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TO EXCURSION C 39 /YOUNG VOLCANICS/
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A Culture-historical Guide to Excursion C 40

by István DOMBI

Because of her central situation in the Carpathian Basin, Hungary shared both in thick and thin through her history of eleven hundred years. The germs of development got here from North and South, from East and West. Renaissance ideas of the near-by Italy struck root in Hungary very early, as well as socialist ideas from the neighbouring Soviet Union in 1917. As a result of her central situation, too, the country was over and over through his history a scene of wars and devastations. The just established state was ransacked by the Tartars in 1242. The turks, having a mind to occupy Europe, ravaged and ruled for 150 years in Hungary, stopping the splendid development of the Renaissance in the country. The Habsburgs as "liberators" from the Turks, exploited the country for a period, no shorter. Then Hungary took part both in the first and second world wars, This country had to fight for each and every step of her progress: at the time of the conquest of Hungary - for the strong feudal state, against the imperialistic holy Roman Empire; in the 19-th century against church and secular feudalism and the Austrian Monarchy - for industrialization and capitalization; and in the recent past against imperialism and nazism - for socialism. In the troubles through our history the historical relics of the country got considerably damaged and depleted.

On the evidence of historical and cultural characteristics Hungary may be divided into four main regions.

The first of them - called Transdanubia - lying west of the Danube is a territory of varied land forms. As a culture-historically rich area it offers a lot of museums, art relics, ethnographic and scientific specialities to see. Historical relics of the early Middle Ages are almost exclusively in this area to be found. This is a demonstration of the fact, that Transdanubia has been a political and cultural centre of the nation, from the time of the conquest of Hungary, of establishing the state, during some further centuries. Remains of pre-conquest periods as of the Roman era and of the migration period as well as relics of the Slavs are concentrated in Transdanubia, too.

The second main culture-historical region is Budapest and the bend of the Danube. Budapest is the northeast European capital having relics both of the Turkish and the Roman eras. The town is extremely rich in mineral waters. Being a densely populated city and having a lively natural scenery are the two main characteristics for the capital. It is the greatest industrial town of the country.

The third main culture-historical region consists of the North-Hungarian-Mountains. This is the highest /1000 m a.s.l./ and the geologically most varied area of Hungary. The dominant monumental peculiarity of this region is the chain of border castles formed at the Turkish times. These castles with walls and bastions falling into ruin, remind of the most heroic days of the Hungarian history.

The fourth main cultural-historical region is the Great Plain. Here there are no varied places in geographical sense, there are few historical monuments or famous museums. But enormous corn fields, wine-lands, fruit-farms give the richness and peculiar

beauty of this land.

In the course of our excursion we shall get a foretaste of each side of our country.

Tending towards Balaton from Budapest we are travelling on the oldest and newest road of Hungary at the same time. Being a country in the heart of the continent ancient Hungary joined important roads centuries, moreover millennia ago. One of them was the Amber Road, connecting Italy and the Baltic; it crossed here the East-West trading road, which was a continuation of the Central-Asian Silk Road. Our country has been a gate, a bond between East and West, North and South. The first built roads in our country were made by the Romans, and some of our present roads are following them, too; this one e.g. the military road between Savaria and Aquincum. For some time the southern spurs of the Buda-Mountains are accompanying us, then the ranges of the Vértes-Mountains loom from NW. Meanwhile we are passing Martonvásár, a settlement of economic and cultural importance.

It has the culturhistorical significance, that Beethoven as a guest of the Brunswick family stayed here for the 6 years between 1800 and 1806. Many of his great compositions are connected with the castle of Martonvásár and its onetime owners. On the island of the park-sea there are arranged evocative concerts every summer.

Shortly we reach Lake Velence, a much frequented excursion and holiday resort. The best-known village in the Lake-district is Pákozd, where the Hungarian National Army triumphed over the Austrian tyranny on the 29-th of September 1848. This was the first victorious battle of the Hungarian revolution and independence-war, beeing a glorious page of European independence-wars of the 19-th century.

SZÉKESFEHÉRVÁR

It is a town of historical past, rich in monuments, one of the economic and cultural centres of NE-Transdanubia. The first settlement was founded in the time of the Celts, then in the place of the former town the Romans formed Herculi. It was given the well-known new-Latin name Alba Regia in the Middle Ages. This name preserves the tradition of nomadic eastern people calling free cities and people "white". Here was one of the first quarters of the conquering Hungarians, and here, too, was formed one of the centres of the state organization. Through five hundred years, till 1527, the kings of Hungary were crowned here, and the members of the reigning family were mostly buried here, too. Till the 15. century Nobility Diet was held in this town, e.g. the 1222 one, when the "Hungarian Magna Charta", the "Golden Bull" was issued.

Székesfehérvár was impoverished in the Turkish times. The Turks held occupied the town from 1543 to 1688. Székesfehérvár became inhabited again only in the middle of the 18. century. Present day townscape was formed by the vast building operations of the Baroque times and the following neoclassic times. The renewing of the episcopate in 1777 and the stabilization of the system of large estates made contradictory the development of the town in the past century, and had a destructive effect against the prosperity, following from the central situation of the town. Since Hungary's Liberation in 1945 one of the industrial centres of the country was developed here. One half of the 71,000 inhabitants are employed in the industry. Schools, institutions and an excellent museum give Székesfehérvár an important cultural role.

The horizontal plan of the town is determined by the arrival of old highways. The city of the town is

long-shaped and of NW-SE direction, and the small rambling streets form squares with it. One of the noted Baroque buildings of the town is the Seminary Church, built in the thirties of the 18. century. The interior of this church is one of the finest of this kind in the country. The arch is decorated with the most successful frescoes of the mature period of Maulbertsch. His works are, too, the crucifix-fresco of the oratory behind the chief altar, and the 3 paintings of the side-altars. In the Baroque building of the onetime monastery, joining the church, valuable ecclesiastical objects from the 17th and 18th centuries are kept by the Ecclesiastic Museum of Székesfehérvár. Going towards the city from here, we are walking along Arany János street, which is perhaps the most evocative part of the town. The street, lined with old houses, offers a nice look over the Baroque cathedral, built in 1758, on the place of a former Romanesque church. In the last decades of the 18. century both in architecture and in painting, sculpture and altar-art Baroque forms are gradually eclipsed by the neoclassic elements, Baroque-rococo altarbuildings, rich in artistic contrasts, full of movement, jutting out into free space, are replaced by simple frame-buildings, emphasizing the horizontal and vertical structure. The chief altar of the cathedral was conceived in the same spirit according to the plans of Franz Anton Hillebrandt.

On the principal square of the town, on the Szabadság /Liberty/ - Place is standing the great block of the Episcopal Palace, built in 1800, one of the finest Louis XVI. style town-palaces of the country. The furnishing of the palace is completely of Biedermeier and Empire style. Its library has about 40.000 volumes, and several codices and incunabula from the Middle Ages. Walking eastward we get to the Ruin-Garden, which was formed on the place of the onetime cathedral and royal palace. The illustrious piece of the lapidary is Saint

Stephen's /Hungary's first king's/ coffin carved from a Roman sarcophagus. Among carvings of the 11-15. centuries many were made of stones of Roman buildings. Going on along the northern main street of the town, we are coming to the Cistercian church, beeing of great artistic value. The church of two towers and very fine interior was built by the Jesuits. The inner walls are covered with decorative paintings of the Vienna master Caspar Franz Sambach /1715-95/. The finest pieces of the Baroque furnishing are the pulpit of the church and the line of rococo cabinets of extraordinary artistic value, in the sacristy.

Taking leave of the Baroque inner town, travelling through the modern residential districts of the rapidly developing Székesfehérvár we get to the largest /595 km²/ lake of Middle Europe, to Hungary's most popular holiday resort. The history of the Balaton as of a travel centre is only one and a half century old. But the general history of the people of the area goes back to ancient times. The environment of the Balaton is one of the oldest inhabited regions of the country, rich in archeological finds. Archeologists found here among others settlements and paint-quarries from the palaeolithic, and burial-grounds from the neolithic. The first tribe known by name were the Celts, they left to us settlements, burial-grounds, pots made on discs. They were followed by the Romans about in the first decade AD. They made roads on both sides of the sea, and built settlements, villas with water- and heating-systems on the place of almost every present village.

Several peoples of the migration stayed here for different periods of time. Fortifications and important cultic relics were left to us by the Longobards and the Avars. Many villages around the Balaton preserve the names of conquering Hungarian tribes and clans, verifying, that the region of the Balaton was inhabited already in ancient times. The two shores of the lake are quite different in character. The southern shore is of

homogeneous geographical structure, the northern one is distributed into romantically subdivided areas by the foothills of Bakony and the dormant volcanos of the Tapolca-Basin. The southern shore is characterized by large beaches and holiday resorts, while behind the summer resorts of the northern shore there are romantic castle-ruins, nice valleys, mountain chains, excursion spots rich in forests and springs.

Near to the-little bathing resort Balatonalmádi lies Felsőőrs. It is a little village with a three-aisled basilica, built in the early 13th century. To the quadratic sanctum connects an horseshoe-shaped apse, showing the influence of the Burgundian early Gothic style, intermediated by Cistercians. Having an inner side-choir the church is a unique one in our country. The restored little church is of monumental effect. The village Vörösbény was given the name "vörös" /red/ because of the ferriferous Permian red sandstone, colouring the soil red and to be found here in great quantities. The Calvinist church of mediaeval origin was built of this stone too; its fortification-like fence refers to the defensive function of mediaeval churches.

Passing the bathing resort Balatonfüred of great past we get to the lovely situated Tihany peninsula. Being an excellently suitable place for settlement and defence, settlements existed here already in the palaeolithic. The finest, largest earthwork from the Early-Iron Age was excavated in Tihany. The Romans constructed buildings in the environment of Tihany, too. The peninsula itself is a result of land drainages made by the Romans. In the basaltic tuffs looking over the Balaton, so called "monk-dwellings" were hollowed out by orthodox monks, who lived in these three groups of caves in the 11th century. These orthodox monks were brought in the country by the Hungarian king Andrew I., who had escaped from Hungary to the Kiev Princedom. He let the Benedictine Abbey be built here in 1055. The deed of foundation,

written in Latin, contains 58 Hungarian words and is the earliest written record extant of the Hungarian language. In the Turkish times Tihany was an impregnable border-fortress of the Hungarian nation. The settlement Tihany has two parts: on the shore there are impressive summer resorts and hotels; and on the hill-top lies the village with its several ethnographically characteristic houses. The main sight of Tihany is the Baroque Abbey with the onetime monastery. They can be seen from every place of the northern half of Balaton. This harmonic unit was built in 1719. The undercroft, held by valuable Romanesque columns, was the burial-place of Andrew I. and is of great significance as a national monument. One of the curiosities of Tihany are the worn triangular crests of *Congeria ungula caprae*, coming to light from the Pliocene and called "goat-claws", taken by folkways for remains of a flock of goats, drowned in the Balaton.

There are many smaller and greater summer resorts on the northern shore of the sea. A nice holiday resort, rich in natural beauties and historic monuments, is Badacsony, visited often by our artists /Kisföldy/. Among others a great Hungarian painter of our century, József Egrý created here most of his works. In the neighbouring Szigliget there is a rest-house for writers, established by the Literature Found. The fascinating beauty of Balaton inspired a lot of outstanding artistic works. The last settlement in the course of our excursion in the environment of the Balaton is Keszthely. It is the greatest town here, with 17.000 inhabitants, and a long historical past. In the vicinity, the Romans had the 400 x 400 meters large castrum at Fenékpusztá. An early Christian basilica was found here too. In Zalavár was the centre of the Slavic state Pribina, existing before the conquest of Transdanubia by Hungarians. The brightest period in the history of the town was the 13th century, when the possessor of the town and environment,

György Festetics, developed Keszthely to one of the main cultural centres of Hungary. On the 12th February every year so called Helikon Celebrations were held here to which assembled the best of intellectuals. This noble tradition of our cultural history revives in our times too. In this town was founded by Gy. Festetics in 1797 the first agricultural academy of Europe, called Georgikon. The most attractive building of the town and an important architectural and culture historical monument of the whole area is the Festetics-Palace, built about 1750 in Baroque style, including one of the most valuable libraries of the country. The Helikon Library is rich first of all in literary works of the age of Enlightenment. In the rooms of the Palace there are furniture, statuary and paintings of considerable artistic and historic value. The famous composer Károly Goldmark was born in this town.

SÜMEG

a village of 6000 inhabitants lies in a nice valley, connecting the Tapolca-Basin with the southern "Kisalföld" / Little Plain/. Coming from Keszthely, the road leads to the lovely situated village in a nice environment, passing below the romantic castle-ruins of the mountains "Rezi" and "Tátika". The visitor gets a nice view of environment and town, of historical and artistic relics. The first MS mentioning the castle of Sümeg dates from 1282. In the 16th century - because of the danger of a Turkish offensive - the castle was reconstructed and fortified, and it became an important member of the Transdanubian border-castle-system. In the 17th and 18th century the bishops of Veszprém held seat in this castle, the Episcopal Palace was built at this time. In the time of the independence-war led by Rákóczi, from 1705, the castle changed owners several times till 1713, when it was blown up.

Nowadays Sümeg is a lively, prospering village, the industrial centre of the environment. Its development is supported by the trading of basalt-quarries and of the industrial plants of Uzsa.

The village is arranged around a highway of NS direction. The main road, looking like a town-street and having a harmonic general impression, reflects the romantic, eclectic style of the late 19th century. Passing through a little side-street we reach the little square, on which stands the parish-church. The single-aisled church was built in 1757 with a single frontal tower. Its inner walls are covered with the most beautiful frescoes of Maulbertsch, representing the life of Christ. The late Baroque style of frescoes, inspired by Italian painting, was introduced in the whole of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy by painters, belonging to the Vienna Academy. The best Vienna masters worked a lot in Hungary. One of them, Franz Anton Maulbertsch /1724-96/, the most significant and of greatest individuality of them was closely attached to Hungary. He made frescoes in 18 churches and 8 palaces in Hungary. The first of them were the Sümeg ones, which are of lively sweep, of rich demonstrative impression, of animated fashioning, of wonderful colouring and of a dramatic expression of emotions. On the other side of the main road lies the Saint Stephan's Square, breathing also the air of the Baroque era: the Franciscan church from 1653 and the opposite episcopal palace are fine relics of early Baroque times. Looking out from here, the solidary Castle Hill of steep sides, crowned with the fortress of Sümeg, offers a picturesque view. The kernel of the fortress was the great block of the Old Tower /donjon/ from the 13th century, to which the further defences - the casemates, the residential palace, the chapel, the friezed castle walls, etc. - were added in later times. From the

little bartizan behind the Old Tower we get a very fine overlook on the dormant volcanoes of the Tapolca-Basin, eastward on the Bakony mountains and to NW towards the "Little Plain".

The great Hungarian poet Sándor Kisfaludy, who had an important role in the literary life of the so called Reform Period in the 1810-20-ies was born in Sümeg.

Tending to Veszprém we pass several interesting points of the southern Bakony: the vicinity of the Somló Hill is famous of its excellent wines, Urkut of manganese ore, Halimba of bauxite, Herend of the world-famous porcelaine works, founded in 1839 by Mór Fischer.

At the beginning, the manufactory made imitations of Chinese and of early 18th century European porcelaine products. Later it marketed original own products and soon became a manufactory of European fame.

Szentgál has ethnographically interesting architecture: the houses are long, with columns and verandas. The quadratic ground-plan of the village Márkó, surrounded by closed bulwarks is a rarity.

VESZPRÉM

With its 33000 inhabitants, Veszprém is the "capital" of the Bakony, built on the rocky banks of the streamlet Séd upon 5 hills, the highest of which is the Castle Hill. The archeological finds of this territory date from the neolithic age. After Roman, Avar and Slavic settlements, the first episcopate of the conquering Hungarians was established here. Through several centuries Veszprém was the town of queens, the cultural and administrative centre of a large district. Within the jurisdiction of its episcopate was the half of Transdanubia. The first Hungarian College was established in Veszprém. From the devastations of Tartars the town recovered in a short time, but mediaeval party-struggles, great devastations caused by Máté Csák, one

of the greatest landowners of the country could never be overcome. After the Mohács defeat of Hungary in 1526, the gradually advancing Turks occupied Veszprém too, in 1552, and held it by fits and starts till 1683. Then, in the early 18th century, the town was one of the centres of the Hungarian war for independence led by Rákóczi. After the devastations of the Habsburg imperial troops, the town revived only about the end of the century. In the course of the capitalist development in the past century the railway avoided the town, so it was relatively handicapped. A vast development started only after the Liberation in 1945: Veszprém has become an important industrial centre, and by the newly established technical university, its cultural role is strengthening, too. The ground-plan of the town, built on the 5 hills and in the valleys between them, is rather complicated. Its twined streets are snacking and running up and down. In the town, having historical monuments of different styles, interesting sights, famous institutions, we shall have a look at the most beautiful building, the castle. The castle of Veszprém was built on a dolomite cliff rising 30 meters above surroundings. Going through the wall-remains of the Old Castle Gate, passing the Southern Gate, we get to the only little street running through the castle. To the left we see the Fire-watch Tower, built in 1814, a characteristic building of the town, the clock of which is playing every hour an old Hungarian recruiting melody. Passing by fine Baroque houses we get to the Episcopal Palace. It was built by Jakab Fellner /1722-80/, whose works represent in our architecture the transition from late-Baroque to Louis XVI. style and Classicism. The main characteristics of the Palace are the simple, monumental formation of space, the reserved forming of the facade, the sparing application of Baroque-rococo elements, the pleasant rhythm of distribution of mass, and a general approach to classicism. The rooms are decorated with frescoes by Johann Cimbal, a contemporary of Anton Maulbertsch. Contrary to Maulbertsch, s frescoes Cimbal, s ones are

closely bound to the fresco-style of the Vienna Academy.

The Gizella-chapel, joining the Palace, is one of our finest early-gothic relics. Formerly it was a two-storied chapel, in its present form it is only one-storied. It was built in the 13th century, then got damaged in the Turkish times and the marks of several re-buildings are to be seen on it. Its frescos-figures of apostles, dating back to the 13th century, are of national importance. Among typically baroque palaces, we get to one of the finest Baroque group of figures of the country: the statue of the Holy Trinity, erected in 1750; then to the three-aisled Saint Michael cathedral of Romanesque style and of two frontal towers on the western side. The cathedral was founded in the 11th century, then rebuilt several times. Besides the cathedral along the northern wall, we see the ruins of Saint George's Chapel, built in the 10th century. Passing by the classicist, U-shaped building /characteristic for the late period of Jakab Fellner/, we reach the border of the steep castle-walls, closing the street. From here we can enjoy the finest panorama of Veszprém: immediately below us the rocks of the Benedek mountain are to be seen, at their feet the streamlet Séd, with its sharp bends then the colourful houses of Veszprém in a broad semicircle, and on the horizon the ranges of the Bakony mountains. The next unit of the Transdanubian Mountains is the Vértes, preserving the memory of a battle in the 11th century, when the defeated and refugee German forces casted away their "vért"-s /"breast-plates"/ here.

CSÁKVÁR

From the early 19th century the imitation and improvement of past styles in architecture becomes general. The first and mostly frequented style is classicism,

applying antique forms and structures both for supplying the rapidly growing urban claims and for building castles and churches in the countryside. A fine piece of architecture of this period is the enormous unit of palace, theatre and chapel in Csákvár, draft by József Hild.

The abandoned open-cast bauxite mine of the nearby Gánt is one of Hungary's unique natural treasures. Here bauxite masses were extracted from the discordant Triassic dolomite with a dolina-like surface. The Eocene cover includes a rich limnetic and marine fauna of mollusca, and great crystals of gypsum, formed by decomposition of pyrite.

One of the finest sights of the Buda mountains is the ruin-church of Zsámbék. The settlement itself, is an ancient one, too, its history goes back to the 12th century.

The architectural activity of Hungarians started after conquering the country /896/ only about the end of the 10th century. The 11th - 13th centuries are already bright times of the Romanesque style, of an organic connection with the general European development. First of all it is an ecclesiastical art, in which the architecture is dominating over all forms of art. Thick walls, small gaps, semicircular arches, and the abstract, summarizing character of rendering are its characteristics. Beside great, three-aisled royal and episcopal basilicas, family-monastery-churches with two towers and single-aisled or round village-churches of varied groundplans and structure are of great importance, too. The early 13th century was a time of important social changes in our country: the feudal leading class became stronger. On artistic level this fact comes to expression by building of family-monasteries, the siting of which points to that, that they were constructed for only a few belie-

vers, and the connecting cloisters were also built for a small number of monks. In the interior of every church there is a choir for the landlord and his family, who took part in the divine service sitting above servants and vassals.

The monastery-church of Zsámbék was built in the first half of the 13th century, in late Romanesque-gothic transitional style. It is one of the finest examples of our French-styled art relics. Its two-towered facade reminds of Norman prototypes.

The name Bend of the Danube signifies the territory lying on both riversides between Budapest and Esztergom. Being rich in natural beauties and historical monuments and lying in the vicinity of the capital, it is the second /after Balaton/ most popular holiday-and excursion resort of the country.

Archeologists found a lot of prehistorical relics in this area, which has always been a very suitable place for settlements, fishing and hunting. First it flourished in the Roman times, then in the migration period the Huns, Avars, Germans, Slavs made use of the remains of Roman fortresses. All the ancient centres of the Hungarian state, except Székesfehérvár, were around here. Some of them / Esztergom, Visegrád, Dömös, Buda/ were residences and international meeting places of kings, centres of trading roads. In the Turkish times, as a border-land, it had a lot to suffer from each sides. After the expulsion of the Turks, this country-side was filled up by foreign settlers, especially Germans. In the 19th century, the revival of church life gave an upswing to the Bend-district. The archbishops of Esztergom and the bishops of Vác began here vast building operations; famous institutions and rich collections were founded. Since the Liberation in 1945 great factories and industrial plants were formed in the Bend-district, and the network of holidayhomes was developed.

ESZTERGOM

The town with 26.000 inhabitants, lying in the western part of the Bend-district, is one of the richest and nicest settlements of the country. It has been a cultural centre since ancient times: man lived here already in the Stone Age. Excavations brought to light different relics of Celtic origin. About the end of the first century the Romans occupied this countryside. On the place of the present town they built an important fortification.

The conquering Hungarians occupied this territory at the beginning of the 10th century. Till the Tartar invasion /1241/ Esztergom was the capital of the country and had a flourishing cultural life. Then, although the Tartars could not occupy the fortress, the royal capital was relocated to Székesfehérvár in the time of the Anjou dynasty of Hungarian kings, then to Buda, from the ruling of Sigismund. In the early renaissance - because of the strengthening of the archbishopric of Esztergom - the town became one of the centres of the country again. From 1534, through 140 years the town was under Turkish rule. In consequence of wars, it was destroyed to such an extent, that town life could start again only at the end of the 18th century. Through many centuries it was a town of ecclesiastic character, the archbishop of Esztergom, the Cardinal Prince Primate held seats here. After the Liberation in 1945 the town has developed in two main directions: it has become a holiday-resort and industrial centre at the same time.

The Castle Hill and environment:

The royal palace of the Árpád kings stood on the southern rock of the Castle Hill for centuries. In the Turkish times it was ruined and filled up with earth. Excavations have been being made here since 1934, bringing rich stone relics from the 11th - 12th centuries to

light. One of the most interesting parts of the palace, being mainly in quite good condition yet, is the onetime chapel, showing a Burgundian influence of the 12th century. On the walls and ceilings of some of the rooms several coats of mediaeval and renaissance fresco-fragments are to be seen. To the North from the excavations stands the chief cathedral, the largest church of Hungary, built in classicist style, with a cupola. On the same place there stood a Romanesque church, built in the 11th century. In the renaissance the part called Bakócz Chapel was added, which with some little alterations, is included in the cathedral, where it is to be seen today. The southern side-chapel was built between 1506 and 1511 as a sepulchral chapel for the archbishop Tamás Bakócz. It was built in early Toscanian renaissance style by an Italian master, and is one of the most intact and rich relics of renaissance in Hungary. The cathedral in its present form was built from 1822 till 1869, mainly according to the plans of the great classicist architect József Hild. From beside the sanctum we can get to the Treasury, where there is a very rich collection of goldsmith's works and textiles. The finest piece of the collection is the so called Calvary of king Matthias, made in the 15th century of pure gold, decorated with pearls and enamel.

At the foot of the Castle Hill we find the Parish-Church of the "Water-Town", and by its sides the Primate's Palace, in which the Christian Museum, one of the most important collections of the country, is placed. The first room gives a foretaste of the very rich mediaeval Hungarian panel-painting. Among triptychs and panels from the 15th century stands a valuable piece of North-Hungarian wood-sculpture: the Lord's Coffin from Garamszentbenedek. The Museum has a rich collection of Italian paintings of the 13th - 14th century: Duccio, Lorenzetti, Giovanni di Paolo, Lorenzo di Credi, etc. In further rooms

there are works of renaissance and baroque painters /Memling, Cranach, Ribera, Hemessen/. Besides them there is a rich material on handicrafts /faience ware of Delft, Flemish gobelins, gothic pieces of stained glass/.

The inner town. The market place /Széchenyi place/ of this historical town and the streets starting from it are very rich in historical monumets. There are a lot of living houses and public buildings of baroque, classicist and romantic style here.

Passing by Dömös and Pilisamarót - two holiday resorts - on the right side of the Danube, we reach one of the most picturesque points of the Bend-district: Visegrád, a holiday-resort of 2000 inhabitants. The environment has been inhabited already in the prehistory, in the Roman times there was the most important fortress of the NE end of the Province Pannonia here. In the migration period Avars and Slavs had settlements here. Then, the territory became a castle-estate, later a county-seat. The ruins on the top of the mountain are remains of the citadel, built in 1250. The history of the palace, lying under the castle, goes back to the early 14th century. King Károly Robert built a palace here about 1320, which was the constant residence of the court, during the Anjou-kings. The Hungarian crown was held here till 1526. After this time, the reign of king Matthias was the second brightest period of Visegrád. At the beginning of the 16th century the splendour of Visegrád begins to decline, and this process ends in the occupation of the castle by the Turks. After suffering a lot, it was liberated in 1684, but no more upswing came to it. About 1939 excavations were started here, and are continued in our days too. From the relics, coming to light we can reconstruct the onetime splendour of Hungary's greatest gothic and renaissance construction. The palace lies near to the river and is placed in five levels. It is composed of 3 main units:

the palace of Matthias, the Chapel, and the palace of Beatrix. The most intact of the remains of the Matthias-palace is the so called Court of Honour with a fountain in the middle, made of red marble, surrounded by gothic sediles in a corridor. In the 1480-ties King Matthias had in Buda workshops, where fine pottery was made by masters of Italian education. The third unit of the palace, the southern or Beatrix-palace, is mostly not yet uncovered.

A nice foretaste of the beauty of the mediaeval palace is the gothic red marble fountain with a baldachin. Its ornaments, the lion and the dog, symbolize force and fidelity.

The donjon of the Under-Castle was built in the 1250-ties. It is a 32 meters high, five-storied tower of hexagonal ground-plan. A museum is installed in it. Passing through a tower-gate from the 14th century, we get to the citadel, along a friezed stone-wall. The castle has a ground-plan of nearly triangular form. The walls were carved partly of andesite. Architectural remains point back to the 14th - 15th centuries. From the beginning of the 16th century the influence of the style of the Royal Palace in Visegrád is to be seen on buildings of the ecclesiastical and secular aristocracy, later in towns and villages too.

Besides the richness in historical and artistic remains, Visegrád is unforgettable thanks to the wonderful panorama, opening from the citadel.

