House 82 (VI. Andrássy út 22), we have the full-scale statue of **Stanisław Moniuszko**, founder of Polish national opera. Another plaque, not far from the Technical University 78 , preserves the memory of architect **Szilárd Zielinski**, who introduced the use of reinforced concrete in Hungary (XI. Budafoki út 3). The Water Tower on Margaret Island (Margit-sziget) was built according to Zielinski's designs.



c

POLES IN TODAY'S HUNGARY

Polish immigrants first appeared in greater numbers in the country in the second half of the 19th century, mostly as miners and seasonal agricultural workers. Workers' colonies developed in major towns and cities (e.g. Tatabánya, Oroszlány) and in places which have since then become parts of Budapest (Kőbánya, Újpest). The so-called **'Polish Church' in Kőbánya** was built to meet the needs of Polish Catholics 99 (X. Óhegy utca 11), and was finally consecrated in 1930. Inside the church, we see the images of the common **Polish-Hungarian saints**


d


e

a | Statues of St Kinga and St Hedwig 96

b | Plaque to John III Sobieski 94

c | The statue of Stanisław Moniuszko on the façade of the Opera 82

d | The 'Polish Church' of Kőbánya 99

e | The common Polish-Hungarian saints in the church 99

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(St Ladislaus, St Hedwig and St Kinga). Beside the church, we see one of the centres of the Polish minority living in Hungary, the **Polish House** (X. Óhegy utca 11). Hungarian Poles have two nationwide organisations today, the **Józef Bem Cultural Association** (*Polskie Stowarzyszenie Kulturalne im. J. Bema na Węgrzech*) and the **Catholic St Adalbert Society**. The headquarters of **the National Polish Self-government** and the Polish Museum and Archives are located at X. Állomás utca 10; the **Municipal Polish Minority Self-government** is at V. Akadémia u. 1-3, and there are 16 local minority self-governments. Hungarian Poles run a Language School, a **folk dance group** and publish two **periodicals** (*Polonia Węgierska, Głos Polonii*). There is a society which re-enacts the Wysocki Legion (Wysocki Légió Hagyományőrző Egyesület; *Stowarzyszenie Grupa Rekonstrukcji Historycznej Legionu Wysockiego na Węgrzech*), and has a webpage (www.wysocki.hu) in Hungarian, Polish and English on its various programmes.

It goes without saying that the one of busiest centres of the Budapest cultural scene is the ***Instytut Polski*** (Polish Institute). Established in 1939, it first had to rush to the aid of Polish refugees. Since 1964, situated in the very heart of the city, on the corner of Andrássy út and Nagymező utca 100 (V. Nagymező utca 15), it has disseminated Polish culture in Budapest, arranging shows, readings and concerts, and has been a major venue of Polish-Hungarian exchange.

Currently, Polish Studies may be pursued at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, and at Péter Pázmány Catholic University, Piliscsaba, not far from the capital.

Hungary is holding the Presidency of the EU Council in the first half of 2011 and passing it on to Poland thereafter; although this is a mere coincidence, it will no doubt occasion further expressions of mutual friendship between the two countries.



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The Roma Flourish and Struggles of Budapest

Gypsies (the Roma) do not constitute a culturally unified community. Although they have a language of their own (Romani), as a result of their earlier migrant lifestyle, today they are a truly multifaceted community linguistically, culturally and in religion. Accordingly, there are two senses in which we can speak about Roma culture: the ethnic culture of the individual communities and Gypsy culture 'in general'. The latter is in many ways similar to the slightly romantic and partly artificially constructed Eastern European national cultures, which were institutionalised in the 19th and 20th centuries.

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One minority?

Today there are three major ethnic and linguistic communities in Hungary who are thought of as Gypsy. The majority consists of **Hungarian-speaking Gypsies**, which include the so-called famous Gypsy musicians. The other two, quite large communities with a solid sense of identity, are the ***Olah* Gypsies** who speak Romani (Gypsy), and the ***Beash*** who speak an archaic form of Romanian. Having lived in this country for a long time, naturally many of them have a mixed or double 'Hungarian and Gypsy' identity.

THE PHARAOH'S PEOPLE AND GYPSY MUSICIANS IN BUDA AND PEST

Historians date the appearance of Gypsies in Hungary to the end of the 14th century, but they did not start living in the capital in great numbers until the second half of the 20th century. It is true that there are data testifying to Gypsies living in the territory of present day Budapest: in 1489, Queen Beatrix was entertained by Gypsy musicians playing an instrument they called the lute on Csepel Island.

After 1541, the capital of the medieval Kingdom of Hungary was occupied by the Ottomans, who brought with them Gypsy groups in large numbers. 16th-century Turkish sources speak of Gypsies who were in the service of the Turkish army and administration as **musicians, blacksmiths, bullet makers, barbers, soldiers,** etc. According to Turkish account books *(defters)*, there were numerous Gypsies living in Buda, where they constituted an entire *mahalle* (quarter) – the **'Egyptian quarter'** – which seems to have been located somewhere near the Danube. Besides the services mentioned, Gypsies also dealt in wine, and were Greek Orthodox or Muslim by religion – indeed, for a long time they were believed to be of Egyptian origin. This is why sources before the 17th century refer to them as **'the Pharaoh's people'**. From the early 18th century, more and more sources mention the activities of Gypsy musicians, although the occupation predominantly associated with Gypsies for a long time to come was that of **blacksmith**. However, the most promising path of upward mobility for Gypsies was through becoming **musicians** – a service for which there was a growing demand among the Hungarian nobility and the well-to-do peasantry. Making a living was still not easy – many musicians had to continue smithing as a second job. By the first half of the 19th century Gypsy musicians had come to be respected and appreciated by society, they were seen as representatives of Hungarian national music, and joined the national struggle for making middle-class status general.

The prestige enjoyed by Gypsy musicians might well be the reason why the word **'Gypsy'** does not have the same derogatory overtone in Hungarian as it does in some other languages, and why the greater part of the Roma think of themselves as Gypsy. (Establishing their organisation of cultural autonomy, they themselves named it the National Gypsy Self-government.) In Hungarian it would sound absurd to rename 'Gypsy music', a cultural category

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János Bihari (1764–1827) was the greatest and most famous **Gypsy violinist** of the Reform Era (the period of renewal in Hungary in the first half of the 19th century), and the first Gypsy musician to become the object of a veritable cult. This opened the way for a whole line of famous violinists. Indeed, Bihari's prestige was so great that he was commemorated by a statue in 1928, during the conservative regime of Miklós Horthy, and even after the statue was destroyed in WWII, it was replaced in the Socialist period. The sculpture is on Margaret Island (Margit-sziget). Bihari's name is also kept in the public memory by a street named after him in District V.

in its own right, as 'Roma music' or to refer to the delicious 'Gypsy roast', a must on the menu of any self-respecting restaurant, as 'roast Roma style'.

20TH-CENTURY STRUGGLES AND IMPROVEMENTS

Around the beginning of the last century, the occupations pursued by Gypsies lost their 'consumer base' in an alarmingly short time. Making a living became an ever greater challenge even for Gypsy musicians. Even amongst the poor, Gypsies were the poorest. Unspeakably worse, they were decimated by the **Holocaust**, which claimed a great many Gypsy victims.

The Gypsy Holocaust (in Romani: *Pharrajimos*) in Hungary is estimated to have claimed 5,000-10,000 lives during 1944-45.

After WWII, a period of cultural transformation ensued, which led to the unfolding of what is known today as Gypsy culture in general.

This period saw the rise of several Roma artists. If some of them might be pigeon-holed as 'naive painters', a number of them were genuine masters. The outstanding **Tamás Péli** produced an oeu-

a | The statue of János Bihari erected in 1928

b | The Roma Holocaust Memorial in IX. Nehru part, the Pest-side Danube bank between Budapest's new landmark CET and Petőfi híd (bridge) 101



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vre incorporating stylistic motifs drawn from the Renaissance and the Baroque. The generally acclaimed talent, **János Balázs**, who rose from squalor as a self-taught artist, defies classification, but his vigorous, mythically inspired paintings are today auctioned for great sums at leading art galleries in Hungary. Several noteworthy Gypsy writers also appeared at this time, including the widely-translated poet **Károly Bari**, who also published major collections of Gypsy folk songs. When Gypsies were recognised as an independent ethnic minority after the fall of Communism, all this unfolded into to a **cultural boom**. However, the transition to a market economy was a particularly heavy blow for the largely unskilled Gypsy population, thus, for the general public, the word 'Gypsy' or 'Roma' is almost synonymous with 'poor'. This rather one-dimensional picture is counterbalanced by an increasing awareness and acknowledgment of **Roma cultural achievement**.



a | Romajális ('Roma May-day Picnic') in Orczy-kert

A WALK IN ROMA BUDAPEST

Of the approximately 1,700,000 people who live in Budapest, around 60–80,000 are Roma, i.e. about 4–5% of the total population of the city and 10–13% of the country's total Gypsy population. The majority of them are Hungarian-speaking 'Hungarian Gypsies', about one tenth belong to the group referred to as *Olah* Gypsy, while *Beash* Gypsies are very rare in the capital.

A paradoxical characteristic of the development of Budapest after WWII is that while on the edge of the city housing estates mushroomed, parts of the inner city became run-down. From the 1960s, disadvantaged groups in search of a better life, including the Gypsies, moved into former lower-middle-class areas. After the political changes, this process became even more accelerated, exacerbated by the fact that the city offered better job opportunities for the Gypsies, who are affected by heavy unemployment. This was how it occurred that, although the Roma have no historical quarters in this city, there are neighbourhoods where they live in great numbers, particularly in poorer areas, these include: **Outer Erzsébetváros** (District VII), **Ferencváros** (District IX) and **Józsefváros** (District VIII), commonly referred to simply as '**the Eighth**'. This latter has mixed associations of destitute poverty, a dark 'ghetto' and a unique multi-



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cultural milieu. Walking among the buildings of Józsefváros, many of them fine, historic apartment blocks, one might easily get the impression that Gypsies constitute the majority of the population. This 'optical illusion', however, has to do with higher unemployment among the Gypsy population and the concomitant difficulties of social integration. The majority of the city's Gypsy population (40% according to some estimates) lives in this quarter, and most of their intellectual, cultural and political institutions are also found here.







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a | The Municipal Roma Educational and Cultural Centre 102



b | 'The Glove Factory Community Centre' 104

c | Gypsy radio channel Radio C 105.

d | The Roma Parliament of Hungary 106

This way, an enterprising tourist willing to take an hour's walk can easily become acquainted with the Roma side of Pest, and find it illuminating to spend some time at any of these institutions. **Budapest Beyond Sightseeing** offers 'alternative' guided tours of the city, which venture into the little streets, overhanging walkways and inner courtyards of the district to allow visitors a glimpse into its everyday life. (Register in advance at www.beyondbudapest.hu).

The **Municipal Roma Educational and Cultural Centre**, which has its headquarters between Astoria and Blaha Lujza tér 102 (VIII. Szentkirályi utca 7), promotes social integration, and also offers its visitors a number of cultural events. Not far from Blaha Lujza tér, we find the centre of the National Gypsy Self-government which houses the **National Roma Library and Archives** 103 (VII. Dohány utca 76). A little further down, we find the centre of the Roma news agency **'C-press'** (VIII. Népszínház utca 42-44). If we walk from here down Nagyfuvaros utca, we get to Mátyás tér where we find what is called **'the Glove Factory Community Centre'** 104



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(VIII. Mátyás tér 15). In Erdélyi utca, a street which opens from this square, we find a school named after the Gypsy writer **Menyhért Lakatos** (1926-2007). His best known novel, the autobiographically inspired *Füstös képek* (Smoky Pictures), has been published in a number of languages world wide.

From Mátyás tér, which has become one of the main targets of urban rehabilitation in recent years, we can walk towards VIII. Teleki tér, and, crossing the square, reach Kerepesi Cemetery, which, besides great figures of Hungarian national history, is also the resting place of many Roma artists (e.g. Gypsy musician Béla Radics, painter Tamás Péli, jazz musician Aladár Pege). It is from VIII. Teleki László tér 7 that Hungary's Gypsy radio channel, **Radio C**, broadcasts its programmes. 105

If we go in the opposite direction, we find the **Roma Parliament of Hungary** at VIII. Tavaszmező utca 6. 106 This is an association of Roma NGOs involved in the protection of interests, but also plays an important part in disseminating Gypsy culture. It is the home of the only significant permanent exhibition of Gypsy art; it regularly puts on seasonal exhibitions, and serves various internet galleries offering glimpses into the world of Gypsy art.

Permanent Exhibition of Gypsy painters – 'ROMA COLOURS IN HUNGARY'
Roma Parliament (Budapest, VIII. Tavaszmező utca 6)





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In the areas with a high Gypsy population, several state institutions and NGOs work on promoting social integration. Examples of the latter include **Józsefváros Education Fund** (Józsefvárosi Tanoda Alapítvány) and the **Ferencváros Education Centre** (Ferencvárosi Tanoda; IX. Tűzoltó utca 33/a). Mention must also be made of the **Romaversitas Fund** (IX. Ferenc körút 39) which offers comprehensive educational and financial support packages to Roma university students.

The masses of innocent Roma people who were deported during WWII are commemorated by the **Roma Holocaust Memorial** on Nehru part ('Nehru Quay'), the District-IX stretch of the Danube bank. The permanent exhibition of the **Holocaust Memorial Centre** 40 (IX. Páva utca 39) presents visitors with the history of an entire Gypsy family.

a | The Ferencváros Education Centre

b | The Holocaust Memorial Centre 40

c | The once lavish buildings of District VIII are now often run down

d | The Parno Graszt ('White Horse')





GYPSY MUSIC IN BUDAPEST

Music has traditionally been one of the most prominent channels through which Gypsies came into contact with non-Gypsy Hungarians. As the Gypsy community has no architecture, historic sites or churches of their own, music has also provided the **'Roma face' of Budapest**. By now, the 'Hungarian Gypsy music' referred to above, with bands of musicians playing fiddles, cimbaloms and occasionally a double bass in restaurants, is nearly extinct, but at the same time musicians with a Gypsy background have been appearing in growing numbers in classical music, jazz and other forms of entertainment (Roma rap, disco). Moreover, ensembles which play authentic Gypsy folk music are growing ever more popular. Besides ***Kalyi Jag***, a veteran of this branch, we must mention ***Rományi Rota*** (Gypsy Wheel), ***Ternipe*** (Youth), ***Parno Graszt*** (White Horse) and ***Ando Drom*** (On the Way) as the best known ensembles, or the only group which plays Beash folk music, the nationally acclaimed **Kanizsa Csillagai**. The Gödör Klub ('Pit Club') in V. Erzsébet tér organises an all-embracing Gypsy Art Festival under the name ***Athe Sam*** (We are here) every year; the Craft Festival held in Buda Castle every August also features a number of Roma music and dance ensembles; and the **Budapest Gypsy Festival** is on every autumn.

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In early May, 'Orczy Gardens' (Orczy-kert near Nagyvárad tér metro station) hosts the festival called **Romajális** which features all types of music from Roma Jazz to disco. Another event, Ferencváros **Roma Cultural Festival**, has been organised annually since 2004. Naturally, ensembles playing high quality Roma folk music may be found in any of the programme magazines of Budapest including many not listed here.

Mention must be made of the **Budapest Gypsy Orchestra** (in Hungarian they call themselves the '100-member Gypsy Orchestra'). Now, an institution in its own right, it was originally a gathering of Gypsy musicians organized to play at the funeral of the famous Gypsy fiddler Sándor Járóka in 1985.

A number of jazz musicians from a Gypsy background have won international recognition, such as **Béla Szakcsi Lakatos**, **Ferenc Snétberger**, **Tony Lakatos**, or **Gyula Babos**, to mention but a few. These performers may be heard in the Columbus Jazz Club, a boat anchored permanently on the Danube, or in the Budapest Jazz Club right next to the National Museum. 3



c


d



a | The Budapest Gypsy Symphony Orchestra playing in the Neologue Synagogue in Dohány utca

All types of Gypsy music from rap through folklore to classical may be heard on Hungary's Roma radio channel **Radio C**, which has been operating for nearly ten years (FM 88.8). Defying a constant shortage of funds, the committed staff of this radio channel continues to broadcast their programme on the air and through the internet, made **'by Gypsies for Gypsies and non-Gypsies** according to the principles of public service'.

Gypsy film-making in Budapest

In August 2009, Budapest was the home of the **'Festival of People Seeking the Sunlight'**, while in December the first **Hungarian Gypsy Film Festival** was held in this city under the title 'Ide nézz, cigány' ('Look here, Gypsy!'). Documentaries on Gypsy issues may be viewed at any time at **DocuArt Film Centre** (IX. Ráday utca 18 – Erkel utca 15).

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Hungarian Gypsy music, an internationally known 'cultural commodity', is not hard to access in Budapest. Here are some quality restaurants with Gypsy bands playing music several nights a week:

PEST

Kulacs Étterem, VIII. Osvát utca 11
Kárpátia Étterem, V. Ferenciek tere 7-8
Vörös Postakocsi, IX. Ráday utca 15
Fakanál, IX. Vámház körút 1-3
Central Cellar, V. Váci utca 11
Sörforrás, V. Váci utca 15
Gundel Restaurant, XIV. Állatkerti út 2
Mátyás Pince Étterem,V. Március 15. tér 7

BUDA

Szeged Vendéglő, XI. Bartók Béla út 1
Király Restaurant, I. Táncsics Mihály utca 25
Új Sipos Halászkert, III. (Óbuda), Fő tér 6
Régi Sipos Halászkert, III. (Óbuda), Lajus u. 46.

The motor of the development of Gypsy culture is the ethnically-based political and cultural organisation enabled by the Act on National Minorities of 1993. Though there are noteworthy Roma centres elsewhere in the country (e.g. in Pécs), **Budapest has been the centre of Roma artistic, cultural, academic, and political life for a long while**. Roma culture is always changing; it is a living process: crossing boundaries is far more characteristic of it than building walls – what we have described is a mere snapshot of how it stands at the moment.



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Going Slovenian in Budapest

SLOVENIANS AND VENDS

Slovenians, whom Hungarians sometimes call Vends, have been present for centuries in the south-western corner of historical Hungary, the western stretch of Vas and Zala counties. The Trianon Treaty annexed these parts of the country to Yugoslavia. Inhabited by mostly Slovenians, this region is called *Prekmurje* (Muravidék) and is now part of Slovenia. Trianon left five small villages with a Slovenian population in Hungary along the river Rába, and these have retained their Slovenian/Vend identity to this day.



The Lutheran Grammar School in Városligeti fasor 107

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Who are the Vends?

The name Vend, as used in contemporary Hungarian, refers simply and generally to **Slovenians living in Hungary**. In the past, several intellectuals (mostly of Vend origin) conceived of the Vend community as Slovenian-speaking Hungarians. Accordingly, the strongest element of Vend identity is their belonging to the Hungarians, while the use of the Slovenian language is only a local curiosity of ethnographic interest. Since this concept differentiates the Vends from Slovenians, many Slovenians came to associate the use of the term Vend with a view that favours assimilation, and which they held suspect. By now, this kind of tension is no longer associated with a term which, used rather infrequently, no longer has such connotations.

The Slovenian community is one of Hungary's 13 officially recognised ethnic minorities (under the Minorities Act of 1993). It is very much limited to particular regions, and there are few signs of its presence in the capital. Nevertheless, there are a number of locations in Budapest which have a Slovenian relevance, and which are worth mentioning.

King Matthias

The reign of King Matthias (Mátyás) Corvinus (15th century) has an emphatic role in Hungarian historical consciousness, and statues of the great ruler may be seen in many places, for instance, at Heroes' Square frequented by tourists. He also features in the Slovenian tradition. For instance, it is among Slovenians that a legend has survived according to which the king is not dead – only asleep in a cave in front of which stands a lime tree that bursts into blossom each Christmas. This story is unknown in the Hungarian tradition, which otherwise retains a great many anecdotes to do with Matthias.

SLOVENIAN STUDENTS IN BUDAPEST

A number of **Slovenian intellectuals** completed their studies in Budapest. Perhaps most closely associated with the city was **Imre Agustič** (1837-1879). Born in the region of the river Mura, he lived in the capital from 1863, and earned his living as a Parliament stenographer. He published a number of articles on political and other subjects in Hungarian newspapers. From 1875 right until his untimely death, he was also the publisher of a periodical in Slovenian entitled *Prijatel* (Friend), which, although edited in Budapest, even attracted the attention of central Slovenian cultural circles. The richly illustrated journal came out as a monthly until 1878, and used Hungarian orthography, while later it became bi-weekly and used the Gaj orthography. It discussed events of Hungarian political life, often spoke about the struggles of the Southern Slav peoples, and also had a noteworthy poetry section, featuring, amongst other things, folk songs of the region on the far side of the Mura (then a Slovenian-inhabited part of Austria).

Another intellectual who studied in Budapest was the extremely erudite Catholic priest **Ferenc Ivanóczy (Franc Ivanócy)** (1857-1913), a champion of Slovenian national pride, who gained a doctorate in theology in 1885. Probably the greatest Hungarian Slovenian, **Ágoston Pável (Avgust Pavel)** (1886-1946), linguist, ethnographer and poet, began his pursuit of Hungarian, Latin and Slavonic studies at Budapest University

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in 1905, and gained his doctorate in 1913. Pável's most lasting contributions are his researches on the Slovenian dialect of the Mura region and the Hungarian translation of the works of the Slovenian writer Ivan Cankar. The noted Slovenian literary historian **Štefan Barbarič** (1920-1988) pursued Slavonic Studies in Budapest, and this is also where the excellent ethnologist, expert in Slavonic Studies and literary historian **Vilko Novak** (1909-2003) gained his doctorate in 1944.

One of Budapest's most prestigious secondary schools, the **Lutheran Grammar School** 107 (Fasori Evangélikus Gimnázium; VII. Városligeti fasor 17-21) has given the world several Nobel Prize-winning scholars. Most of them, including Jenő Wigner who won the prize for Physics in 1963, had been taught physics by Vend-Hungarian **Sándor Mikola**, who, in the interwar period, became a militant champion of the pro-Hungarian interpretation of Vend identity. He believed that the Vend were Hungarians who had 'gone Slavic'. When the Eastern part of today's Slovenia, inhabited by Hungarians and Slovenians alike, was re-annexed by Hungary for a short period (1941-45), he promoted his pro-Hungarian Vend attitude in this region. This is why contemporary Slovenian historical consciousness does not think of Mikola as a Slovenian – even though it was in the Vend language that he wrote a number of works on the subject.

His memory is retained today in the Sándor Mikola Award given by a society of physicists to teachers successful in teaching through experiments.

SLOVENIAN LIFE IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

From the 1950s onwards, Slovenians in Hungary came to live in greater numbers in Budapest, which offered them the opportunity to make a living. Between 1947 and 1990, their interests were protected by the Democratic Association of Southern Slavs in Hungary, which had a separate executive in charge of Slovenian affairs from 1972 onwards. After the post-communist political change, in 1990, Croats, Serbs and Slovenians set up their own organisations. A **Slovenian Minority Self-government** was founded at XVIII. Üllői út 400, while Slovenians from the Rába area now living in Budapest were able to create their own organisation, the **Slovenian Society of Budapest** 108 (VII. Rumbach Sebestyén utca 12). The purpose of the organisation is to help Slovenians who have moved to Budapest retain their identity and native tongue. An interesting initiative is the **Kossics Foundation**, which was established in 1993, and aims to promote Slovenian language teaching in Hungary, and develop Slovenian-Hungarian cultural relations. Its publications and conferences have contributed to a mutual understanding between the two cultures.

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Armenians, the Oldest Christian nation, in Budapest

An Armenian presence in the Carpathian Basin has been documented ever since antiquity. Medieval chroniclers state that several groups of Armenians arrived in the region along with the settling Hungarians. Later on, further waves came, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. Returning from the fifth crusade in 1218, King Andrew II is believed to have been accompanied by a major Armenian community. Indeed, one of his sons had been engaged to the daughter of the Armenian monarch. Although the bond of wedlock was eventually not tied, the king returned from the Near East with a number of Armenian settlers, who made their home in the area of Esztergom. They became successful merchants, particularly herding livestock from Hungary to Western, mostly German markets – a lucrative business in Hungary from medieval times until recently.

Armenian worship in Budapest 110

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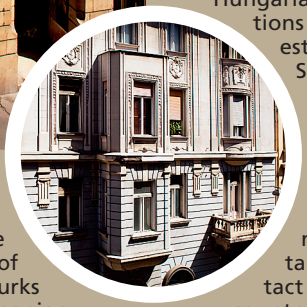

According to a less well-known story, at the time of the re-capture of Buda from the Turks in 1686, an Armenian lived in the castle, and plotting with an Armenian spy from the Christian camp, contributed to blowing up the magazine of the castle, which proved to be a turning point in the siege.

As **successful businessmen** and major tax payers, the Armenians of Hungary, living mostly in Transylvania, often came to the aid of the royal treasury. Thus, several of them purchased or were granted nobility, and became eligible to marry into families of the Hungarian aristocracy. Since the more well-to-do among them gave their children an education of the highest standard, they also appeared among the leading strata of the intelligentsia. Thus, Armenians integrated very successfully into the Hungarian aristocracy and middle class.

Between the two World Wars, Budapest became a place where Armenians from historical Hungary gathered. Refugees fleeing WWI atrocities joined those who had been living in the city for a long time. According to their own records, there were approximately 2,000 ethnic Armenian Hungarian citizens living in Budapest at the time, with an active cultural life of their own. After the Communist take-over in the late 1940s, several Armenian families fell victim to the 'anti-bourgeois' persecutions. From the 1960s, however, Hungarian-Armenian relations of sorts could be established through Soviet Armenia, and families could maintain contacts within limits.

Communism having fallen, ethnic Armenians are now free to maintain any kind of contact with their mother country. Since 1993, the system of minority self-governments has been a main energizer and supporter of contacts with Armenia.

In the last census (2001), 364 Budapest citizens claimed to be Armenian by ethnicity, 162 to speak Armenian as their mother tongue, and 488 stated that they had some sort of connection with Armenian culture and traditions. The Armenian minority is one of the most scattered ethnic groups in Hungary today. Nevertheless, they run several

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institutions in Budapest – district minority self-governments, their **municipal local self-government** (V. Akadémia utca 1) and their **national self-government** (II. Palatinus utca 4). Small and scattered as the community is, events are often attended by members living in distant parts of the country, which means that Budapest and the rest of the country are not separated for the Armenian community.

Whether its members live in Budapest or the country, the composition of the community is quite mixed, consisting of Armenians who emigrated to Hungary from historical Armenia or from the diaspora at the most varied points in time. Naturally, those who arrived a long time ago are now largely assimilated or have lost their Armenian traditions, while 20th-century arrivals, though integrated with the local society, have kept their language and customs.





Budapest Armenian communities organise events at both the district and municipal level, and events organized by the national self-government are also held in the city. To preserve and promote their traditions, they regularly invite representatives of the cultural life of their mother country and those living in the surrounding countries. There are a number of institutions which play an important part in this respect. The **Armenian Cultural Centre** 109 (V. Semmelweis utca 17) hosts a wide variety of events. The **Armenian Catholic Congregation** has its church, a converted flat, at XI. Orlay utca 6, which has an exhibition room, usually accessible only at the time of holy mass. 110 The congregation acquired part of the building in 1957, and the rest somewhat later. The church was eventually consecrated in 1975. In the 1990s, it established close ties with the Armenian Mekhitarist Order of Vienna. After a brief interruption in 2007, it again offers holy mass according to the Armenian rite in both Hungarian and Armenian.

a | The Armenian Cultural Centre 109

b | The Armenian Catholic Church 110



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The most noteworthy Armenian memorial in Budapest is the **cross stone** at the Pest head of the Elisabeth Bridge (Erzsébet híd) in V. Petőfi tér, which was erected in 2000 by the Hungarian Armenian community in memory of their compatriots who died during WWI ('the genocide' as Armenians call it). 111 Carved by an Armenian master, the stone is of red tuff, characteristic of their mother country. There is also a war memorial to the Armenian soldiers who died in Hungary in WWII in XVIII. Uzsoki tér.

The Armenian community gathers at the stone cross in Petőfi tér also to remember the Armenian victims of WWII on 24 April every year. It is likewise at this time that the Armenian district, municipal and national self-governments organise their major cultural events, such as the **week of Armenian culture**.

The other important occasion they come together to celebrate annually is the **Day of Armenian Independence** on 21 September. This is also accompanied by a series of cultural events. A reception is held regularly at the cultural centre Aranytíz (V. Arany János utca 10), attended each time by the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Armenia. This is particularly significant because the Ambassador is based in Vienna, and performs his duties in four different countries (Austria, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovakia).

The Armenians of Hungary also observe a particular Hungarian national day of commemoration, **6 October**, the day the thirteen generals of the War of Independence were executed at Arad in 1849. Over seventy officers and almost two hundred Armenian privates took part in the Hungarian freedom struggle. Two of the martyred generals, **Ernő Kiss** and **Vilmos Lázár**, were Armenians by descent. Several streets in the city bear their names to commemorate them. Ernő Kiss in one opening off V. Szabadság tér and another one in District IV, the neighbouring streets being named after their fellow high-ranking officers in the War of Independence; Districts XV, XVIII and XX also have streets named after him; Vilmos Lázár is honoured by streets in Districts IV and XXI.

Another event which Armenians celebrate on a scale beyond the closest family is Christmas. Some families follow the custom of Western Christianity and celebrate Christmas on 25 December; others observe the Nativity together with Epiphany in traditional Armenian fashion on 6 January.



The Armenian cross stone in V. Petőfi tér 111

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Flurries from the Carpathians

UKRAINIANS AND RUSYNS IN BUDAPEST

Hungary officially recognises the Ukrainian and Rusyn peoples as national and ethnic minorities of according to the Act on the rights of national and ethnic minorities adopted in 1993. Both are regarded indigenous in Hungary because their home, the Sub-Carpathian region, was a part of the Hungarian Kingdom from the beginnings until its dissolution after the WWI and between 1939 and 1944. They live scattered mostly in the north-eastern part of the country.

In fact, the ancestors of contemporary Ukrainians and Rusyns had lived partly in the Carpathian Basin and partly migrated from Galicia (the border region between present-day Poland and the Ukraine) into the north-eastern counties of the Hungarian Kingdom in consecutive waves between the 15th and 19th centuries.

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The Rusyns

The emergence of the Rusyn people is closely related to historical Hungary. Living in the north-eastern mountainous region of the country (contemporary eastern Slovakia and the **Sub-Carpathian region** of the Ukraine), this group of Eastern Slavs developed a separate Rusyn identity. Since the development of their national identity was belated and their language is very close to Ukrainian, many people consider them a Ukrainian ethnic sub-group, although they consider themselves different from the Ukrainians. Hungarian-Rusyn connections are illustrated clearly by the fact that Hungary's Rusyns made **22 May** their national holiday – the day when the early 18th-century anti-Habsburg war of liberation led by Francis II Rákóczi unfurled its flags in the Sub-Carpathian area.

Although, since the Trianon Treaty in 1920, Rusyns and Ukrainians have belonged to the smaller minorities of Hungary – according to the 2001 census, 7,393 persons claimed to be Ukrainian and 2,079 Rusyns by ethnicity – they are both organised minorities. In early February 2005, Ukrainians had altogether 32 local minority self-governments, while Rusyns 13.

During the 19th century, many of them, similarly to other ethnic groups, came to the capital to find work or otherwise try their luck. Most of them soon became assimilated to the Hungarian majority, and keeping the Ukrainian identity alive did not become a priority until after the emergence of the minority self-government system in our day.



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UKRAINIAN AND RUSYN MEMORIALS IN BUDAPEST

The publication of the almanac *Rusalka Dnistrovaya*

Perhaps the most important memorial spot of Ukrainian national culture in this city is found in the Castle District of Buda in the famous old street Országház utca (I. Országház utca 1-3). It was in the **Royal Hungarian University Press**, operating in this building, that the **almanac *Rusalka Dnistrovaya* ('Mermaid of the Dniester')** was published in 1837. The book played an important role in the emergence of modern Ukrainian literature and culture, since it is regarded as the first publication of Galician-Ukrainian literature. This volume of poetry was also important because it proved that the living vernacular of the Ukrainian people could become the basis of literary Ukrainian. In the wall of the building of the former publishing house, a bilingual plaque records this important fact. 112

Statue of Taras Shevchenko

The greatest Ukrainian national writer of the 19th century, **Taras Shevchenko**, also has a statue in the Hungarian capital at II. Fő utca 88 113 (corner of Fő utca and Ganz utca). It is a relatively new work of art which was unveiled by the Presidents of the two countries, Viktor Yushchenko and László Sólyom, in 2007.

Taras Shevchenko (1814-1861) was born into a family of serfs living in dire circumstances in the Ukraine. Besides being a brilliant poet, he was also a very good painter. He spoke excellent Russian and Polish. The Russian authorities charged him of revolutionary activities and writing, and imprisoned him. After he was released, he spent many years in



a | A plaque commemorating the publication of the almanac ***Rusalka Dnistrovaya*** 112

b | Statue of Taras Shevchenko in II. Fő utca 113

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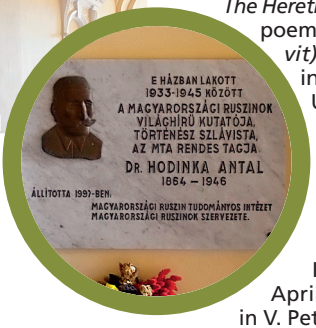

forced labour, in exile and as a regular in the army. After his final release, he lived for his writing alone. Shevchenko died in the year when the serf system, of which he so violently disapproved, was finally abolished. His best known works include *Kobzar, The Heretic* and *Caucasus*. His poem *Testament (Zapovit)* is of outstanding importance for Ukrainians.

The Holodomor Memorial

Inaugurated in April 2009, the statue in V. Petőfi Sándor tér is a **memento to the terrible famine** that ravaged the Ukraine under the Stalinist regime in 1932-33, killing several million people. The tragic event is coming to play an increasingly important role in the national identity of Ukrainians. Particularly after the

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turn of the 21st century, several memorials were erected in the Ukraine and world wide in honour of the victims.

Memorial plaques to Rusyn educators

Antal Hodinka (1864-1946), Rusyn historian and professor of Slavic studies, was born in a family of Greek Catholic priests. After his university studies at the Arts Faculty, he was active in Vienna, Pozsony (Bratislava) and Pécs. He lectured at Erzsébet University in Pozsony between 1916-1920, then, after WWI, when the university was relocated to Pécs, he moved along also. In the 1930s, he came to be Rector of this University. As an acclaimed scholar of Eastern and Central European Slavic history, he was elected to be a member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. His **memorial plaque** is at VI. Benczúr utca 5, his one-time home. 114 Now, a Rusyn cultural association is named after him.

Another famous Rusyn educator, **Emil Baleczky** (1919-1981), has his memorial plaque nearby, at VI. Szinyei Merse Pál utca 11. Born at Hukliva, Transcarpathia, he had an eventful life, working as a poet, writer and a patron of the Rusyn language within the Academic Society of the Sub-Carpathian Region. In the 1950s, he lectured in Russian as Head of Department. As a well-known figure of Hungarian Slavic studies, he received a memorial plaque which was inaugurated by the Municipal Rusyn Minority Self-government.

a | The Holodomor Memorial

b | Memorial plaque to Antal Hodinka 114

c | Memorial plaque to Emil Baleczky



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Ukrainian and Rusyn Presence in Budapest

In Budapest, Rusyn and Ukrainian minority self-governments and NGOs are active in several districts. **The Cultural Society of Ukrainians in Hungary** 115 (VI. Hajós utca 1) has been working for 15 years on promoting and preserving Ukrainian traditions and culture, publishing the periodical *Hromada* and organising Ukrainian events and festivities, including the **Shevchenko Days** and the **Days of Ukrainian Culture**. The **National Ukrainian Minority Self-government** has its headquarters in the same building.

Although the regions traditionally inhabited by Hungarian Rusyns lie far away from Budapest, this is where the **National Rusyn Minority Self-government** has its seat together with the Library and the **Public Collection and Museum of Rusyns in Hungary** 116 (XIV. Gyarmat utca 85/B). Established from private donations, the museum was opened in 2006 and presents Rusyn folk culture. The National Rusyn Minority Self-government publishes a magazine entitled *Ruszin Világ* (Rusyn World).









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a | The Library and the Public Collection and Museum of Rusyns in Hungary 116

b | The Cultural Society of Ukrainians in Hungary 115

c | The Greek Catholic wooden church in the Open-air Museum of Szentendre 20 kilometres north of Budapest – occasionally the site of Rusyn community events. 50

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Between Power and Spirit

RUSSIA IN BUDAPEST



Russian people have been present in the Hungarian capital and its vicinity for quite a while. The first Russian institution was the Tokaj Wine Purveyor Commission and the congregation which was established alongside it, but this was a short-lived initiative. Russian-Hungarian relations were defined by dynastic ties in the 19th century, and increasingly by geo-political factors in the 20th. In the early 19th century, people were still willing to view a Russian Princess, Alexandra Pavlovna, the prematurely deceased first wife of Palatine Joseph, as 'queen of all Hungarians'. But the Hungarian War of Independence of 1848-49 was defeated by the Habsburgs with considerable Russian assistance, which left a deep scar in the Hungarian collective consciousness. This negative image of Russians was reinforced by the power-political struggles between the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and Russia (for influence over the Balkans), as well as by the sense of a 'pan-Slavic threat' in Hungary. This was capped in the 20th century by Hungary's entry into the war against the Soviet Union in 1941, its occupation by Soviet Union after the war and, finally, the crushing of the 1956 Revolution.

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After the Russian Revolution of 1917, millions of Russians fled from the Bolsheviks. Major Russian emigrant communities came into being in Paris, Belgrade and Prague before WWII. It is a lesser known fact that **Russian refugees** also came to Hungary after 1917. Encouraged by Regent Miklós Horthy, a number of aristocratic families moved to Budapest, but this did not lead to the emergence of a sizeable Russian community. The most important institution they established was their congregation in Szív utca (District VI), but this ceased to exist after WWII. This emigré community grew larger as Russians were forcibly relocated from Yugoslavia after







1945 – it was for them that the Patriarchate of Moscow founded the **Chapel of St Sergius of Radonezh**. 117 The sumptuous villa at VI. Lendvay utca 26 was donated to the congregation by an Armenian lawyer. The chapel continues to be one of the centres of Russian orthodoxy in Hungary. In the 1950s, the Patriarchate of Moscow also gained possession of the Orthodox Church in V. Petőfi tér, which the Greeks of Pest had founded, built and maintained. The Patriarchate of Moscow established the Hungarian Orthodox Diocese at the turn of the millennium.

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During the Socialist period, Hungarian-Soviet relations were conducted within the framework of the 'Soviet bloc'. The Russian community in Hungary came to include a number of people who came officially from the Soviet Union (professionals, soldiers, consultants, and their family members). Until the changes in 1989–90, the House of Soviet Culture had the duty of spreading Russian culture in Hungary. This task is now fulfilled by its successor, the **Russian Cultural Centre** *(Российский культурный центр)* at its new premises 118 (VI. Andrássy út 120). It also provides the means whereby the Russian community can conduct its cultural activities (library, theatre group, etc.). Another institution that must be mentioned is the **Research and Methodological Centre for Russian Studies** at Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest.

After the political transformation, the Russian community came to include expatriates mostly involved in business (joint ventures, financial institutions). Russian-Hungarian cooperation is particularly strong in the energy sector. This was the time when the chain of food stores **'Arbat'** was established in Budapest, offering a great number of products reminiscent of the former Soviet Union (e.g. at the Fény utca market, II. Lövőház utca 12, and VII. István utca 20). Over the years, a number of restaurants offering **Russian specialities** have been established in Budapest, such as the **Golden Caviar** (I. Ostrom utca 19). The Russian-language social and advertising periodical **Rossiyskiy Kuryer** (*Российский курьер*) is also in the service of Russian community life.



a | The Chapel of St Sergius of Radonezh 117

b | Russian Cultural Centre 118







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a | Fenced-off Soviet Memorial: **'Glory to the liberating Soviet heroes'**. The statue has provoked a great deal of debate, particularly because of its central and symbolic location. It is protected by the Russian-Hungarian Agreement on Military Graves, which also compels the Russian party to preserve and maintain Hungarian military cemeteries from WWII in former Soviet territory.

b | St Alexandra's Chapel at Üröm. Interestingly, the Russian name of the Church Mission **(*Офенская Духовная миссия.* Church Mission of Ofen)** retains the old German name of Buda (Ofen). 119

Soviet or Russian?

Most unfortunately, some Hungarians tend to merge the concepts of Russian and Soviet. This of course has to do with the fact the Socialist regime ruling Hungary after 1945 rose to power with the help of the Soviet Army. Soviet power was manifest in the presence of the Red Army, the ceaseless drumming of Communist ideology and the compulsory teaching of Russian at school. Hungarians have often associated this with Russians as such and with former historical injustices. Until 1989, many public places, major Budapest streets and roads were named after leaders of the proletarian movement, Soviet commanders or artists (Tolbukhin Boulevard, Lenin Boulevard, Gorky Ally, Mayakovsky Street). After the collapse of the Communist regime, these streets were re-named, and only a handful of the 'Socialist-realist' statues are still in their former places. One of the most spectacular ones still in place is the **Soviet Memorial** in V. Szabadság tér commemorating the soldiers who died in WWII. From time to time, the memorial comes to be the subject of heated debate, with controversial interpretations of recent history clashing, particularly as regards the liberation and the simultaneous occupation of Hungary.

ST ALEXANDRA'S CHAPEL AT ÜRÖM

Üröm, one of the suburbs of Budapest, is the home of the most spectacular Russian memorial spot in Hungary – the **sepulchral chapel of Princess Alexandra Pavlovna**, daughter of the Russian Tsar Paul I. 119 Consecrated in 1803, this is the oldest Russian church building in Europe outside the boundaries of what was the Russian Empire. Alexandra Pavlovna was the first wife of Palatine Joseph of Habsburg. Their dynastic marriage was one of the most glorious episodes of Hungarian-

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Russian relations. The Princess's early death in 1801, however, wiped out all plans of deepening Hungarian-Russian relations and possibly even of founding an independent Hungarian dynasty. A **Russian Church Mission** was set up at Üröm to preserve the memory of the Princess and offer regular services in the sepulchral chapel. Until 1917, the chapel and its clerical staff (a priest, a deacon and the singers) were financed by the Russian Holy Synod and the Tsar's court, and at the same time it enjoyed the protection of the Habsburg court. Its central treasure, the carved *iconostasis,* was donated by Tsar Alexander III in 1883. The chapel was visited up until the 20th century by a number of Russian notabilities, diplomats, politicians and writers. It was kept in evidence in Russia as an important place of remembrance. After WWII, the chapel and its vicinity became dilapidated. The chapel was burgled on eight occasions – its rich library was lost, icons and devotional objects disappeared, and even the grave of the princess was desecrated. Finally, the remains of Alexandra Pavlovna were moved to the Palatine's crypt in Buda Castle. The sepulchral chapel was eventually restored for the 200th anniversary of its consecration, and the princess was re-buried with the permission and participation of the Habsburg family in **2003**. Since that time, Orthodox services in Russian have regularly been offered in the chapel.



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Muslims in Budapest Then and Now

Hungarians first came into contact with Islam during their migration before conquering the area they now inhabit ('the Conquest', 896 AD). Establishing the Kingdom of Hungary, they adopted Christianity; nevertheless, a considerable Muslim population existed in the area from the very beginning. By the time the medieval Hungarian state collapsed (1526), other peoples who had arrived centuries before had completely merged with the Christian Hungarians.

Solar eclipse over Pest

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a

KIZIL ELMA

The battle of Mohács in **1526** meant the end of an independent Kingdom of Hungary for a long time to come. The country became subject to rivalry between the Turks and the Habsburgs. In 1541, Buda, the capital, also came under lasting Ottoman rule. The city, which in the 16th and 17th centuries was nicknamed ***Kizil Elma*, 'Golden Apple'**, became an important seat in the Ottoman Empire. Christians who had fled were replaced by Turkish or other Moslems (Cherkes, Persian or Arabic), as well as by Slavs from the Balkans. The Turkish forces stationed here were the largest contingent in the entire occupied territory due to the strategic importance of the city. During the Turkish occupation, not many new buildings were built, instead, the occupants tended to take over existing churches and houses and convert them to meet their own needs. This way, formerly German-Hungarian Buda and Pest assumed a Turkish character in its appearance. The overall impression was rendered 'exotic' by mosques, minarets and Turkish baths; soldiers of the Ottoman Empire, oriental merchants and dervishes mixed with the local population in the streets; and the cry of the *muezzin* calling to prayer was heard. For a century and a half, the former Capital of Hungary was deprived of its Western features, and turned oriental.

Although during the coming century, the Habsburgs made several attempts to re-conquer Buda and Pest, success only came in **1686** as a result of the international co-operation of the **Holy League**, after a bitter siege lasting two and a half months. In the struggles, the two cities suffered serious damage, and most of the traces of Ottoman rule were buried beneath charred ruins. The few exceptions include the surviving remains of the Turkish tradition of baths, and a few other buildings.

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TURKISH BATHS IN BUDAPEST

Written references to **Turkish baths** existing in Budapest began to appear right after the occupation. Hot and steam baths played a role at once hygienic, religious and social. Most of them were built in Buda, but many of them ceased functioning after the end of Turkish rule and were demolished or just left to disintegrate. Some, however, were kept in use – later being added to converted. They are still in operation today and retain their original Turkish sections.

At the foot of Gellért Hill, the Buda end of Elisabeth Bridge (Erzsébet híd), we find the **Rudas Baths** 120 (Rudas fürdő, I. Döbrentei tér 9). The Turks called it *Yeshil direkli ilidjasi*, meaning the baths with green pillars. It was built by Sokollou Mustapha, Pasha of Buda in the 1560s. The building preserves its vaulted hall from the Turkish era – next to it there stood a row of inns and eateries, as well as a dervish mosque. In 1896, a therapeutic swimming pool and a sauna were added to the baths. There is also a day hospital with a complete physiotherapy section. From 1936 onwards until a few years ago, the baths were only open to men.

Not far from the Rudas, on the Tabán-side of Gellért Hill, we find another spa, the **'Rácz Baths'** 43 (Rác fürdő, I. Hadnagy utca 8). Built over the earlier royal baths, the vaulted hall and the octagonal pool have survived from the Turkish period. Its present shape is the result of renovations done in 1965, but it has been magnificently restored and extended in the last few years.

If we walk along Fő utca, the main street of Víziváros below Buda Castle, we arrive at the next surviving Turkish baths, the **Király fürdő** 121 (II. Fő utca 82–86). During Turkish times this was called the Cockerel Gate Baths *(Horozkapu)*. It was built in the second half of the 16th century in Víziváros, which was then surrounded by walls, so that the



a | Rudas Baths (fürdő) – night bathing in our day 120

b | The Király Baths (fürdő) 121



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baths could be used even during sieges. Now called Király Thermal Baths, the building has mostly kept its **original Turkish ground plan and architecture**, except for the original vestibule, which has disappeared.

If we walk further North, we find ourselves in Óbuda ('Old Buda') and reach one of Hungary's oldest baths, **Császár-Komjádi Baths and Swimming Pool** (II. Árpád fejedelem útja 8). There are testimonies to its existence going back as far as Roman written sources. In the 12th century, during the reign of King Géza II, it was referred to as *Forum Geyzae*. During the Turkish period it was one of Buda's best known baths, and the bathing hall has survived intact. It continued to function during the Habsburgs, and was donated to the order of The Hospitallers of St John of God in the 19th century. A few years ago the ownership of the baths was restored to the order. The building itself has been extended and converted several times since the Turkish period, with the noted architect József Hild contributing to the work.



CANNONS, TOMBS AND OTHER REMAINS FROM TURKISH BUDA

After 1541, Buda became the most **important military base** of the Western extremity of the Ottoman Empire. Its fortifications were reinforced, particularly during the 17th century, by building new bastions and a number of other state-of-the-art defence structures. These were badly damaged during the battles of the re-capture of Buda, but several are still open to view today, even though they have been significantly transformed.

In the north-western corner of the Castle District, behind the **Museum of Military History**, we find a display of cannons from the Turkish period, while inside the Museum visitors can see a wide array of Turkish weapons and costumes. 122 A few hundred metres from here, on the Angevin Bastion (Anjou bástya), we find the tomb memorial, complete with inscriptions in both Hungarian and Turkish, of **Abdurrahman Abdi Arnaut**, the last Pasha of Buda, who fell during the siege of 1686.

Exhibitions about Turkish Times

In the **National Gallery**, inside wing C of the royal palace, a monumental historical tableau, The Recapture of Buda Castle in 1686 by Gyula Benczúr, is a striking memento of the triumph of the Christian army. An exhibition reviving Turkish times can also be seen in the **Hungarian National Museum** 3 (VIII. Múzeum körút 14-16).

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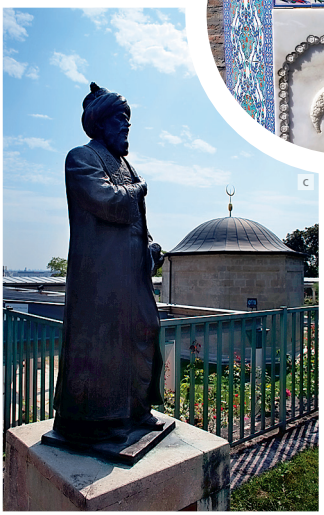
Another important memento of the Turkish period, this time a religious one, is the ***türbe* (sepulchre chapel) of Gül Baba** in the villa quarter of Rózsadomb ('Rose Hill'), not far from the Buda end of Margaret Bridge (Margit híd), at the top of the picturesque Gül Baba utca with its Turkish atmosphere 123 (II. Mecset utca 14). Built in the 16th century, it is the northernmost point of Muslim pilgrimage. Gül Baba (the 'Father of Roses') was a Muslim dervish *(bekhtashi dervish)*, who came to Buda with the conquering Turks in 1541. As head of the order of dervishes, he was meant to head an Islamic religious centre in the newly acquired city, but he died during the thanksgiving service after the occupation of Buda. He was honoured with a magnificent funeral, and then a sepulchre chapel was built over his tomb between 1543 and 1548. In the 19th–20th centuries the buildings were opened up, restored and extended, partly with **sponsorship from the Turkish government**. Since 2000, the sepulchre has again been open to visitors. A Turkish coffee bar and an exhibition hall have been opened to welcome tourists and pilgrims.





a | Cannons behind the Museum of Military History 122

b | The tomb memorial of Abdurrahman Abdi Arnaut, last Pasha of Buda

c | The Türbe of Gül Baba 123

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Other smaller and more hidden traces of old Muslim Buda have also been preserved. Recalling Turkish times, remains of the ***mosque*** of Pasha Toyghoun have survived in the Capuchin Church (I. Fő utca 30–32), as has the ***mihrab*** (prayer cabin) built next to the altar of the Inner-city Parish Church (V. Március 15. tér). There are also **Turkish graves** scattered near the southern wall of Buda Castle (Buzogány-torony).

'Bad neighbours are a Turkish curse'

The Hungarian proverb has come down to us from centuries of struggles against the Turks. By the 20th century, however, the Turkish Empire was squeezed out from the Balkans, and Hungarian-Turkish relations began to improve rapidly. As one of these steps, the Sultan of Turkey restored to Hungary the books that had been taken to Turkey from King Matthias's library – a number of the famous Corvinae.

a | Turkish graves near the wall of Buda Castle

b | The Dar-Alsalaam Mosque 124



MUSLIM BUDAPEST TODAY

The number of Muslim people living in Budapest today is negligible when compared to the large cities of Western Europe. According to the 2001 census, 3,201 inhabitants of the Hungarian capital claimed to be Muslims, and estimates also put their number at under 5,000. Most of them are **Arab** or **Turkish** (the latter number around 2,000), but they also include **Albanians, Bosnians** and **Hungarians**. The majority of Arab and Turkish people came to Budapest to study – and still do –, usually medicine and engineering, or sometimes other subjects. During the Communist regime, excellent grant opportunities attracted many students from the Arab world. Many stayed on after graduation, married, and settled in Hungary.

Although the Muslim community is small and there is no 'Muslim quarter', their cultural and religious life is all the more lively. There are **eight mosques** in the city, but none of them has a minaret. Most are centrally located and converted for the purpose. Perhaps the most significant one is **Dar-Alsalaam** at XI. Bartók Béla út 29. 124 Besides the worship area, it has a kitchen and an office, and can thus host various events. The **Hungarian Islamic Charity Fund** runs a mosque at VII. Hernád utca 4; and another one belongs to the **Hungarian Islamic Community** at XIII. Róbert Károly körút 104. An old factory building near the Józsefváros Market Hall (District VIII) conceals a mosque mostly visited by Turkish people who work at the market or nearby. A further mosque is in the basement of the Restaurant Star Kebab next to Nyugati pályaud-

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var (Western Railway Station). Major events of the local Muslim community often attract anything up to a thousand guests, for which organisers hire restaurants or a large hall in one of the city's student hostels.

In the New Public Cemetery (Rákoskeresztúri Új Köztemető), there is a small Turkish plot that has been in use since the 19th century. (X. Kozma u. 8-10.) Its oldest item is a grave from 1890 with both Arabic and Hungarian inscriptions.

The face of 21st-century Budapest has not been particularly influenced by Muslims up till now, although it is true that they have been granted permission to build a mosque complete with a minaret in District XI. Their lively social life, restaurants and religious instruction sessions are open to the general public, which renders it an active part of life in the city.





TURKISH CUISINE

The palette of gastronomic delights offered in this city is made more colourful by **Turkish restaurants**, which are mainly found in the inner city. **Kebab** vendors are dotted along the smaller and the larger Ring Road, Kiskörút and Nagykörút, and we have **Szeráj**, one of the largest Turkish restaurants in Budapest at the Pest end of the Margaret Bridge (Margit híd). Another source of Turkish culinary pleasures is the Restaurant Eker in Bartók Béla út, not far from the mosque. Besides exotic flavours, these restaurants surround their guests with a genuine Turkish ambience. Anyone fond of Turkish atmosphere and looking for a truly oriental milieu should go to District VIII, home to a number of immigrant communities, where he can find an excellent Turkish restaurant and coffee house *(Arzum Lahmacun Salonu)* with reasonable prices. Besides Hungarians, this place is frequented by Albanian and Arab people.



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The Mediterranean Gusto of Budapest

ITALIAN, SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE INFLUENCES

The Western Mediterranean – Italy for its relative closeness and the Iberian peninsular in spite of its distance – has had a remarkable influence on the Hungarian capital. This is partly due to Hungary's being part of the general development of European civilisation; recall its early and powerful response to the Italian Renaissance beginning from the 15th century, as shown by frescoes and demonstrated by, among other things, the collections housed in the **Hungarian National Archives** 125 (I. Bécsi kapu tér 2-4). Roman Catholicism has also been an important channel for Mediterranean and Hungarian cultural interaction. Sometimes, shared political interests also made for close ties, but, even without these, Budapest has shown a sustained and intense interest in and affinity with the world of Italy, Spain and Portugal.

The Instituto Italiano di Cultura in Budapest 134

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A MEDITERRANEAN WALK IN BUDA

Except for the almost century and a half of Ottoman occupation, Buda has been the capital of Hungary since the Middle Ages, and as such, it was the focus of Southern European activity in the region. This walk takes you around the Buda sites that mark the cultural ties originating from shared political interests and Catholicism.

Italians and Spaniards at the 'Bulwark of Christianity'

The westward expansion of the Ottoman Empire meant a permanent threat to Hungary for some 300 years, during 150 of which the central part of the Kingdom of Hungary, including Buda, came under direct Turkish rule. Contemporaries then thought, and Hungarian historical consciousness still continues to think, that the Hungarians were the **'bulwark of Christianity'** in this unceasing and pernicious warfare; still, Italian-born clergymen and Spanish soldiers also took part in the struggles.

Let us begin our walk at the North-Western end of the Castle District, the Vienna Gate (I. Bécsi kapu). Just outside the wall, opposite I. Lovas utca 37, we note the memorial plaque to the **300 Spanish heroes** who broke through the wall into the city at this point. The tablet was placed here in 1934. A separate plaque for **Catalonian heroes** was erected beside it in 2000 by Hungary and the Autonomous Community of Catalonia. 126

a | Left: Memorial plaque to the Catalonian heroes of the 1686 siege of Buda, with the arms of Catalonia and Hungary.

Right: Memorial plaque to the Spanish heroes of the 1686 siege of Buda, with the arms of Buda, Spain and Hungary. 126

b | Statue of Saint John of Capistrano, outside the Institute and Museum of Military History and near the Steeple of the ruined Church of Mary Magdalene 127



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Not far from the Vienna Gate, just inside the walls, we see the **statue of Saint John of Capistrano** (1386-1456), or Kapisztrán János as he is referred to in Hungarian 127 (I. Kapisztrán tér). Already aged seventy, the Italian-born Franciscan monk and inquisitor was sent by the pope to preach a **crusade against the Turks**. Leading the crusaders he had recruited, he joined the forces of John Hunyadi and helped raise the siege of Nándorfehérvár (now Belgrade) in **1456**. He himself fought in the battle, and earned the name the 'Soldier Priest'. Capistrano's papal superior was the Spanish Cardinal **Juan Carvajal**, who, apart from bringing funds for the war effort, played a significant role in Hungarian politics at the time. The great victory of the crusaders from many nations together with the Hungarian forces at Belgrade stopped Ottoman expansion for seventy years. (It is with this victory that the Christian world associates the custom of ringing the bells at midday, which exists in the whole of Europe – see the introduction.)

Like Hunyadi himself and many others, Capistrano fell victim to the plague that flourished in the camp. He was canonized in 1690, and the statue paying homage to him has been there since 1921.

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Walking further on, we see the **statue of Pope Innocent XI** (in Hungarian Ince). 128 Like Capistrano, the Italian-born ecclesiastic was also involved in the struggle against the Turks. During his rule (1676–1689), he spared no pains or money to bring together the **Holy League**, the alliance of the Holy Roman Empire, Venice and Poland (and later Russia) to drive the Turks out of Hungary. He lived to see his efforts succeed; the united Christian forces recaptured Buda in 1686 and Belgrade in 1688. Budapest raised the statue to him to commemorate his endeavours on the 250th anniversary of the fierce siege (1936).

Continuing our walk, we take the row of steps leading down from the castle area walls into Víziváros ('Water Town'), the quarter between the Castle District and the Danube. Down in Fő utca, we find a statue of **Blessed Mark of Aviano** (in Hungarian Avianói Márk) outside the Capuchin Church of Saint Elisabeth (Erzsébet) of the House of Árpád 129 (I. Fő utca 32). A Capuchin monk (1631-1699), Mark as papal legate mediated during tensions between members of the anti-Turkish Holy League, and became a friend and confidant of Emperor Leopold I. Encouraging and consoling the soldiers, he participated in reconquering Buda and Belgrade. Beatified in 2003, his statue was erected three years later.





a | The statue of Pope Innocent XI 128

b | The statue of Blessed Mark of Aviano 129

c | Altar of St Francis Xavier in Roman Catholic Church of St Anne 130

A Spanish Patron Saint of Buda

Once in Víziváros, there are two more churches worth visiting. One of them is the 18th-century baroque Roman Catholic **Church of St Anne** 130 (I. Batthyány tér 7); the other, not much further down, is the Greek Catholic **Church of St Florian the Martyr**, also dating from the 18th century 131 (II. Fő utca 88). Both churches have an **altar of St Francis Xavier** – a sign of the cult this saint had in Buda at the time. St Francis Xavier (1506-1552) is usually referred to as a missionary for his work in spreading Christianity in India and Japan. After his canonization in 1622, however, he was venerated mostly as someone who had offered protection against the plague, which repeatedly took its toll on Buda in the early 1700s. In response to his growing cult, the city council chose him as a patron saint of Buda 1709.

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With the veneration of the Spanish saint, certain Asian artistic motifs began to appear in Buda; the **reliefs depicting Chinese scenes** on the house built in 1750 on the corner of Pala utca and Fő utca are an interesting aspect of the erstwhile cult of St Francis Xavier. 132


a

If we walk up the hill back to the Castle District, we will find another depiction of St Francis Xavier on the **Holy Trinity Column** erected in 1713 in the square in front of Matthias Church in memory of the Great Plague. 133 The most valuable work of art depicting Xavier in Budapest, Andrea Pozzo's altarpiece from 1710, was in Matthias Church, but was later removed when it underwent neo-Gothic reconstruction, finally being displayed in the Kiscell Museum in Óbuda ('Old Buda').



St Francis Xavier in the outer Districts of Buda

Kiscell Museum: Municipal Picture Gallery – its fine collections include Pozzo's altarpiece. The museum is easy to access by bus from I. Batthyány tér. Far less conveniently situated is another 18th-century **statue of St Francis Xavier** with its massive, several-meter high plinth, which once stood at the edge of Buda near a barracks. In 1965, the Communist authorities, however, decided that the statue would not boost the anti-imperialist morale of the soldiers, and moved it behind the closed walls of the American Cemetery nearby (XI. Budaörsi út 77).


b


b

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Italians in Buda

Before we leave Szentháromság tér (Trinity Square), we should note a statue of Pallas Athene on the corner of the house opposite the Matthias Church. The original statue was the work of an Italian master, **Carlo Adami**, who donated it to Buda in order to acquire civic rights in the city – a gorgeous reminder of the several centuries of active Italian presence in Buda, which has had Italian inhabitants since the Middle Ages. This is also witnessed to by the fact that Úri utca ('Lords Street') was once called Olasz utca ('Italian Street'), as a plaque on the wall of Úri utca 57 notes.

The much-loved **St Francis of Assisi** is of course also revered throughout Budapest; he has a major church named after him in IX. Bakáts tér; and there are several churches run by the Franciscan Order; the Nursing Sisters of Saint Francis established the Saint Francis Hospital in the Buda hills in the 1930s (II. Széher út 73).

Trade relations between Hungary and Italy were of course highly important, but the royal court promoted cultural links, as well. From the 14th century, the Angevin kings, then Sigismund of Luxembourg and Matthias Hunyadi, kept extending the castle, building a magnificent **palace complex** of which foreign visitors sang the praises. Matthias' Renaissance court and huge library was revered throughout Europe – much of it the work of many an Italian master and craftsman. Among the sculptures on the Matthias

a | 'Chinese' reliefs on a house in Víziváros 132

b | St Francis Xavier on the Holy Trinity Column 133

c | Pallas Athene bearing the arms of Buda and a bronze lance. The original statue is in the City Hall (V. Városház u. 9-11).

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Fountain at the wall inside the Hunyadi udvar [courtyard] of the Royal Palace, there is a figure sitting beside King Matthias as a hunter, taking notes with a falcon perched on his knee – this is the great **Italian Humanist scholar Galeotto Marzio**, a frequent guest of Matthias.

'This is Hungary's largest city, inhabited by a great many craftsmen, though not as clean as German towns. People are often overweight, which, they claim, is a consequence of their affluence. Emperor Sigismund has excelled himself in building work,' wrote the Spanish traveller **Pedro Tafur** (c. 1410 – c.1487).



Sadly, the Turkish wars destroyed the Royal Palace of Buda – only archaeological finds attest the superior craftsmanship of its Italian builders. What see in its place is a massive Baroque ensemble, housing the National Gallery, the National Library and the Budapest History Museum. The latter exhibits some lovely medieval sculptures giving an inkling of the sophistication of Sigismund's palace. One of its recent finds – a true rarity – is a 14th-century silk tapestry complete with the red and silver striped arms of the Árpáds and the golden-lily arms of the Angevins – scholars link it to the Kingdom of Naples.

Hungarian Dynastic Relations from Naples to the Lusiads

Providing the monarchs of Hungary between 1000 and 1301, several members of the **House of Árpád** were related to Italian or Iberian dynasties. According to historians, the red and silver stripes of the coat-of-arms of the Árpáds go back to **Aragon** through King Emeric (Imre) III's wife, Constance of Aragon, and so came to be part of the arms of the Hungarian kingdom and later the Hungarian state, as they are today. The House of Árpád died out in 1301, and the Hungarian throne went to the **Angevins based in Naples**. Interestingly, there never was any dynastic relation between Portugal and Hungary, yet, according to one widespread Portuguese tradition, the father of the first king of Portugal was the son of the founder of the Hungarian state St Stephen. The legend also crops up in the Portuguese epic The Lusiads by **Luís de Camões**.

HUNGARIAN-ITALIAN CAMARADERIE IN UPRISINGS

Walking in the inner city of Pest, we will undoubtedly visit the **Hungarian National Museum.** 3 The 'Museum Gardens' around it offer several Italian reminders. If we want to enter them from the left, we will first need to walk beside the Italian Institute, the *Instituto Italiano di Cultura* 134 (formerly the House of Representatives of the Hungarian Parliament; VIII. Bródy Sándor utca 8), and then, inside, we will see several sculptures – two with Italian relevance. One is the **bust of Giuseppe Garibaldi** made in 1932. On the plinth there is a relief showing the Hungarian insurgent **István Türr**, a participant in the Italian War

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of Independence, shaking hands with Garibaldi. After the defeat of the Hungarian Revolution of 1848–49, a great number of Hungarians went to fight for Italian liberty. Both nations striving for independence and fighting roughly the same enemy, a mutual sense of sympathy and camaraderie soon emerged between them. The other Italian statue is a bust of **Alessandro Monti**, the commander of the Italian Legion fighting for Hungarian freedom in 1848–49. It was donated to Budapest by the City of Rome in 1929.



b

MEN OF JUSTICE FROM SOUTHWEST EUROPE DURING WWII

Up in the Castle District, a plaque on the wall of the house at Dísz tér 2 states: this is where the **Apostolic Nuncio Angelo Rotta** worked during WWII, issuing Vatican protective passes to 15,000 thousand Jewish Hungarians. He officially protested against the deportations. Israel awarded him the title of Righteous among the Nations. As of 7 June 2010, the bank of the Danube between I. Batthyány tér and Chain Bridge is named after him.

The Spanish Ambassador to Budapest likewise came to the rescue of Budapest Jews. **Angel Sans Briz** issued 500–700 free passes, and approved the establishment of several dozen **'protected houses'** or **'Spanish houses'** in Budapest. Briz removed, his **Italian** friend and accomplice, **Giorgio Perlasca** continued to issue papers, saving over 5,000 Jews by the end of the war. The **Portuguese chargé d'affaires Carlos de Liz-Texeira Branquinho** also took part in the rescue activity, issuing some 500–800 passes. The **Portuguese** also established **'protected houses'** (XIII. Újpesti rakpart 5) where Jews with Portuguese papers found refuge. Perlasca has a memorial plaque dedicated to him in the district where the seven Spanish 'protected houses' were set up (XIII. Szent István park 35) and a bust in front of the Italian Cultural Institute. There is also a Commercial and Catering School named after him (X. Maglódi út 8).



c

a | The bust of Alessandro Monti 3

b | The bust of Giuseppe Garibaldi – 'For Garibaldi from the Hungarian nation'

c | **Bust of Giorgio Perlasca.** Perlasca had come to Budapest on regular business. After the German occupation, he had to go into hiding, but was interned. An old friend, the Spanish Ambassador Sanz Briz, issued him with a Spanish passport, and asked him to manage the protected houses. Sans Briz was removed from Budapest in November 1944, but Perlasca chose to stay on; posing as a Spanish diplomat, he continued his rescue work until the end of the German Nazi and Hungarian Arrow-Cross reign of terror. Internationally co-produced, ***Perlasca, The Courage of a Just Man*** is a film about his work saving lives.

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THE MEDITERRANEAN IN BUDAPEST TODAY

Currently, there are thousands of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese people in Budapest on a long-term basis, either on business or for university studies. The Italian presence is the most marked; the Italian Chamber of Commerce in Hungary (Váci utca 81) coordinates 300 companies working in Budapest, and there are around 2,200 Italians with a permanent residence permit.

Hungarian-Mediterranean relations have become institutionalised in a number of ways in today's Budapest. There are now two grammar schools where the language of instruction is Italian **(St Ladislas Grammar School; János Xantus Secondary School of Tourism)**. The **Mihály Károlyi Spanish-Hungarian Bilingual Grammmar School** was founded in 1988, and the **Manualita First Spanish-Hungarian Bilingual Nursery School** has been looking after children since 2004.

The various Cultural Institutes in Budapest have a singular import. The **Instituto Italiano di Cultura** has been operating in Budapest since 1937. Marked by a huge Italian flag, its current home is at VIII. Bródy Sándor utca 8, with the bust of Perlasca outside already mentioned. Round the block in Múzeum körút, we reach the campus of **Eötvös Loránd University** with its departments of Italian, Spanish and Portuguese studies – the latter hosting the **Instituto Camões**, the Portuguese cultural institute. The Spanish **Instituto Cervantes** 135 (VI. Vörösmarty utca 32) was officially opened in 2004 by the heir apparent to the Spanish throne, Felipe de Borbón y Grecia and his wife.

The institutes organise various language courses, conferences and film screenings – the Italian Institute has become particularly



The *Instituto Italiano di Cultura* in Budapest. Designed by the great Hungarian architect Miklós Ybl, it was the **House of Representatives of the Hungarian Parliament between 1865 and 1902**.

widely known through its events. Generally, Budapest audiences show intense interest in Italian, Spanish and Portuguese culture such as books and films, which is clearly noticeable during book fairs and film festivals.

The Italian and Spanish collection of the Museum of Fine Arts is particularly noteworthy. Presenting the development of the different periods of Italian and Spanish painting in an almost unbroken chain from the 1400s to the 20th century, it is, according to art historians, on a par with any of the major international galleries (note its highly praised show 'Treasures from Budapest' in London late 2010). The collection was originally started by the **Esterházys**, one of Hungary's most prominent aristocratic families, and boasts major works by **Velázquez, Goya, el Greco, Giotto, Raphael, Titian,**

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Veronese, and **Tiepolo**, but it is continually being expanded. The **Opera House** at Andrássy út 22 82 has featured many an Italian maestro, but, if we go further along the most elegant boulevard of the city, we will note **Giovanni Palestrina** on the façade of the building at no. 61, and, further on, we will recognise the sgraffito portraits of **Leonardo da Vinci, Raphael, Titian**, and **Michelangelo** on the **Academy of Fine Arts** at no. 71.

Last but not least, Mediteraranean cuisine fares naturally very well in Budapest – lovers of Italian, Spanish or even Portuguese flavours will find the right place to eat. Besides a number of pizzerias, there is a Portuguese wine bar and café, a Portuguese-Brazilian churrasceria and a Spanish tapas bar. Upscale **Puskás Pancho Sports Club** displays memorabilia, objects and photographs of the great **Hungarian footballer Ferenc Puskás**, a quadruple goal King, who, after his emigration to Spain, the Spanish think of as Pancho, and Hungarians as Puskás Öcsi. (III. Bécsi út 56)

a | The offices of the Association of the Knights of Malta in Hungary 136

b | The coat-of-arms of the Sovereign Military Order of Malta at its Embassy in Budapest





The Maltese in Budapest

The **Sovereign Military Order of Malta**, the one-time possessor of the island and its precursors, had been in contact with Hungary for centuries, roughly since the time when the Hungarian King Andrew (Endre) II led a crusade to the Holy Land. The Association of Knights of Malta in Hungary was established as late as 1928, with its seat in the Castle District of Buda. During the Communist era, they were forced to emigrate; but, after the political change of 1989, Hungary restored diplomatic relations with the Order, previously recognised as an independent state. The Association has its seat in Buda again, and the work of the Hungarian Maltese Charity Service they run is widely appreciated by Hungarians. 136

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Swiss Secrets of Budapest



THE ALPS FROM THE CARPATHIANS

Like most Europeans, Hungarians think of Switzerland as a haven of peace, stability and prosperity. Though they have little personal experience of the Alpine country, they are aware of Hungarian plans in the 19th and 20th centuries to turn the multi-national Kingdom of Hungary into a 'Switzerland of the East'. In a region riddled with ethnic tension, Switzerland was seen as a paragon not so much of opulence as of the peaceful co-existence of different nations. Nevertheless, visitors to Budapest and those who live there are both equally oblivious of the powerful Swiss relevance of a number of sights in this city.

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SWISS EXPERTS IN BUDAPEST

The rapid development of 19th-century Hungary and its capital city both held a tremendous attraction for Western professionals and had a demand for them. And, in response, come they did, establishing themselves here. Among them, the Swiss formed their independent community in Hungary, capable of sustaining even their own mutual benefit society. They were mostly enterprising people, and the results of their efforts are still visible in today's Budapest.

ÁBRAHÁM GANZ THE IRON MAN

There are still a number of Hungarian factories that bear the name of **Ábrahám Ganz**. Born in the town of Unter-Embrach in 1814, he came to Buda as an iron-founder in the 1840s, and set up shop here. He began by casting household articles, but then, developing his own patents, he produced railway equipment, which he was able to sell at home in Hungary and abroad. The small foundry he started developed into the world famous **Ganz Works**, one of the largest companies in the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. In 1894, it founded its own apprentice school, the successor of which, Ábrahám Ganz Bilingual (Hungarian/German or Hungarian/English) Secondary and Technical School continues to train technical experts (XIX. Üllői út 270 and 303, XVIII. Hengersor út 36). The original foundry operated until 1964, and was later taken over by the **Foundry Museum of the Hungarian Technical and Transport Museum** 137 (II. Bem József utca 20). This is the only foundry in Central Europe preserved as a national monument.



a | The Foundry Museum of the Hungarian Technical and Transport Museum at II. Bem József utca 20, behind Ganz utca, the street bearing the name of the Swiss-born manufacturer. 137

b | Ábrahám Ganz Bilingual Secondary and Technical School

c | The memorial plaque to Szaléz Ferenc Cathry 138



SZALÉZ FERENC CATHRY, BUILDER OF THE COG-RAILWAY

Born in Andermatt, **Szaléz Ferenc Cathry** (1834-1901) came to Hungary as an engineer employed by the Basel-based Internationale Gesellschaft für Bergbahnen. Together with **Nikolaus Riggenbach**, railway engineer for Swiss Rigi First European Cog-railway Designers,

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he built Budapest's **cog-railway on Svábhegy**. This single track steam railway line of 2.8 kilometres was launched, the third of its kind in Europe, in 1874. In 1890, the line was extended to Széchenyi-hegy.

Cathry settled and is buried in Budapest. His name and activity are commemorated by a plaque on the Svábhegy Station building of the cog-railway 138 (XII. Eötvös út 1).



EDE WÉBER THE SETTLER

Born in Basel, **Ede Wéber**, (1843-1935) came to Hungary to train orphanage teachers. After retiring, he bought an estate at Kerepes on the outskirts of Budapest. His idea was to establish a lower-middle-class suburb with a church, a cemetery, a market, a nursery school and a playground for children. The plan approved in 1910, he named it **Helvécia** ('Helvetia'). The name was changed to Szilasliget in 1940. A street in Szilasliget commemorates him.

Wéber also ran a soil-reclamation project on the sanded-up stretches of the Great Plain. Near the town of Kecskemét, he established a vine-growing village which is called Helvécia to this day, though it has merged with the city.

REZSŐ LAJOS RAY THE ARCHITECT

Born in Bru, **Rezső Lajos Ray** (1845–1899) moved to Hungary as an architect in 1868. Working in the Historicist, neo-Renaissance and later neo-Baroque styles fashionable at the time, he designed major buildings, including the **Hotel Royal** (today Corinthia Grand Hotel Royal, VII. Erzsébet körút 43–49) and the **Lukács Baths** 139 (II. Frankel Leó utca 25–29). His son also became a successful architect.

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The Swiss Secret of Hungarian Cards

A special kind of playing cards with 32 or 36 cards to a pack is still popular in most areas of the former Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. Hungarians call them **'Hungarian Cards'**, the Germans **'Doppeldeutsche'**, while the English **'Tell Cards'.** They were designed by a Pest card painter, József Schneider, in the 1830s when anti-Habsburg sentiment was running high. Censorship rendering it impossible to voice such feelings openly, he decided to reproduce the characters of Schiller's *William Tell*, an iconic figure of the Swiss anti-Habsburg rebellion. This is commemorated by a plaque on the wall of the house where Schneider's workshop once stood. 140 (VII. corner of Kazinczy utca and Király utca)





a | The former Haggenmacher Brewery 141



b | Gerbeaud with its characteristic turn-of-the-century ambience. 142

Gerbeaud's most famous creation, the **'Gerbaud cake'**, consists of three layers of pastry with apricot jam and ground walnuts between them, after which the entire cake is coated in dark chocolate – no respectable Hungarian grandmother can omit making 'Gerbaud cake'.

'In Paradise,' as a contemporary anecdote had it, 'the Serpent offered Eve an apple. Eve took a bite, and then said to Adam: "You can try this one – it's from Gerbaud's."' (1909)



KÁROLY AND HENRIK HAGGENMACHER, THE BREWER AND MILLER BROTHERS

Born in Winterthur, **Károly** (1835-1921) and **Henrik** (1827-1921) **Haggenmacher** arrived in Hungary in 1856. Settling in Buda, the two wealthy brothers first bought up run-down mills, repaired and resold them. Later Károly obtained one of the top jobs in the First Buda-Pest Steam Mill Company, while his elder brother Henrik, having become a wealthy steam-mill owner, bought a brewery in Budafok. Later his firm merged with the Dreher company in Kőbánya.

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A part of Haggenmacher's brewery has recently become gentrified, and, now as Haggenmacher Udvar (Yard), houses art studios and galleries 141 (XXII. Nagytétényi út 48-50). Another site of the Haggenmacher brewery business was the **Hági Söröző** ('Ale House', VII. Huszár utca 7-9) – now restored, it is open to beer lovers again, and became a protected national monument in 2003.

EMIL GERBEAUD THE CONFECTIONER

Emil Gerbeaud (1854-1919) was born in Geneva, learned his trade under various major confectioners in Germany, France and England; then, finally, he came to Budapest in 1884, and joined Henrik Kugler's confectionary in Gizella tér (today: V. Vörösmarty tér 7). In 1886, Gerbeaud extended the building to include a chocolate factory. His new method for producing chocolate was presented at the Millennium Exhibition in 1896. In 1908, after Kugler's death, the shop changed its name, and has been operating as **'Gerbeaud'** ever since. 142

This Swiss-Hungarian confectioner was a celebrated businessman of his time, even awarded membership of the French Legion of Honour. Remaining world-class ever since, Gerbeaud is popular with tourists coming to the Hungarian capital, and even foreign politicians pay it a visit.



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JUST MAN CARL LUTZ

a | The Lutz statue by Tamás Szabó in Dob utca

b | The memorial plaque to Carl Lutz in Vadász utca

c | The memorial plaque to Friedrich Born

d | Swisscham Hungary

e | Fondue

During WWII, **Carl Lutz** (1895-1975), Vice-consul of neutral Switzerland between 1942 and 1945, represented 15 different countries in Hungary, including Great Britain and the United States of America. He worked in an office fitted out for him in the building of the US Embassy in Szabadság tér. He is much revered for the work he did in preventing the deportation of the Jews – his activities saved the lives of some 62,000 Hungarian Jews. Under pressure from the international community, the Hungarian government permitted the emigration of around 7,000 Hungarian Jews in June 1944, and it was the job of Lutz to compile the list of those who were to travel. The so-called 'Glass House' 143 (Üvegház; V. Vadász utca 29) became the centre of **'Jewish rescue operations'**. Jewish people who had fled the countryside to escape deportation found refuge here, and this was also where illegal border crossings were organised.


a



b



c

JUST MAN FRIEDRICH BORN

Another Swiss person, **Friedrich Born**, also played a part in the rescue operations at the end of WWII. In co-operation with Lutz, he offered a safe haven to thousands of Jewish Hungarians under the auspices of the Red Cross. His name is recorded on memorial plaques on the Red Cross Headquarters (V. Arany János utca 31) and in the quadrangle of the Museum of Military History. Like Lutz, the stretch of the Buda-side river bank between the Chain Bridge and the Elizabeth Bridge was named after him in 2010.

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The Memory of Lutz in Budapest

The **'Glass House'** had been built on commission for the wholesale glass merchant Gyula Weiss Jr. in 1934. The Carl Lutz Foundation furnished a memorial room in the former garage of the building. The exhibition in homage of Lutz has been open since 2005. Other Lutz memorials in Budapest include:

- A memorial plaque on the wall of the 'Glass House' (V. Vadász utca 29);
- A memorial in the park outside the American Embassy (2006) (V. Szabadság tér 12);
- A statue in the area of the former ghetto (1991) (VII. Dob utca 12);
- A stretch of the Pest-side bank of the Danube was named after Lutz in 2010 (north of Margit híd).





SWISS PRESENCE IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

In today's Budapest, Switzerland is formally represented by the Swiss Embassy. It is also worth mentioning **Swisscham Hungary** (*Handelskammer Schweiz-Ungarn Budapest*, Swiss-Hungarian Chamber of Commerce) which represents the interests of Swiss companies. The Chamber has been active in Hungary since 1995. It offers commercial information to its members – Hungarians interested in the Swiss market receive relevant information and vice versa.

As regards Swiss cuisine, Hungarians like eating fondue, and several restaurants in Budapest make it their speciality (Fehér Bölény Fondue Bár, V. Bank utca 5).

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The French Attraction of Budapest

FRANCO-HUNGARIAN HISTORY

France has always played an important role in Hungarian integration with Western civilisation, and in the Middle Ages contributed significantly to the establishment of a Western-style organisation of the state in Hungary. Interestingly Saint Martin (c. 316–397), Bishop of Tours and later a patron saint of France, happens to have been born in Savaria (now Szombathely, Hungary) a few centuries before the arrival of the Hungarians (896).



The Lycée français Gustave Eiffel de Budapest

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After the Conquest and the marauding expeditions which Hungarian historians likes to call incursions, Hungary began to integrate into Europe; and, as part of the process, a great number of **missionaries from France** arrived to convert a largely pagan population. According to a tradition, the first Hungarian king, St Stephen (István), was sent his crown by Pope Sylvester II (in the year 1000) – an act which meant the inclusion of Hungary as a state into Western Christendom. The House of Árpád (ruled Hungary between 1000 and 1301) established dozens of dynastic relations with France. Thanks to French monastic orders, Romanesque architecture became widespread in Hungary. A scion of the **House of Angevin**, King Louis the Great (Lajos; 1342–1382) was revered as a perfect embodiment of the **French chivalric ideal** in this country.

During the wars against the Turks, there were a number of French volunteers, mercenaries and aristocrats fighting in Hungarian territories. Later, during the War of the Spanish Succession, **Louis XIV** sent money and army officers to support Ferenc Rákóczi's uprising against the Habsburgs (1701–11). In the **Age of Enlightenment**, Hungarian intellectuals were particularly drawn to French ideas and later the French Revolution. The French Revolution of 1848 had a direct impact on events in Hungary. Modernism in French art and thought at the end of the 19th century had a deep and lasting influence on Hungarian culture.

In the first half of the 20th century, however, the image of the French in the Hungarian collective consciousness shifted in a negative direction, as the dissolution of historical Hungary by the **Treaty of Trianon (1920)** was thought of as a scheme by French politicians. To this day, the treaty is perceived as the greatest historical trauma Hungary has suffered, ceding two-thirds of its former territory and millions of ethnic Hungarians to newly founded states. In spite of being politically isolated, the cultural administration of the interwar period strongly supported French orientation, establishing e.g. a French Grammar School at Gödöllő just outside Budapest. During WWII, Hungary, officially not at war with France, gave asylum to over one thousand French POWs who had escaped from Germany. After the war, connections between the two countries began to weaken until after the post-Communist transition when a powerful turn for the better ensued.

THE FRENCH IN MEDIEVAL BUDA

Difficult as it is to tie in the 'international' Gothic style with a particular nation, the Gothic remains at Buda, as art historians maintain, bear the marks of **'French inspiration'**. One of the oldest buildings in the Castle District is the former **Dominican Church**, which has been incorporated into the modern building of the Hilton Hotel (I. Hess András tér 1-3). When it was excavated, 14th and 15th century grave stones were found (one with a coat-arms suggestive of the French Châtillon family), which were inserted into the new wall. **The Budapest History Museum** in Buda Castle displays fragments of sculptures from a medieval sculptor's workshop discovered in the 1970s. The

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The equestrian statue of Prince Eugene of Savoy

findings are of exceptional value in Hungary, as most of Buda's medieval high culture perished in the Turkish wars. The pieces are dated to the early 15th century, the reign of Sigismund of Luxembourg, and art historians associate them with the French school of sculpture.

A FRENCH GENERAL AGAINST THE TURKS

On the terrace in front of the former Royal Palace, now the National Gallery, we see the flamboyant equestrian **statue of Prince Eugene of Savoy** facing the Danube. **Eugène de Savoie-Carignan** (1663-1736) was a nephew of Cardinal Mazarin, but the family fell out of grace with the king, and the young Eugene determined on a military career offered his services to the Habsburg court. He fought through the anti-Turkish wars of the 1680s, the siege of Vienna in 1683 and the recapture of Buda in 1686; and, as a commander-in-chief, he scored a decisive victory against the Ottoman troops in the Battle of Zenta (then Hungary, today Senta, Serbia), finally driving the Turks out of the Carpathian Basin in 1697. The statue was commissioned by the city of Zenta, but the town could not afford to pay for it, so the government bought it for the Castle of Buda in 1900.

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a | Memorial stone of the Hungarian Jacobins

b | French historicist in style, the relief sculptures on the pillars of Margit híd (Margaret Bridge) are the work of **Adolphe Thabard**.

c | The façade of Nyugati pályaudvar ('Western Railway Station') as seen from Nagykörút. The modern square to the right of the building is called **Eiffel tér** (Square) in honour of the designer of the station.

d | XIII. Balzac utca

e | XIII. Victor Hugo u.

'TO PARIS CAST YOUR WATCHFUL EYES NOW'

(János Batsányi)

Beneath the Castle of Buda lies a park called Vérmező, i.e. the 'Field of Blood'. The name, apart from its allusion to Judas' betrayal of Jesus, refers to the fact that this is where a group of Hungarian intellectuals, the **'Hungarian Jacobins'** were executed in **1795**. They had set up a secret organization to bring about radical change in Hungary in the spirit of the Jacobins of the French Revolution. The movement was discovered, and its leaders were beheaded or imprisoned, including the poet Batsányi quoted above. The stone commemorating them in Vérmező was erected in 1955, on the 160th anniversary of their execution.



a



c



d

FRENCH ARCHITECTS AT WORK ON A NASCENT METROPOLIS

After the Hungarian and Austrian political elite struck the compromise that established the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy (1867), Budapest embarked on a phase of explosive development. A construction boom ensued, and state-of-the-art, splendid new buildings burgeoned throughout the city. A second bridge across the Danube was obviously needed. Tenders were put out, and the successful design happened to be by the **French architect Ernest Goüin**, and it was the *Societé de Construction de Batignolles* that built what came to be called **Margit híd** (Margaret Bridge) between 1872 and 1876. Only a few hundred meters further down on the Pest side, along Nagykörút (Ring Road), we find **Nyugati pályaudvar** ('Western Railway Station)', which was designed by the **studio of Gustav Eiffel** – at the time only an aspirant for world fame. The railway station, boasting a steel structure unique for its time, was officially opened in 1877.



b

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DIVERSE FRENCH ATTRACTIONS

Near this stretch of the Nagykörút (called Szent István körút), we find some examples of the attraction of the Hungarians of Budapest to the French. On the Northern side, two streets were named after French writers in the early 1950s: **Balzac utca** and **Victor Hugo utca** (District XIII).





Going south towards the inner city, we are struck by the sight of a **statue of Napoleon I** in a niche of the façade of an apartment house on the corner of Hajós utca and Zichy utca. The building was called Napoleon Court (VI. Hajós utca 25) and the statue erected after a former Café Napoléon on the opposite side of the street. However, unbeknown to the name giver, the café had been named not after the Corsican-born emperor but Napoleon III, who was an attractive figure for the Hungarians at the time.

FRENCH-HUNGARIAN CONNECTIONS INSTITUTIONALISED

Ever since the French Revolution, Hungarian society and the country's intelligentsia have looked to Paris as a kind of point of reference, and have gone out of their way to supply themselves with 'products' of its culture. Gathering first in 1880, patrons and friends of French culture founded the **Budapest French Circle**. The Circle later merged with the **Hungarian-French Literary Association** established in 1906. After 1923, several important French writers, literary scholars and linguists were active in Budapest, and they set up the Budapest

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branch of the *Alliance française*, the board of which included the most prominent Hungarian writers and Béla Bartók.

Finally, the Budapest ***Institut français*** was established in 1947 144 (I. Fő utca 17). Unlike other French Institutes in the region, it survived the Communist takeover (1949), and has continued to fulfil its mission of promoting French culture and language in Hungary ever since.

a | The Institut français de Budapest 144

b | The Museum of Fine Arts

c | The Lycée français Gustave Eiffel de Budapest

d | Jardin de Paris





FRENCH PRESENCE IN TODAY'S BUDAPEST

Hungary is now an observing member of the *Organisation internationale de la francophonie*; its relations with France are well-balanced. The most active representative of French culture in Budapest today is the French Institute. Its programmes, such as French film weeks, exhibitions, readings, and street parties, attract a wide audience today. Also noteworthy in this respect is the Collection of Modern Art in the **Museum of Fine Arts**, which boasts major works by the French impressionists and post-impressionists, such as **Manet**, **Monet**, **Cézanne**, and **Gauguin**.

The Hungarian-French Chamber of Commerce is active in promoting Franco-Hungarian business relations through its network of over 200 companies in both countries (V. Váci utca 51).

Education in French is currently offered at the ***Lycée français Gustave Eiffel de Budapest*** at both primary and secondary levels (II. Máriaremetei út 193-199). French is of course widely taught at universities and in grammar schools. Affiliated with the Parisian l'Ecole d'art Maryse Eloy, the ***Visart Academie d'Art*** (XIII. Váci út 60) makes it its mission to promote modern French trends in visual art in Hungary.

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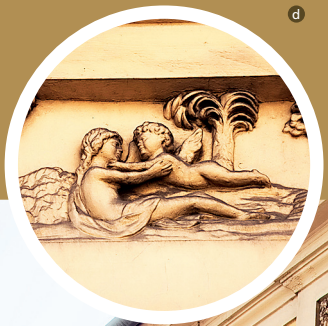
c

French Fare in Budapest

'Cuisine française' is represented by a number of restaurants in Budapest. Fittingly, opposite the French Institute there is **Le Jardin de Paris** (I. Fő utca 20). Its owners have moved here from Paris, themselves trained the chefs, and made sure that the restaurant exudes the true air of France with its *coqs gaulois* and French etchings on the walls. The bar itself, a piece of furniture over a hundred years old, was also imported from France. Another restaurant, **Chez Daniel**, with the owner personally offering his delicacies, recreates both the tastes and moods of his home Provence (VI. Szív utca 32). The wine shop Trikolor next door sells wines, liqueurs and essences. The **'House of French Wines'** (Francia Borok Háza; V. Szarka utca 4) offers a wide range of French wines.



d



d



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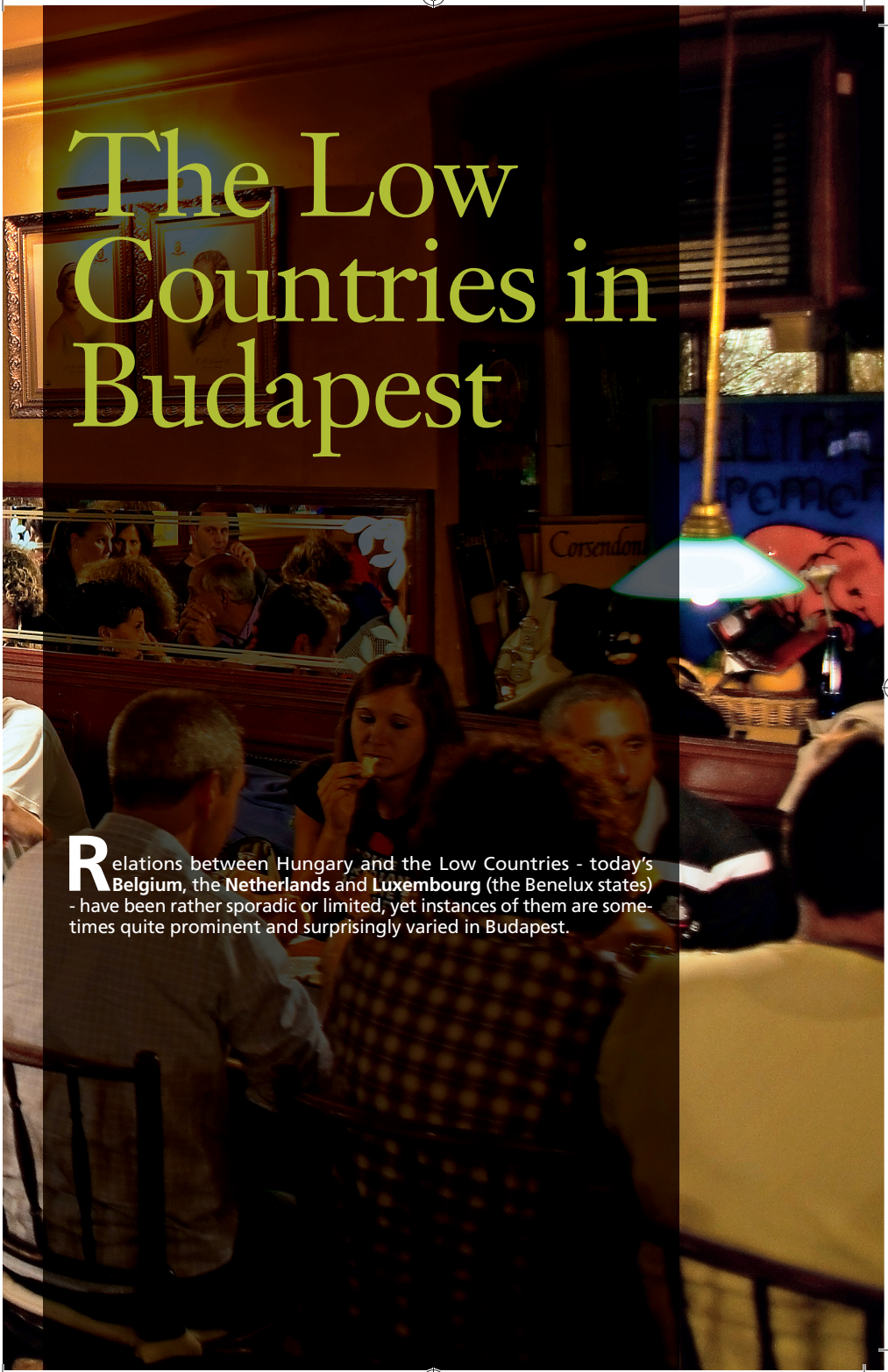
The Low Countries in Budapest



Relations between Hungary and the Low Countries - today's **Belgium**, the **Netherlands** and **Luxembourg** (the Benelux states) - have been rather sporadic or limited, yet instances of them are sometimes quite prominent and surprisingly varied in Budapest.

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MEDIEVAL TIMES

In the Middle Ages, **St Elisabeth of the House of Árpád** (1207–1231) enjoyed a considerable cult in the Netherlands, and one of her daughters, Sophie (Zsófia), married Duke Henry II of Brabant. What had a more direct, though now unfortunately less visible, impact on Buda was that **Sigismund (Zsigmond) of Luxembourg**, King of Hungary, set up his permanent court here in 1408, and it was from this base that he set out to obtain the crowns of Bohemia, Germany and finally even the Holy Roman Empire. Apart from his ambitious palace-building project, he also founded a university in Óbuda (1395). Sadly, this, like an earlier attempt, came to naught. Nevertheless, to commemorate his aspiration, a recently established college in 'Old Buda' adopted his name (**Zsigmond Király Főiskola**; III. Kelta u. 2).



a | King Sigismund College

b | Statue of András Hadik

THE EARLY MODERN ERA

The Habsburgs also meant a connection of sorts. The widow of the Hungarian King Louis II and the sister of the Holy Roman Emperor Ferdinand I, the Brussels-born **Mary of Austria** fled Buda to escape the Turks, and became Governor of the Habsburg Netherlands between 1531 and 1555. She was accompanied there by the notable Hungarian humanist, **Miklós Oláh** (Romanian through his father), who later become Archbishop of Esztergom. Several Hungarian humanists visited the Lower Countries at this time. Later, in the absence of universities, wandering Hungarian **Protestant students** often went to study at Dutch universities, such as Leiden or Utrecht. The Dutch and Hungarian Reformed communities have developed close ties ever since. Hungary also had 'visitors' from the Low Countries – soldiers and military leaders during the Turkish wars and the Thirty Years War (e.g. **Karl Van Mansfeld**, **Johann t'Serclaes Tilly** and **Charles Bonaventure de Longueval**, **Count of Bucquoy**).

THE MODERN ERA

Among the notabilities with personal ties to the Low Countries, we have the 18th-century field marshal András Hadik, whose mother, **Franciska Hardy**, had come from Luxembourg. Having excelled himself in the Prussian-Austrian war (1756–63), Hadik is commemorated by a number of places in Budapest, the most spectacular of them being his equestrian statue in the Castle District of Buda (on the corner of Szentháromság utca and Úri utca).

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The daughter of King Leopold II of Belgium, **Princess Stephanie** (1864–1945), was married to Crown Prince Rudolf of Habsburg, heir to the Austro-Hungarian throne, but after his suicide (in 1889), she decided to marry a Hungarian Count, Elemér Lónyay, in spite of all the protests from her father and the Viennese court, and stayed in Hungary for the rest of her life. XIV. Stefánia út commemorates her.

THE DUTCH CHILD-RELIEF OPERATION

An instance of the long-standing **Dutch-Hungarian Reformed relations** is that Holland, a neutral country in WWI, offered support to post-war, post-revolutionary and hunger-struck Hungary in various ways. One Dutch initiative under the patronage of **Queen Wilhelmina** was to take starving Budapest



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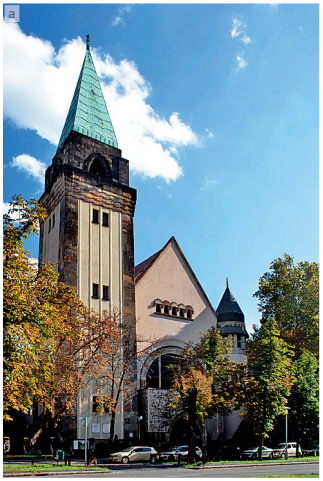
a | The Reformed Church, host of Julianna Elementary, in former Wilhelmina steet – an outstanding example of Hungarian Art Nouveau arhitecture 145

b | Erick van Egeraat's ING Bank 146

children to stay with Dutch, Belgian, Swiss, Swedish, and even English families for a long period to be properly nourished and recuperate. In appreciation, a street was named after Queen Wilhelmina (today it is VI–VII. Városligeti fasor). The programme was restarted, though less intensively, after WWII. In 2009, the Hungarian Red Cross launched a series of events entitled **'Thanks, Netherlands!'** to commemorate this. After the 1920s child-relief programme, some of the funds raised had not been spent, and these were used to establish a **Reformed Church Elementary School**, which was named after **Princess Julianna** (Queen 1948–2004), and built in the back yard of the Reformed Church in the street. After the war the school was nationalised, and then, in 1990s, it was returned to the church, and functions as such again. 145

ART OF THE LOW COUNTRIES IN BUDAPEST


a

The **Esterházys**, one of Hungary's oldest and greatest aristocratic families, particularly Prince Nicolas II (1765–1833), amassed a major art collection, which was later bought by the state to establish the **Museum of Fine Arts** on Heroes' Square (Hősök tere; XIV. Dózsa György út 41). Among the 3,000 paintings in its Old Masters section, the museum boasts **Pieter Bruegel the Elder's** *Saint John the Baptist*, some paintings by **Rubens** *(Study of a Man's Head; Portrait of a Man)* and also several major works by the great Flemish masters of the 17th century, including **Anthony van Dyck's** *St John the Evangelist*, **Rembrandt's** *St John* and *The Butchery*, and several others by artists like **Frans Hals** and **Vermeer van Delft**.

For lovers of the modern-day Low Countries, the **LOW Dutch-Flemish cultural festival** has been organised since 2008 at the joint initiative of the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Flemish Representation in Hungary. At venues in Budapest and Pécs, some 500 works by Dutch, Flemish and Hungarian artists have been presented. A special homepage, www.lowkult.hu, helps promote the events. In 2009, the Flemish part of the festival was entitled **'FUTURSPEKTIV – New Flemish Masters'** and the Dutch **'Nothing is Impossible'**.

In 2006, the Budapest Museum of Fine Arts and the **Musée national d'histoire et d'art of Luxembourg** jointly arranged a major exhibition called *'Sigismundus – Rex et Imperator'* presenting the life and times of the great European ruler through some 400 works of art form 100 collections in 19 different countries.

One of the great architects of our time, **Erick van Egeraat**, is also represented in Budapest. Although his massive City Hall

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project has been put off, several of his buildings adorn Budapest, including the head offices of **ING Bank** on the corner of Dózsa György út and Benczúr utca 146 (VI. Dózsa György út 84) and the exquisitely grand Deák Palace in the heart of the city (V. Deák Ferenc u. 15).



EXPATS

Since 1992, the Budapest Dutch community has had a school, the **Nederlandse Taal- en Cultuurschool**, offering instruction in Dutch and under Dutch law at primary and secondary levels. There is also a Dutch expat club, the **Nederlandse Club Hongarije**, running various programmes, and a news bulletin and website to keep members abreast of events. Its logo is a combination of the Dutch tulip and the Hungarian red paprika, symbolising the encounter of the two cultures.





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Tastes from the Low Countries

The Belgian Princess Stephanie is remembered in Hungary by more than just the street bearing her name (XIV. Stefánia út). She is said to have grown extremely fond of Hungary and its cuisine, and in response, Hungarians have named several dishes that combine eggs, the **'Stefánia style'**, after her; a mincemeat pie with boiled eggs is a staple Hungarian dish. A chocolate cake is also named after her.
Lovers of Belgian beers and cuisine can also take their pick among a number of restaurants and pubs in Budapest. In Buda, one of these is the Belgian Brasserie Henri, which opened in the 1990s (I. Bem rakpart 12), the House of Belgian Beers, which boasts a considerable choice (I. Halász utca2), as well as the Pater Marcus Belgian Abbey Beer House and Restaurant (I. Apor Péter utca 1). On the Pest side, Café Mosselen welcomes its visitors with its Belgian-French cuisine (XIII. Pannónia utca 14), while the Amstel River Café (V. Párizsi utca 6) is a Dutch style restaurant.



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Our Next of Kin, the Finns, in Budapest



Alone in a sea of Indo-Germanic peoples, the Hungarians had believed for centuries that they were the descendants of the Huns – Attila is a common personal name to our day; and it was something of a cultural shock in the 19th century when modern linguistics established that Hungarian belongs to the Finno-Ugric language group. Though some have dubbed this kinship as 'smacking of fish', many have taken it to heart, and developed an increasingly powerful sense of brotherhood and intellectual relatedness – this is perhaps witnessed by the fact that Hungarians have produced six different full translations of the Finnish national epic the ***Kalevala***.

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a

AKSELI GALLEN-KALLELA

Famous for his illustrations of the *Kalevala*, the painter **Akseli Gallen-Kallela** (1865–1931) is commemorated by a sculpture near the Buda end of the Chain Bridge. 147 He first came into contact with Hungarian art and artists at the Paris Expo of 1900. A few years later, he wrote in a letter: 'Tomorrow I am leaving for fabled Hungary, and look forward keenly to the moment when I can get to know this kindred nation and its culture – something I have always longed to do.' The first occasion was the 1906 winter exhibition at the Art Hall (Műcsarnok), where he presented his work along with other Northern European artists. The second one was a major show at the Museum of Fine Arts (Szépművészeti Múzeum) in 1908, seen by over one-hundred thousand people. During these stays, he made life-long friendships with members of the Artists' Colony of Gödöllő. Together they visited Transylvania, and the Hungarians returned his visit by going to Finland. Friendship with the Finnish master enabled Hungarian artists to organise study trips to Finland, and to tempt Finnish artists to visit Hungary.

Setting up his easel on Margaret Island (Margit-sziget), in Aquincum or in the side of Gellért Hill, Gallen-Kallela painted several pictures of Budapest. His daughter, Kristi, later claimed, 'Never at any time was my father celebrated the way he was here. We often heard loud cries in the street: Long live Gallén!' Staying at the former Hotel Fiume, he often went for a night stroll in Budapest. One evening, he allegedly climbed onto the back of one of the stone lions on the Chain Bridge, and there painted a view of the Danube Bank. The bridge guard ordered him to get off, but the painter produced a permit from the police which entitled him to paint.

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YRJÖ LIIPOLA

On the base of the statue of the 19th-century poet Mihály Vörösmarty (V. Vörösmarty tér), the Finnish sculptor Yrjö Liipola (1881-1971) has a memorial plaque. 148 Liipola fled to Hungary in 1904 to escape persecution for his protest against recruitment in Finland by the Russian army. As an assistant, he worked with the great Hungarian sculptor Alajos Stróbl on the equestrian statue of St Stephen, which now stands outside the Matthias Church in Buda Castle. He then studied under Ede Kallós, and participated in making the Vörösmarty statue, in which the figure of the young standard-bearer has his features. Marrying a Hungarian woman, he spent much of his creative life in Budapest. Before the Finnish Embassy was established in Budapest, he also acted as a consul; then, on his return to Finland in 1934, he fulfilled the office of a Hungarian consul.

'Liipola is now turned quite Hungarian' wrote the ministry official and poet Elek Koronghy Lippich, 'but he is still a loyal child of his Northern home […]. Young Finnish artists should be sent to Hungary, to meet a nation closely related. Paris only confuses their souls and teaches them things that they need years to forget before they can become Finnish artists. What fills their souls here in Hungary enriches them for years. There should be more contact between Finnish and Hungarian culture.' Apart from sculpting over a 100 portraits in Hungary, Yrjö Liipola also translated several Hungarian works into Finnish.

HUNGARIAN VOLUNTEERS IN THE WINTER WAR

At the time of the **Finno-Soviet war of 1939-40**, the Finnish Embassy on Gellért Hill was flooded with aid parcels and other tokens of sympathy. The Lutheran and the Reformed Churches, the Hungarian Mothers for Finnish Children, the Hungarian-Finnish Society, and the daily *8 órai újság* raised major funds, while professor **Albert Szent-Györgyi**, winner of the Nobel Prize in Physiology, donated his prize for the Finnish freedom fighters. Thousands of volunteers gathered, and a bat-

a | The Akseli Gallen-Kallela memorial 147

b | Memorial plaque to Yrjö Liipola 148



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talion of 341 Hungarians was organised under the patronage of prime-minister Pál Teleki; disguised as ski-tourists, they travelled to Finland through Italy, France, England, and Norway, as Germany and Sweden had not granted permission for their transit. In the meantime, however, an armistice was signed, and so the volunteers were shortly sent home without front-line fighting. In the 1950s, the Communist regime regarded their volunteering on the Finnish side as a war crime, and they had to face many years of inprisonment or the threat of it. Today they are highly esteemed, their memories and recollections count as vital historical sources. A plaque in the quadrangle of the Insistute and Museum of Military History 122 (I. Kapisztrán tér 2-4) commemorates them.

Memorial plaque to the Hungarian volunteers in the Winter War 122

THE FINNISH EMBASSY AND FINNAGORA

The Budapest **Finnish Embassy** is at XI. Kelenhegyi út16/a, at the side of Gellért Hill. 149 'I don't think Finland has any other embassy as beautiful as this villa on Gellért Hill with its spacious rooms, wide staircases and palatial parlours,' recalled Onni Talas, Finland's first Permanent Ambassador. Alas, the building bought in 1939 was badly damaged in WWII, and had to be replaced. Finaly, the new building designed by Ilmo Valjakka was officially opened on 14 April 1989. Finnish Foreign Minister Pertti Paasio donated to the embassy Akseli Gallen-Kallela's 1907 painting *The Danube in the Evening*. The new building hosts the Finnish cultural, scientific and business centre **Finnagora** and the only **Finnish Institute** in Central Europe, as well as a fine library. The Embassy also regularly organises Finnish film screenings.

OTHER FINNISH FEATURES IN BUDAPEST

The **Society of Finns in Hungary**, in cooperation with ***Suomi-koulu***, offers various programmes for Finnish children living in Hungary, including the Finnish Week centered around the *Kalevala* and the **Day of Finnish Culture** (28 February) involving Hungarian schools. The Lutheran Grammar School of Deák tér (V. Sütő utca 1) hosts the cultural events of the **Kalevala Circle**, as well as the performances of the **Kalevala Choir** and **Revontulet Ensemble**. **The Lutheran Church in Kelenföld** (XI. Bocskai út 10) offers services in Finnish during Advent and Easter, while Finnish Christmas carols are sung at the **Budahegyvidék Lutheran Church** (XII. Kékgolyó utca17). The Budapest-based Finnish businessman **Ari Kupsus** owns a gallery in VIII. Bródy Sándor utca 23/B putting on contemporary art shows and concerts.

The Trafó House of Contemporary Art (IX. Liliom utca 41), Boat A38 (the Buda end of the Petőfi Bridge), Sziget Festival (Óbuda Island) and the Millenary Centre (II. Kis Rókus utca 16-20) regularly feature Finnish ensembles ranging from folk music to heavy metal.

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The Baltic Outreaches of Budapest

Because of the distance involved, there have been few ties between the Baltic nations - **Estonians, Latvians** and **Lithuanians** - and Hungary. Remains and mementoes of them do exist in Budapest, yet they are few and far between. Estonians are related to Hungarians chiefly through the sense of a shared Finno-Ugric origin, while with the Lithuanians, kings from the Jagiellon dynasty serve as a link between the two countries. During the years of Soviet occupation, particularly in the late 1980s, the three Baltic states represented a kind of symbol of national independence in the eyes of dissident intellectuals in Budapest. As Lithuanian and Polish history ran along the same track for several centuries, many of the Lithuanian mementoes in Budapest are also points of remembrance for the Polish people.

Statue of Stephen Báthory, the much-revered king of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth

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In the most attractive part of Buda, District XII, we find a road called **Jagelló út**, which was named after the Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila. (Close ties between Hungary and the Lithuanian dynasty, which was to become a joint Polish-Lithuanian royal dynasty, are indicated by the fact that, in Hungarian historical terminology, the name came to be used with a special Hungarian orthography – Jagelló, while the Lithuanian original is Jogaila and the Polish version is Jagiełło.) The area was developed essentially between the two World Wars, and this is also when the name was chosen.

The **Lithuanian Grand Duke Jogaila** married **Hedwig** (the later saint), daughter of King Louis (Angevin) the Great of Hungary. Since Hedwig succeeded Louis on the throne of Poland, their marriage created the personal union of that country with Lithuania. Thus in a certain sense we might say that the common chapters of Polish and Lithuanian history were written, at least in the early stages, with a Hungarian pen. Similarly, the reason why Jogaila wanted a personal union with Poland also had to do with Hungary: the Teutonic Order had settled in Transylvania, a region of Hungary until 1920, today part of Romania. After they were expelled from there, they settled on the boundary of Poland and Lithuania, and posed a serious threat to the latter. Today, a small **bust of St Hedwig** stands on one of the most attractive spots in Budapest, close to the Danube bank by the Pest end of Erzsébet híd, at the entrance of the **'Inner City Parish Church of Our Lady'** 96 (Belvárosi Nagyboldogasszony Főplébániatemplom). St Hedwig is also the patron saint of one of Hungary's most picturesque regions, the Danube Bend North of Budapest. This is why she has an impressive statue on the main square of the small city of **Vác**, which lies about 40 km from Budapest. After the House of Angevin died out, the successors of Jogaila came to occupy the Hungarian throne. Jogaila's son, **Ulászló I** (1440-1444) became memorable through his tragic death – he fell at Varna in a battle against the Turks. A plaque commemorates him in the quadrangle of the **Museum of Military History** 122 (I. Kapisztrán tér 2-4). The two last monarchs of the independent Kingdom of Hungary (**Ladislaus II** and **Louis II**) were also members of the Jagiellon dynasty – their statues are displayed on the Danube façade of the Parliament. The death of Louis II and the collapse of the Hungarian state in 1526 are portrayed in a famous painting by Bertalan Székely displayed in the National Gallery (I. Dísz tér 17). A further Lithuanian aspect of Hungarian history is that Lithuania is the country where the Hungarian Revolution of 1956 raised the most enthusiastic response. Occupied and annexed by the Soviets a decade and a half earlier, Lithuania now became the scene of demonstrations – in Vilnius, for example, a student riot broke out simultaneously with the Hungarian revolution. Well before the Baltic states gained independence, in 1990, Lithuania's representative had erected a national style wooden grave memorial (with a Pensive Christ, ***Rupintojelis*** on its top) as a homage to the Hungarian revolution, in **Plot 301** of the Rákoskeresztúr Cemetery, where the

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former Hungarian Prime Minister Imre Nagy rests. 154 In another act of remembrance of the 1956 Revolution, the Lithuanian poet and literary scholar **Tomas Venclova** wrote a poem entitled 'Instruction' in 1980, after visiting Bem tér, the scene of the mass demonstration which later developed into the revolution. The tragic events of 1956 also inspired two Latvian poets who were living in exile at the time (**Olafs Stumbrs** and **Andrejs Irbe**).

The three Baltic nations are also connected by a Hungarian statesman, **Stephen Báthory, Prince of Transylvania**. In 1576, Báthory became king of the Polish-Lithuanian Rzeczpospolita (Commonwealth). His statue stands in the park between XIV. Thököly út and Hungária körút. 150 Besides his successful campaigns against Russia, Báthory also created lasting assets in the cultural field – in 1579 he promoted the existing Jesuit college in Vilnius to the rank of a university. In the interwar period (under Polish auspices), the university was to adopt his name. He also founded further Jesuit colleges in the territories he occupied (such as in **Riga**, Latvia; and in **Tartu**, Estonia, or Dorpat as it was called at the time).

Traces of Baltic presence are also observable in Budapest in other fields. Several of the museums in the city have material of Latvian or Estonian relevance: in the **Transport Museum**, for example, (XIV. Városligeti körút 11) we find a **Riga motorcycle** produced in the Soviet era; in the **Ludwig Museum** (Művészetek Palotája, 'Palace of Arts', XI. Komor Marcell utca 1) we can enjoy works by contemporary Estonian artists, and we can also find Baltic material in the **Museum of Ethnography** 6 (V. Kossuth Lajos tér 12). Recently there was an exhibition in the Museum of Military History about the history of the Lithuanian national resistance movement in the 1940s and 50s. There is also an ***Eesti Instituut*** (Estonian Institute) in Budapest (V. Falk Miksa utca 22), its mission being to popularise Estonian culture, to disseminate information on Estonian society and culture, and to promote the teaching of the Estonian language.

In autumn 1999, an independent Department of Estonian Language and Literature was launched at **Eötvös Loránd University Budapest**, and each Baltic state has an embassy in the city.



The Lithuanian 1956 memorial in Plot 301 of the Rákoskeresztúr cemetery 154

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Loves Splendidly Isolated

BRITISH AND IRISH INFLUENCES IN BUDAPEST

Anglo-Hungarian relations go back to the turn of the first millennium. In the Middle Ages, they were mostly intellectual ties, both lay and clerical. After the Ottoman conquest, Hungary lost her sovereignty, and England, turning toward the Atlantic Ocean and developing into a world power, seemed to lose sight of Hungary. Hungarians did not do so with England. They saw it as a model of a free and middle-class-led society in the 19th century. The 'Anglomania' of the Hungarian elite did not subside in the first half of the 20th century, either, even though Hungary became entangled with Nazi Germany. Under the Communist regime, relations were practically prohibited, but, after the political change of 1989, they once more became dynamic.

The Church of the 'English Nuns' (Loreto Sisters)

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a | Chain Bridge 5

b | Plaque to Adam Clark

c | The Zero Kilometre Stone at Clark Ádám tér is Hungary's centre point in terms of measuring distances. In the background, we see the mouth of the Castle Tunnel, 350 metres in length. Today, it is not recommended to walk inside because of car exhaust.

'Heaven grant us its peace, but not the king of Hungary's' (Shakespeare: *Measure for Measure*, Act I, Scene 2). The quote refers to the Turkish period: the peace of the king of Hungary is not lasting, it is a state of constant readiness for war.

Irish and Hungarian society did not discover each other until the 19th century. Such members of our society who ventured as far as the emerald isle were taken aback by the poverty they encountered there. Another characteristic response was to see O'Connell's fight for national liberties as an example to follow. Irish politics in turn looked on Hungary's compromise with the Austrians (1867) as a viable model for national emancipation. At the beginning of the 21st century, the Hungarians looked to the 'Irish miracle' and the 'Celtic tiger', as a political and economic model.

Traces of Medieval Hungarian-English and Hungarian-Irish Relations

St Stephen (István), founder and first monarch of the Kingdom of Hungary (1000-1038), made every effort to marry his daughters to the sons of the best and greatest dynasties. **Edward the Exile**, the son of Edmund Ironside fled from Cnut the Great, the Danish king who ruled England at that time, and found refuge in the Hungarian court. Edward married Stephen's daughter Agatha, and had a child by her named Margaret. Later Edward and his family returned to England. Margaret became the wife of King Malcolm III of Scotland, and came to be revered as a paragon of the faithful wife and perfect mother. She died in Edinburgh in 1093, and was canonised in the 13th century. This is how Hungarian blood came to trickle in the veins of the Plantagenet dynasty. Surprisingly, the first student at Oxford University to be known by name was also a Hungarian: Nicolaus de Hungaria who spent three years there between 1193 and 1196.

In the 14th and the 15th centuries, two Hungarian pilgrims visited the famous mediaeval place of pilgrimage, St Patrick's Purgatory in Lough Derg, County Donegal. Accounts of their visions are an interesting document of the age.

In his book written in 1904, *The Resurrection in Hungary: A Parallel to Ireland*, the famous Irish statesman Arthur Griffith described the constitutional struggles for independence in 19th-century Hungary as an example of social and economic progress to be followed by Ireland.

ANGLO-MANIA IN THE REFORM AGE: THE CHAIN BRIDGE AND ITS AREA

In the progressive, liberal mood of 'the Reform Age' in the first half of the 19th century, several members of the nobility went on study trips to England. It was after such a trip that the greatest champion of progress in Hungary, Count **István Széchenyi**, embarked on a number of initiatives, including the introduction of horse racing in Hungary, starting the National Club movement and, most importantly, having the first permanent bridge built between Pest and Buda.

Designs for the bridge were the work of English civil engineer **William Tierney Clark** (1783-1852), who had produced a similar structure but on a smaller scale for Marlow in England. Its construction took ten years and was finally completed in 1849. After its inauguration, the **Chain Bridge** became a symbol of social equality because nobles and commoners alike had to pay to go across it. It has come to be the best-known icon of the city after the Parliament Building, even the 200-forint coin issued in 2009 bears its image. 5 A namesake of the designer, the **Scottish architect Adam Clark** (1811-1866) was employed to supervise the construction.

The square at the Buda end of the bridge is called after him, in Hungarian fashion, Clark Ádám tér. He was also responsible

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for building the tunnel which, starting there, runs under Castle Hill. Clark eventually settled in Hungary, started a family, and lived the rest of his life here. This is commemorated by a plaque at his last home at I. Ybl Miklós tér 6.

The splendid building on the Pest side just opposite Chain Bridge is called **Gresham Palace**, as it once belonged to British Gresham Insurance Company. This turn-of-the-century building was inaugurated in 1907. At the beginning of the 20th century, a coterie of now famous artists used to meet in its café, and came to be called the Gresham Circle. Today Gresham Palace is an exclusive hotel. A World Heritage item since 1987, it offers guided tours for visitors.


a



b


c

BRITISH MEMENTOES IN THE INNER CITY

a | The Church of the 'English Nuns' 65

b | The Well of Justice 151

István Széchenyi was referred to even by his contemporaries as the greatest of Hungarians. Indeed, this enterprising aristocrat did a great deal for progress in Hungary in the fields of transport, river regulation, industrial development and economics, and it was also he who founded the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. All this lives on vividly in the collective memory of Hungarian people. Most people also know that Széchenyi used to look to England both for inspiration and for professional expertise. The fact that this was common practice amongst the elite of the age is shown clearly by a contemporary travelogue, *Hungary and Transylvania*, by **John Paget**. During his travels in Hungary, Paget often met compatriots working here as doctors, soldiers or estate managers. Incidentally, Paget married the niece of Széchenyi's close friend, Miklós Wesselényi, who had a similar enthusiasm for England. Paget got to like Hungary much, he fought in the Revolution in 1848-49, and it was later 'in exile' that he published his *Hungary and Transylvania* in England. Later, he was able to return to Hungary, and died here in 1892.



a

British Parallels in Hungarian Literature

One of Hungary's greatest poets, János Arany (1817-1882), has his monument in the most prominent place in the nearby Gardens of the National Museum (VIII. Múzeum körút 14-16.). All Hungarians know his poem 'The Bards of Wales', which relates how a whole array of Welsh bards chose to die rather than sing the praises of King Edward I, who had occupied their land. By reviving this legend, the poet was encouraging resistance against the Austrians after the defeat of the Hungarian revolution (1849).
The figure guarding Arany above in the group of sculptures is Miklós Toldi. Arany's epic poems about this knight are part of general education in Hungary. In fact, Toldi was a real person, a member of the so-called White Company, an English-Hungarian mercenary army in 14th-century Italy.



a

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In one of the pedestrian streets of the inner city of Pest, we find a church which is commonly called by Hungarians the **'Church of the English Nuns'** 65 (otherwise Belvárosi Szent Mihály Templom ['Saint Michael's']; V. Váci utca 47/b). **The Institute of the Blessed Virgin Mary**, the **Loreto Sisters**, founded by the English Catholic nun Mary Ward (1585-1645) had a house in Pest from the 18th century on. Closed down under the Communist regime, it was re-opened after the 1989 political change, and has around 120 members today. Next to the church, it runs a school for children of primary and secondary school age, named after the Yorkshire-born founder of the order, Mary Ward.

A further landmark in the inner city is a fountain in Szabó Ervin tér, the 4.5 metres tall **Well of Justice**. As the inscription around its rim shows, it was erected in memory of Lord Rothermere. 151



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After WWI, Hungary lost two-thirds of her former territory, and some three and a half million ethnic Hungarians came to live in the newly founded neighbouring states. Hungarians strove for the revision of the Peace Treaty of Trianon in the 1920s, and found an unexpected ally in the media-mogul Lord Rothermere. **Harold Harmsworth, first viscount of Rothermere**, was the owner of *The Daily Mail*, and England's third richest man at the time. He made his first trip to Hungary in 1927, after which he became one of the main supporters of Hungarian revisionism. On 21 June 1927, he published a historic article in his paper entitled 'Hungary's Place in the Sun'. This placed Hungary's position after the Trianon Treaty in the centre of international attention for a long time to come. The fountain was erected from donations by Hungarian admirers of the Lord.

a | St Columba's Scottish Presbyterian Church (Scottish Mission) 152

b | Irish Cat Pub (V. Múzeum körút 41.)

c | British Council



THE SCOTTISH MISSION IN PEST-BUDA AND THE MEMORY OF A SCOTSWOMAN WHO SAVED JEWS

In 1841 the **Scottish Protestant Mission**, which aimed to convert Jews, sent three of its members to Pest. The mission later came to include further members and was successful in its activity. Officially, the aim of the group was also to offer a religious background for the English and Scottish workers and professionals working on the Chain Bridge. It enjoyed the support of the highest Hungarian public authority, Palatine Joseph, whose wife was English. Later the Scottish Mission only managed to avoid being expelled from the Habsburg Empire under the protection of the Reformed Congregation of Pest. In the Communist period, this was the only foreign church body allowed to carry on functioning. Now called **St Columba's Scottish Presbyterian Church**, the Scottish Mission is at VI. Vörösmarty utca 51. 152

This is also where we find a memorial plaque to **Jane Haining**. She was a Church of Scotland missionary deported from the same spot in 1944 for giving safe hiding to Jewish children who had been entrusted to her care. All the children survived the time of the persecutions, but the brave Scottish missionary was killed in Auschwitz. Jane Haining has been awarded the title of Righteous among the Nations.

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BRITISH AND IRISH PRESENCE IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

Since the period before the political change of 1989, British-Hungarian and Irish-Hungarian relations have been going through a veritable renaissance. The institutions where this is manifested are the **British Council** and the **British Chamber of Commerce in Hungary**. Far more noticeable is the presence of **English**, **Scottish** and **Irish pubs** in Budapest. There are some 30 of them, the list can be checked on http://www.budarpads.com/budapest-irish-and-scottish-bars.htm. To give some examples, the Irish Cat Pub is off Kálvin tér (V. Múzeum körút 41), and offers Irish beer specialities; the Caledonia (VI. Mozsár utca 9) sells Scottish whiskeys and draught beer. The Scottish Corner (V. Galamb utca 3) is an elegant restaurant, which also features whiskey tasting events and sells examples of Scottish arts and crafts. The Sir William Pub, founded in 1998, has typical Scottish dishes and whiskies (X. Ráday utca 9). The **Celtic world** has been gaining popularity in Hungary over the past decade – Irish folk dance and folk music are taught or enjoyed at a number of places in this city.

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The Northern Lights of Budapest

NORWEGIANS, DANES AND SWEDES

Apart from sharing the same major European historical events, Scandinavian countries, owing to the distance, have not had a marked influence on Hungary or Budapest. Yet there are some instances, northern lights, as it were, that flare up here and there.

The Gregersen House in Lónyay utca

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A NORDIC MASTER BUILDER IN BUDAPEST

Only a few minutes' walk from Kálvin tér, at the entrance to the building which once hosted the Budapest Consulate of the Kingdom of Norway, we find a memorial plaque to **Norwegian architect Gregersen Gudbrand** 153 (IX. Lónyay utca 29). Born in Norway, Gudbrand (1824–1910) arrived in Hungary in 1847, and later became a volunteer in the Hungarian Revolution against the Habsburgs (1848-49). Thereafter he designed a number of railway lines and bridges, and was active in the reconstruction works following the great flood of Szeged in 1879. As a recognition of his achievements, he was awarded the Knight's Cross of the Order of King Franz Joseph, as well as Hungarian nobility with the by-name Saági which he and his descendants were entitled to use. His construction company, registered as Gregersen G. és Fiai Építő Vállalat (Gregersen G. and Sons Construction Co.) in 1888, soon became widely known for the work it did in constructing Hungary's railways, traces of which may be found in practically all parts of the country.

Besides railway design and construction, Gregersen was also highly active in the wood industry, and played a great part in transforming Budapest, a growing city, into a modern



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a | Memorial plaque to Gregersen Gudbrand 153

b | The Gregersen House in Lónyay utca (IX. Lónyay 29.) 153

c | The symbolic grave post of Povl Bang Jensen 154


b

metropolis. Apart from several buildings, which have sadly perished, Gregersen and Sons did the complete carpentry of the Parliament Building (V. Kossuth tér), the Museum of fine Arts in Heroes' Square (Hősök tere; XIV. Dózsa György út 41) and the wood panelling of the conference hall and customer spaces of the Hungarian National Central Bank (V. Szabadság tér 8-9). They also constructed some one-third of the structures of the 1885 national industrial expo.

In 1866, the construction of the **Gregersen House** in Lónyay utca was completed, and the architect moved in with his family. (The life and work of Gudbrand Gregersen was presented at an exhibition organised by the Local History Museum of Ferencváros in 1999.) In Norway, he was received by kings and Prime Ministers, and was awarded the distinction of the Order of St Olaf. He played a major role in shaping relations between Hungary and Norway – for thirty years the Norwegian Consulate functioned in the Gregersen House, under the direction of the architect's youngest son. One of the walkways leading to the new National Theatre (IX. Bajor Gizi Park 1) bears his name.

A HUNGARIAN MARTYR FROM DENMARK: POVL BANG JENSEN

Suggestive of the bond between the dead and the living, cemeteries are well worth taking the time to visit. The most uplifting and sublime event of the Hungarian political change in 1989 was the reburial of the martyrs of the Revolution and Freedom Fight of 1956. The reason why they had to be reburied was that they had been denied a proper burial. After their execution, they were covered up in the prison yard; then, two years later, they were secretly put away face downwards under falsely inscribed grave markers in an outlying plot of the largest cemetery in Budapest 154 (Rákoskeresztúr, X. Kozma utca 8-10). **Plot 301**, after the martyrs' state reburial there, has become perhaps the single-most important memorial place for Hungarians; a captivating modernist monument surrounded by traditional and remodelled Hungarian-style grave posts proclaims the message of the dead. Among the posts, one bears a **Danish** name: **Povl Bang Jensen**. He had been on the UN committee investigating the events of the revolution, and refused to hand over to his superiors the list of Hungarian witnesses, for fear that their



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families in Hungary would be subject to vengeance from the Soviets. Bang Jensen was later found in New York with a bullet through his temple. The precise circumstances of his death remain unclear to this day. To honour him, a symbolic grave post was put up in Plot 301 on the 30th anniversary of his death (25 November 1989). In 1992, he was posthumously granted the '56 Memorial Award by the Republic of Hungary. His grave in Copenhagen has a small marble plaque expressing the gratitude of the Hungarian nation on it. He also has a bust in the vestibule of the **Hungarian Ministry of Foreign Affairs** (II. Bem rakpart 47).

A SWEDISH ROYAL STOPOVER IN PEST

In the Great Northern War between Sweden and Russia for northern supremacy, **Charles XII**, the most noted king and military leader of Sweden, after the battle of Poltava (1709) had to flee for his life. Charles then spent over three years in Turkish exile. In autumn **1714**, he decided to return home by the quickest possible means, and try and turn the tide of the war. Travelling under the false name of Peter Frisk, he covered the distance in a mere 14 days – a tremendous feat for the age. On his way, he stopped over in Pest – this is commemorated by a **plaque** at V. Váci utca 43. 155 Though the inscription on the plaque may be somewhat inaccurate – the king was probably travelling by coach, not on horseback, and slightly earlier than the plaque would have it – the King returned home, and regained as much as he could. In remembrance of his feat, General Åke Sagrén, Swedish chief of staff, made a tour of the distance in 2000. Swedes are said to have taken to coffee due to the adventurous journey of their great king.



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a | Memorial plaque to King Charles XII of Sweden 155

b | The Wallenberg Memorial in XIII. Szent István park after its second installation

RAOUL WALLENBERG

Having been on business in Budapest and learned Hungarian, **Raoul Wallenberg** (1912–1947?) was appointed secretary to the Swedish Embassy in Budapest in May 1944 under a proposal by the US War Refugee Board set up by President Roosevelt to forestall the Nazi plan of exterminating all the European Jews in their areas. Wallenberg was posted to support the rescue of the Jewish population. By issuing letters of protection and setting up **'protected houses'**, he and his colleagues saved tens of thousands of Jews. After the Arrow-Cross (the Hungarian Nazi movement) putsch on 15 October 1944, passes were not recognized, and hun-

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dreds of people under Swedish protection were arrested and shot into the Danube. Through his contacts and his personal daring, Wallenberg continued with his efforts to the last. However, the in-coming Soviet troops arrested him (probably on 17 January 1945), and took him to Moscow. He is said to have been executed in the prison of the Soviet secret police in 1947, but the date and manner of his death have not been clearly established. In 2003, he was posthumously made an honorary citizen of Budapest.

to Wallenberg, the statue then turned up as a medical allegory, the **'Snake Killer'**, in front of a Debrecen pharmaceutical company, and was later made into its logo. Likewise with medical meaning, a reduced replica was put up at the Radiological Clinic in Budapest (VIII. Üllői út 78/a). Later, the original context was given back to it. Finally, a copy of the sculpture was put up in the original spot in 1999.

In spite of the pro-Soviet Hungarian leadership, his 'rehabilitation' began in the mid-1980s. In 1985, the US Ambassador



The later history of **the world's first Wallenberg memorial** is itself testimony to the troubled and thorny history of Budapest. Today, there are three Wallenberg monuments in the city, all of which go back to the same roots. As early as 1949, a sculpture by Pál Pátzay showing a man fighting a serpent was erected in XIII. Szent István park (see the chapter on Jewish Budapest). However, the morning it was to be unveiled, it was lifted away – the memory of the Swedish diplomat who had vanished in the wake of the Soviet invasion was too awkward for the Communists. With no allusion

to Hungary commissioned the Hungarian sculptor **Imre Varga** to create a Wallenberg memorial. The Party leadership would have none of it, but Sweden threatened to cancel the invitation of the Hungarian Communist premier for a visit in 1987 should the inauguration of the statue be cancelled. This was how the holders of power finally acquiesced to the memorial being put up 156 (II. Szilágyi Erzsébet fasor). The carving in Varga's statue alludes to the first Wallenberg memorial by Pátzay. The Jewish World Congress was held in Budapest in 1987, and its participants wanted to pay tribute to Wallenberg by

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visiting the statue. However, it was fenced off when they arrived – they would not be deterred and climbed over it. A copy of Varga's statue has also been erected in Tel Aviv.

FURTHER WALLENBERG MEMORIALS IN BUDAPEST

- **VI. Benczúr utca 16**
  Currently, the address of the Austrian Embassy (then the International Red Cross), this was where Wallenberg reported to the Soviets; a **plaque** in Hungarian and German commemorates the event.

- **VII. Dohány utca 2**
  The **Wallenberg Memorial Park** is behind the synagogue; the entrance is through the synagogue.

- **VIII. Orczy tér**
  A **plaque** at Józsefváros pályaudvar (Railway Station) commemorates Wallenberg's rescue activities there.

- **XIII. corner of Pozsonyi út and Wallenberg utca**

- **XI. Minerva utca 3/b**

The activity of Wallenberg is given detailed attention at the **Holocaust Memorial Centre** (IX. Páva utca 39), and Hungary's largest secondary school on VIII. Ludovika tér also bears his name. Another school and a street were named after his colleague Valdemar Langlet (IV. Langlet utca 3-5), who through the Swedish Red Cross helped Wallenberg.

a | Wallenberg's statue in II. Szilágyi Erzsébet fasor. 156

b | As of 1989, a plaque commemorates Wallenberg's activities and the areas of Újlipótváros where the Swedish Embassy set up 'protected houses', the 'international ghetto'

c | Wallenberg memorial plaque on the wall of the former Swedish Embassy (set in 1994)

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a | The Nordic House Foundation (VII. Klauzál tér 4) – established in autumn 2003 by Scandinavians living in Hungary and Hungarians with an interest in Scandinavia to support cultural activities, to promote the development of cultural and business relations between Hungary and the Scandinavian countries. 158

b | Andersen Pub

Memorials to Olof Palme and Anna Lindh (XIV. Városliget, Olof Palme sétány) The broadest promenade in **Városliget ('City Park')** bears the name of the former **Swedish Prime Minister Olof Palme** (1929–86). A radical social democrat, he aslo championed the cause of third world countries. He was assassinated in broad daylight in Stockholm. Not far from the former Swedish Embassy, the plaque on the granite block Budapest City Council erected in 1987 reads: 'In memory of the champion of peace and progress'. 157 Nearby, on the same promenade, there is another granite block with a plaque in homage to the **Swedish Foreign Minister Anna Lindh** who was assassinated in 2003.

Apart from memorial plaques, traces of the Swedish functionalist style associated with the name of **Gunnar Asplund** are also found in Budapest. Several Hungarian architects of the interwar period were captivated by Swedish architecture, and his influence was noticeable even in the 1950s. Examples include the dressing rooms of the Ferenc Puskás Stadium (XIV. Istvánmezei út 3-5) designed by Károly Dávid and Lajos Gádor's dubbing studio.



SCANDINAVIAN LIVING IN CONTEMPORARY BUDAPEST

The inner-city **Viking Club** (V. Fehér Hajó utca 5) welcomes Scandinavians living in Hungary or anyone interested in their meetings held on the first Thursday night of every month. There is also the **Andersen Pub** – a Danish restaurant and beer house (VIII. Krúdy Gyula utca 17).

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AUTHORS

Gergely Baráth (1986) – historian
Mátyás Binder (1981) – historian, cultural anthropologist
Stefano Bottoni (1977) – historian
József Demmel (1982) – historian
Edgár Dobos (1976) – historian, foreign relations expert
Zoltán Egeresi (1985) – historian, foreign relations expert
Iván Halász (1971) – historian, lawyer, Slavist
Balázs Kiss (1980) – historian, political scientist
István Kollai (1980) – historian, economist
Miklós Komoróczy (1973) – Bohemist
Gábor Lagzi (1974) – historian, Polonist
György Lukács B. (1984) – historian
Éva Merenics (1982) – foreign relations expert
Andor Mészáros (1971) – historian, Bohemist
Miklós Mitrovits (1978) – historian, Polonist
Lőrinc Sályi (1983) – historian
Ágnes Katalin Süle (1980) – historian, art historian
Csaba Zahorán (1977) – historian

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