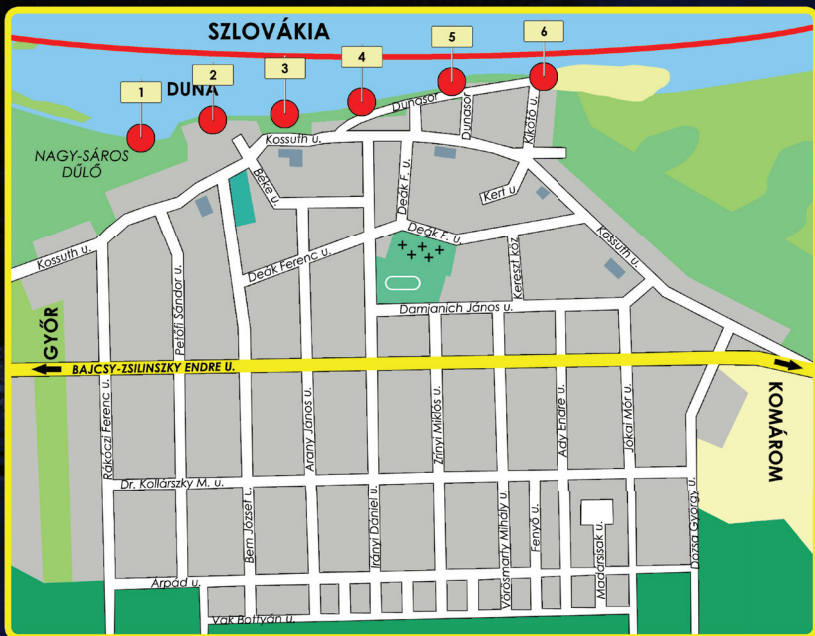


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A stagecoach from the Roman times

During the Roman Empire the borders followed the line of the Danube. Gönyű belonged to the Romans while the other side of the river was inhabited by Germanic clans so the Romans made this border alongside the Danube militarily stronger by setting up smaller auxiliary camps with 500-1000 members within each legionary camp of 5000-6000 soldiers. Normally the camps were a one-day trip from each other. A line of watchtowers was built in order to strictly control the border. The military buildings were connected with each other by a pebble-covered road known as the Limes. This road became the most important route in the Pannonia province. The soldiers not only protected the Roman Empire from enemy attack but also controlled commercial activities and took care of the travellers' and couriers' safety.



Stop-off points were established in those places where the settlements or the bigger camps were a larger distance from each other. The stop-off point excavated in 2007 north of Gönyű and near the current EON power station may have had the same function. The excavation was led by Szilvia Bíró who worked on it together with experts from the Jánus Xántus Museum.

The entrance of the 17x21m building was reachable from a turning on the Limes. In the middle of the building there was a large yard surrounded by rooms of various sizes.

3

Experts could definitely determine the location of the kitchen and in addition to this a dining room, the owner's bedroom and a guestroom could all possibly have been parts of the inn.

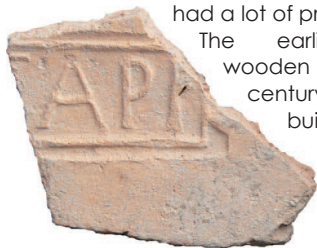
The walls of the building were made of straw and clay mortar and for the roofing they used tiles. Experts have found that many of the bricks were marked and these marks tell us that legionaries stationed at Brigetio (the present Komárom-Szőny) helped in the construction of this building.

The building was surrounded by an enormous ditch which was designed to drain away the water. Because the Danube was also only a few hundred metres away at that time we can suppose they had a lot of problems with flooding.

The earliest building supported by wooden poles was built at the end of the 1st century A.D. whereas the aforementioned building was built 20-30 years later. Based

on the age of the coins, clothing fibres and connectors and pottery fragments found it is possible to estimate the 'heyday' of this resting point was during the empire of Marcus Aurelius (AD. 168-180). Later on in around AD 230 it was completely abandoned. The underground stone founda-

tions are still intact and will hopefully one day be able to displayed.



The stagecoach inn from the time of Maria Theresa



A building of great dimensions, this lodging house is one of the most beautiful parts of Gönyű and has stood on the banks of the Danube since the middle of the 18th century. At that time the Gönyű settlement was owned by Count palatine Miklós Esterházy.

Rostaházy József

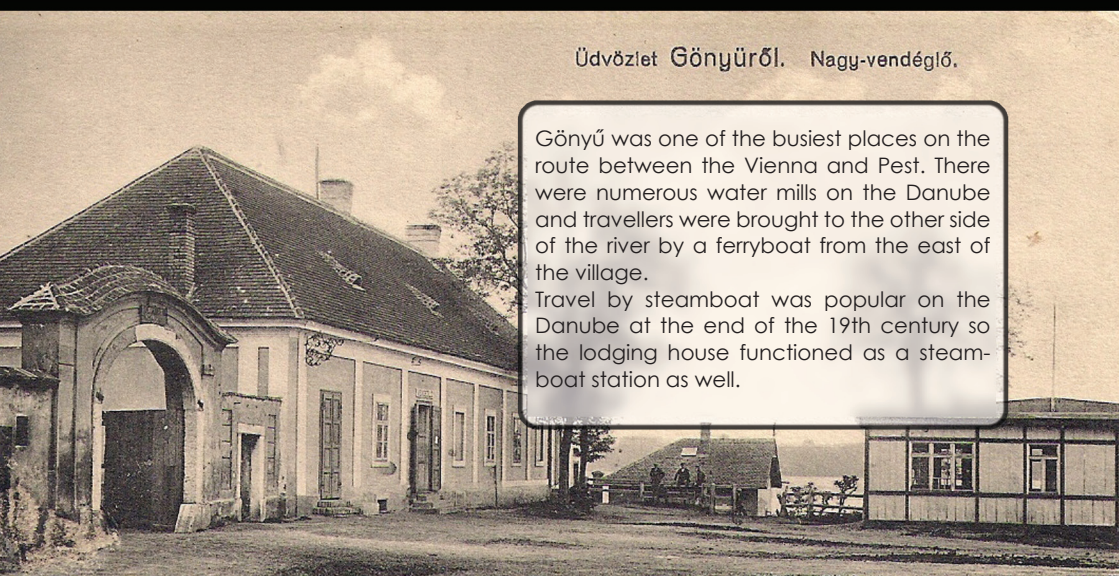
According to contemporary records the stagecoach inn was built by Bishop Károly Esterházy's architect between 1759-1769. Recording the history of the building is helped hugely by the different maps of that time. The earliest ground plan of the building was saved by the so-called 1st military measurement which was prepared during the reign of József II. On this plan only the L-shaped village not far from Győr on the bank of the river Danube. Some years ago a great lodging house was built of stone which has 16 windows on one side and 8 on the other side. It provides beautiful scenery to the people passing by on the water.' This lodging house could not only give accommodation and catering but also took pride in running stables so travellers could change the tired horses there. In addition, possibly Caesar Ferenc 1st spent a night there in the very start of the 19th century when the Rostaházy family was given a noble title. Napoleon's soldiers camped there after the fight at Kismegyer when the officers had their accommodation in the Esterházy castle north of the lodging house.

4

Üdvözlet Gönyűről. Nagy-vendégfő.

Gönyű was one of the busiest places on the route between the Vienna and Pest. There were numerous water mills on the Danube and travellers were brought to the other side of the river by a ferryboat from the east of the village.

Travel by steamboat was popular on the Danube at the end of the 19th century so the lodging house functioned as a steamboat station as well.



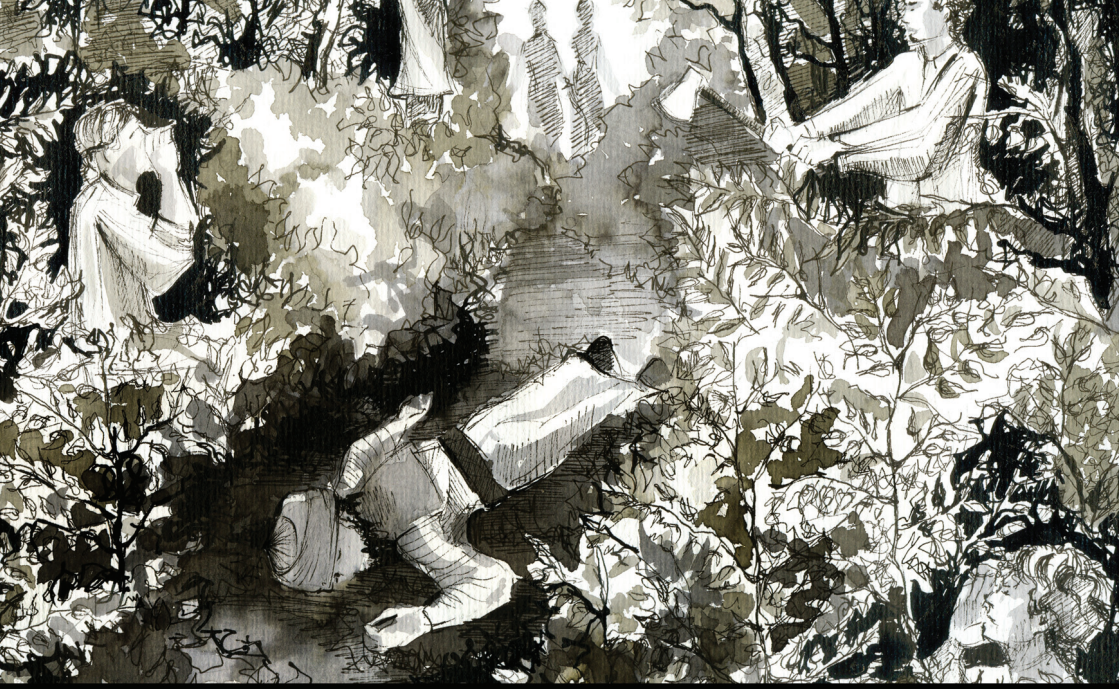


The Erebe islands and the nature of River Danube

At the very depths of the woods nature is still the boss! The world of the island in the middle of the Danube is part of the Pannonhalma Nature Reserve. The different regulations and rebuilding have resulted in a vastly altered state and speeded up the flooding of this field. Despite this the hard-woods and the soft-woods of this section of the river and the island are still beautiful and healthy, while the flora and fauna of the nature reserve is especially rich. The area became more valuable to nature by the fact that all the different animals weren't imported but naturally found this special place by their own means.

This nature reserve by the Danube is often also mentioned as a miniaturized version of Szigetköz (between two large tributaries of the Danube in north-western Hungary) where the same processes can be seen. These processes were causing only very small, hardly recognisable changes but these changes have become larger and more widespread nowadays.





Artist: Réka Gottlieb

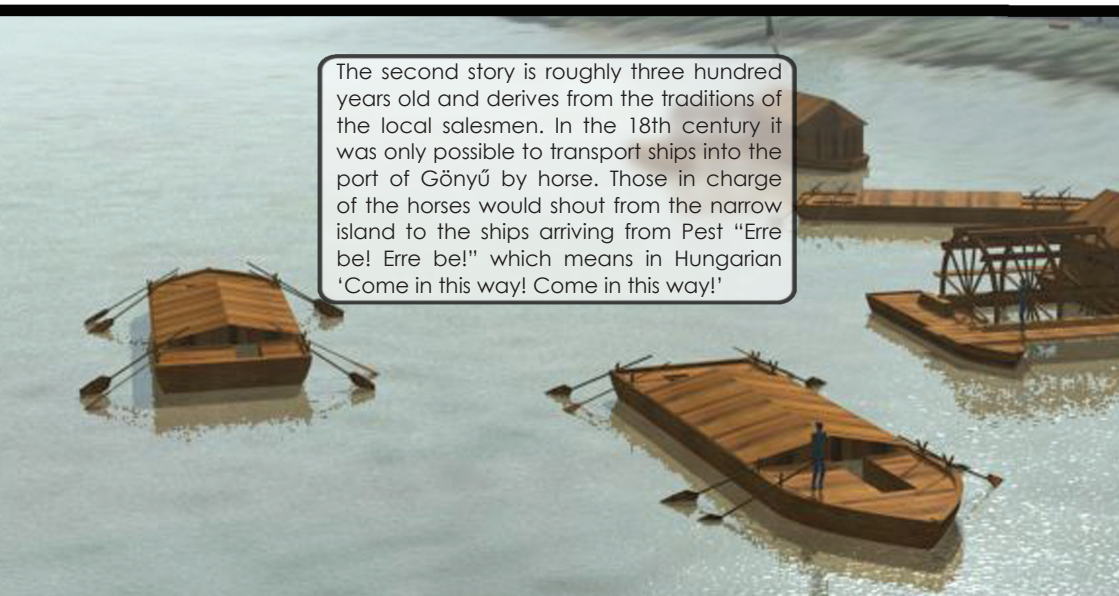
History

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The legendary Erebe islands acquired their name some hundred years ago. The elderly of the village of Gönyű know two stories about the origins of the island's name.

According to a legend of the 16th century the citizens of Gönyű hid there from the Turks who were invading Hungary. As a trap they hid deep in the forest and shouted to the Turks "Erre be! Erre be!" which means in Hungarian "Come in this way! Come in this way!". Unluckily for the invaders there was only one narrow path leading to the island where the brave defenders of Gönyű were hiding, waiting to kill them.

The second story is roughly three hundred years old and derives from the traditions of the local salesmen. In the 18th century it was only possible to transport ships into the port of Gönyű by horse. Those in charge of the horses would shout from the narrow island to the ships arriving from Pest "Erre be! Erre be!" which means in Hungarian "Come in this way! Come in this way!"



The living planet

Alongside the history of the romantic land the natural world still has a story to tell today. Adventurers or even winged travellers can get to know the thousands upon thousands of faces of the ever-changing and regenerating nature. From the autumn onwards there are large amounts of migratory birds which don't settle here, but remain in the Erebe for a couple of weeks while they take nourishment and fly on. The Danube itself is a migratory route and long ago very rare birds turned up here such as ones which live in the Arctic Circle.



The variety of species amongst the Erebe islands' bird population is exceedingly rich and varied with close on 100 species having been recorded in the conservation area. The lord of the skies here is none other than the bald eagle, which out of fear guards its eggs somewhere in the ancient trees of the deciduous forest. The prominent bird of prey that nests in the area is the black kite but, although rarely seen, at the time of the autumn and spring migrations the osprey can also appear here.

7

This ever-renewing world has also attracted two species of quick-footed residents from distant lands. The otter is the top predator in the wetlands, its appearance testimony to the favourable ecological state of its habitat. Due to hunting at the beginning of the 20th century the beaver all but vanished from Europe. The first ones arrived in Hungary at the beginning of the 1990s.

Besides resettlement, thanks to natural immigration experts believe that close on 500 species of bird live in Hungary today. The nibbled and upturned trees are the best proof of the existence of Gönyű on the Danube's loyal residents.





Photographer: Lajos Horváth

One of the Methuselah of the Erebe is a black poplar of around 100 years. The thinnest roots of this ancient poplar are thicker than is general among the common trees in the forest. Such an old tree can be understood as a complete ecological system as it gives a home to a large number of plants as well as animals. Quite apart from the trees these species build up a complex reciprocal contact system, which can best be imagined as a large, efficient city.

8

The ideological value of these trees is priceless because trees such as and similar to these can only be found today in areas which cannot be exploited or are placed under protection. Sometime at the beginning of the 1990s on the largest island experts began an experiment to transform the forest; in two larger areas the one-time areas of the noble poplar were renewed with peduncle oaks and common ash so that the natural processes could be speeded up here.

According to experts it will be these that will be here in two or three hundred years but through their contribution roots have pushed out. The experts have left the forests to themselves so they can form according to their own laws of nature and in time will resettle all kinds of trees that such a habitat favours. This is called active nature protection.



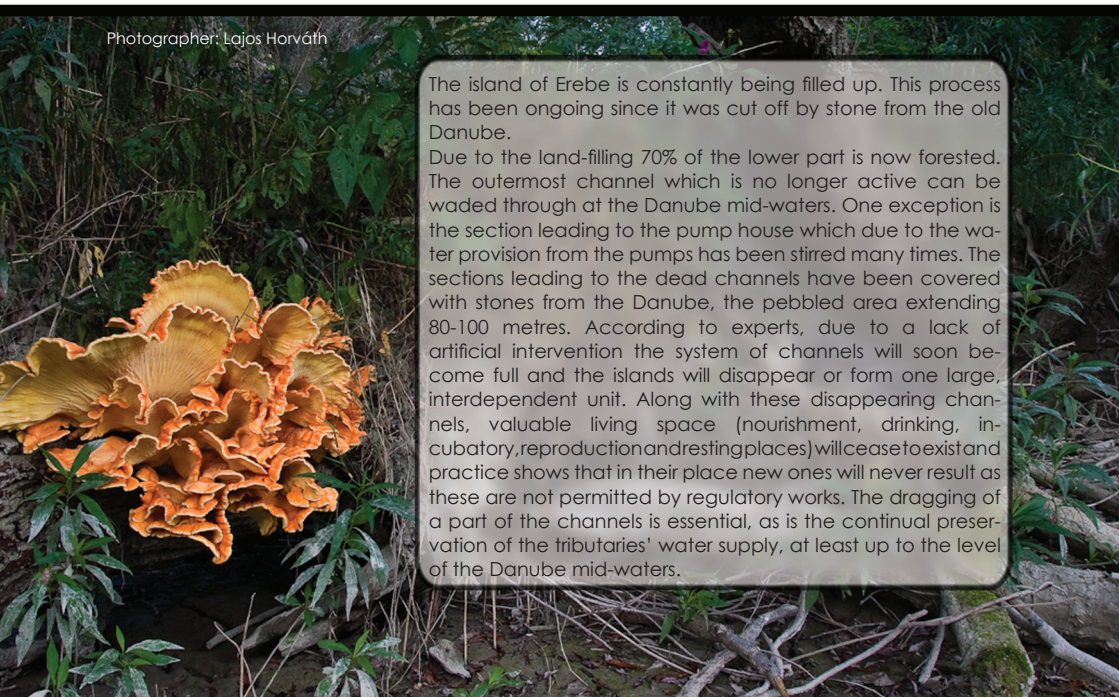
Photographer: Lajos Horváth



Photographer: Lajos Horváth

This changeable living space currently gives many living beings the opportunity, even if they are simply passing through, of shelter, security and life to the animal planet. The laws of nature reign here; as the seasons change, life is also renewed in the Erebe. Fish come here to spawn; the offspring, getting stronger all the time, set off in safety on their long journey in the waters of the Danube.

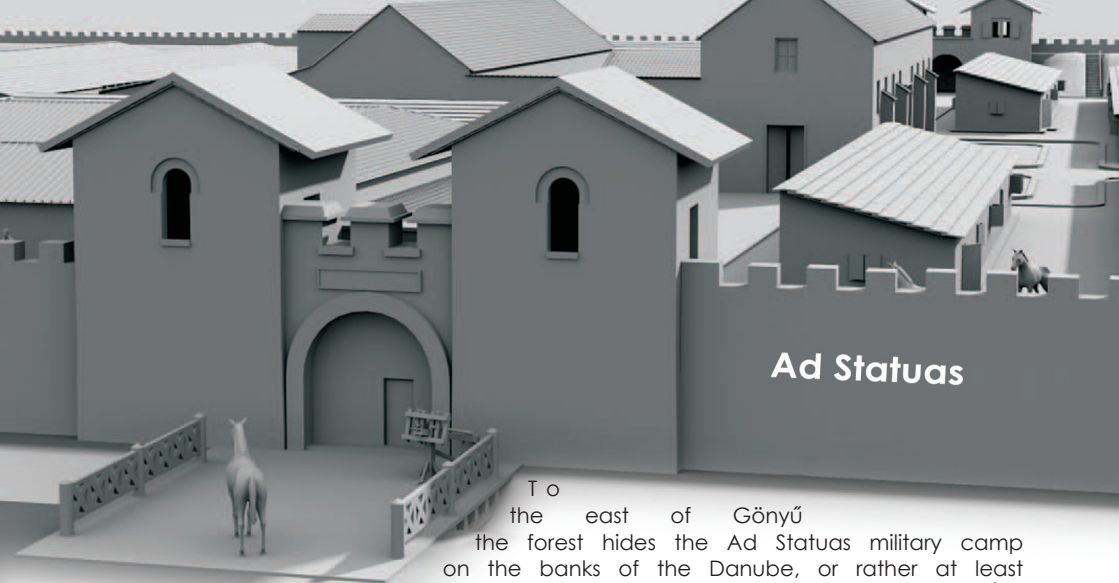
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Photographer: Lajos Horváth

The island of Erebe is constantly being filled up. This process has been ongoing since it was cut off by stone from the old Danube.

Due to the land-filling 70% of the lower part is now forested. The outermost channel which is no longer active can be waded through at the Danube mid-waters. One exception is the section leading to the pump house which due to the water provision from the pumps has been stirred many times. The sections leading to the dead channels have been covered with stones from the Danube, the pebbled area extending 80-100 metres. According to experts, due to a lack of artificial intervention the system of channels will soon become full and the islands will disappear or form one large, interdependent unit. Along with these disappearing channels, valuable living space (nourishment, drinking, incubatory, reproduction and resting places) will cease to exist and practice shows that in their place new ones will never result as these are not permitted by regulatory works. The dragging of a part of the channels is essential, as is the continual preservation of the tributaries' water supply, at least up to the level of the Danube mid-waters.



Ad Statuas

To the east of Gönyű the forest hides the Ad Statuas military camp on the banks of the Danube, or rather at least the part that still remains. In the area now belonging to Ács closest to Gönyű is the auxiliary camp. The military camps were built according to a defined system and practically all of them were placed in a pre-defined place and built on the basis of a unified ground plan.

Ad Statuas was, just like all of the other military facilities, first built from wood at the end of the 1st century following the German wars of 97 AD. At that time a force of 500 infantry formed here, as did the auxiliary infantry stations during the later troop placements.

10 Following this, in 118-119 AD the camp had to be rebuilt, the Danube most likely flooding the northern part, thus the camp was moved back by some 35 metres.

Between AD 170 and 178 in the Markoman - Sarmatian war the enemy set alight the camp, just as they did the other Pannonian fortresses. From then on it was rebuilt using stone, at first just the ramparts and then the inner camp. The square fortress and gate towers are typical of the system known across the whole of the Roman Empire; similar towers can be found all the way from Great Britain to North Africa.

The camp went through another transformation in the 4th century, the corner towers being converted into the shape of a fan. The discovery of hidden treasure made from bronze after AD 355 is linked to one of the regular barbarian incursions.

Since the archaeological digs are limited to the area of the camp there is practically no data pertaining to the civilian settlement (Vicus) around the camp. The next of kin of the soldiers, the craftsmen and traders also had their own little town around the camps, thereby ensuring the requirements of the soldiers living in the camp could be met.

Unfortunately today the area is one of the favourite targets of treasure hunters and with the Danube also continually washing the banks the camp is now in danger.



Source: Dénes Gabler: Roman castellum at Ács-Vaspuszta. Das römische Castellum von Ács-Vaspuszta. In: Szilvia Biró – Attila Molnár (editor.): Travern / Striker at the Border. Road Station from the Roman times at Gönyű

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