

Cultural and economic aspects of the Roman limes route in Hungary

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Abstract: The frontier of Pannonia, which stretched from Klosterneuburg to Belgrade, was one of the most important borderlines of the Empire. This is proved by the strong military power concentrated in Pannonia from the second half of the 1st century onwards. A 400-km-long section of it lies on the territory of present day Hungary. There is a large archaeological area in Budapest (Aquincum), with quite a few monuments, such as parts of the legionary fortress, the military amphitheatre and the whole quarter of a preserved civil town (Figure 1.). The watch-towers are – especially from the late Roman period and around the Danube Bend – at a distance of 1 to 2 km apart from each other (ripapannonica.hu). During the first century AD some auxiliary forces were stationed along the main routes leading across the country to the fortifications at the Danube bank (Moschek W. 2010).

Keywords: Limes, the frontier of Pannonia, world heritage, tourism

Introduction

The Roman Empire was surrounded by the limes which had three components, the first was the fortification and the hedge fence, in more modern form, the stonewall, the second was the ditch, and the third was the watch tower (Fields N., Dennis P. 2008).

The word, ‘limes’ originally meant path. The border regions were meshed by roads, especially military roads which were connected to Rome, but sometimes they reached some territories of the enemies as well. The artificial hills and barriers were combined with some natural obstacles, like rivers too. The best example for this is the Hungarian border area which was by the line of River Danube (Visy Zs. 1988).

In the beginning the limes meant to be military paths with some military facilities. Its priority task was to help the soldiers to get to enemy areas, and to insure their successful actions. Defending it got harder and harder in the period of early migrations as more and more warrior tribes wanted to find their shelters inside the borders of the empire. The limes stretched along 382 kilometres from Germania, from River Rhein to River Danube. On the Scotland-England border they built up the 128 km long Hadrianus Wall (now a world heritage site) (Fields N. 2008).

The fortresses from the Roman Ages were also army barracks and administrative centres. The soldiers served at the commands, buildings, workshops and guard duties, on the other hand they could use the spas for their convenience. It was especially true at the camps of legions where the soldiers were Roman citizens and their command was a noble from the Order of the Senators, whereas his utilities was the youth of the order of the knighthood (Klee M. 2006). The fortresses had two main streets and where they crossed there was a forum of the camps. The camp sanctuary, the administrative rooms, the warehouses and the hall of assembly were all located here. Along the main street there were houses of the officers, the bath, warehouses for the grains and behind them the hospital, workshops and barracks. The stone houses were covered with tiles, and people could walk around them on paths made by stone. The defensive walls of the huge fortresses were followed by an artificial hill and a ditch (Hungarian Limes Association 2014).

Along the right side of the Danube, the limes was perfect for transportation even in the Middle Ages, because of its thick stoned grounding and pebble cover. The distances from the legion camps were signposted by labelled milestones. From the first century only a few ruins of the wooden watch towers got well-known. The second century's famous memories are the construction signs of the watch towers. Around all watch towers there were ditches, and by the sides of the ditches there were fixed fences (Visy Zs. 2003).

Materials and methods

We made a questionnaire and were researching in the Contraaquincum, at the Március 15. tér, in Budapest. This is the place where the Duna Limes Visitors Centers will be built. The square is not big, but it was renovated 2 years ago, and tokens got very important roles. We asked a lot of people from different ranges. One of the main topic was the limes. Firstly, I wanted to know, what do people know about that. Otherwise do they know where are these remains of the limes and whether they visit them. The other main topic was connected to the world heritage sites. What do people think about this and how we can support them?

We asked 120 people. The conclusion: more than half of the people do not know the limes. Some people tried to say something or bluffed, but when they saw my stunned face, they said they do not know. After that, the half of people could answer for the question of „Where you find the remains of the limes?” Somebody could set out Aquincum, Pécs and Szombathely. They were middle-aged or university students. Persons, who know something about the limes, already visited those (Figure 3.).

The most popular place is the Aquincum Museum, because it is situated in Budapest, so it is close to their home; and the Early Christian Burial Sites in Pécs, because nowadays it is really popular (Figure 4.).

In conclusion, it is due to the rank of World Heritage and title of European Capital. However, I met such a respondent who took part in the Dunaszekcső's Camp two years ago, and he – according to his telling – got a detailed insight to the stories of Romans. During my questions, I mentioned separately the Savaria Carnival because in my opinion, this is the most known event connected to the Roman Era. This event was very well-known, I did not have any respondent, who had never heard of it. One third of my respondents went to see this Carnival – they were mainly middle-aged people.

People supported the idea of Duna Limes being a World Heritage site and they think this entry is a good idea. 10 people said that our country would do better if we care about more important things. More optimistic people believe in this and they see the possibilities in it to popularize our country and attract foreign people. The mentioned history teacher was who mostly showed and explained his opinion about this topic. He said, it would be necessary to have a lot of support for the development, which is essential to be worthy to be ranked.

Consequently, I suppose my hypothesis is true. Most of the people do not know exactly the definition of limes. People who are interested in the culture and history, they look up the vaults in the Necropolis, the Savaria Carnival, or the Museum of Aquincum (Figure 1.). From my point of view, most of the people would not visit a town only to see the relics of the limes. It would be advisable for those settlements, who would like to show their

relics of roman era, to cooperate with other attractions or features. If we look back to the mentioned settlements, there is minimum one other feature everywhere, because of tourist, who would like to visit that place. The success of Aquincum is due to that this place is located in Budapest. There are several tourist attractions in Pécs, besides the relics, there are crypts as well. There is a camp in Dunaszekcső, while in Szombathely a colourful carnival takes place. These are good examples for the future. If they care more about the marketing plans, some other places might also become popular.



Figure 1. The old museum building inside the archaeological park at Aquincum (Budapest) is surrounded by the ruins. (Remenyik B.-Szabó L.-Tóth G. 2014)

Results and discussion

Winning the Word Heritage title would make a huge difference in the life of the Danube Valley, it would create a thematic network with a united (yet individual) attraction site. The Roman Lines (the section from The Netherlands to Hungary) would become the biggest and the longest site by the Word Heritage of UNESCO in 2018. (Figure 2.)

This would also show an example for the Word Heritage river side businesses to create a common brand and promote unified marketing activities. This is the only river side nomination out of the Word Heritage nominations' list, which insures an advantage for the settlement around the Danube, but the good operation of this network also depends on the readiness and willingness of the settlements.

For this reason our goal was to design a unified network along the Danube which shows the unification of the attraction sites. The long-term planning of tourism concept of the Danube Limes.

The approval of the Danube Limes to the Word Heritage Program would mean a long-term planning of the tourism concept and the connecting projects. The planning of the cultural

activities has introduced possible theatre locations as well. The theatres were suggested to perform ancient-themed plays. We have dealt with tourism networking of the nominated and already accepted heritage sites at those sections, which would introduce the World Heritages along the Danube.

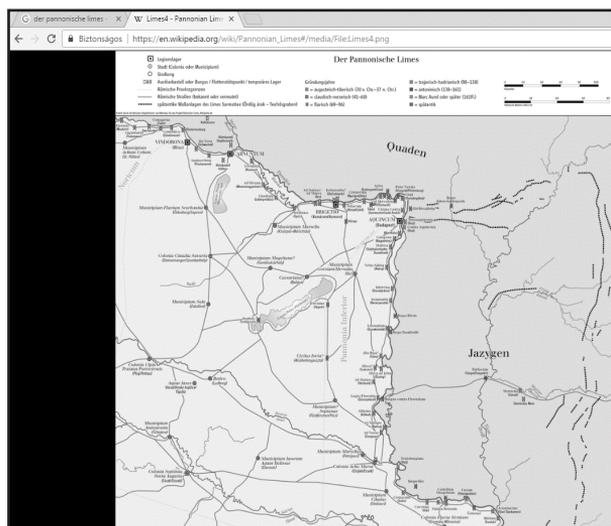


Figure 2. Map of the Roman frontier in the Middle Danube area. <http://mek.oszk.hu/02100/02185/html/1324.html>

During the archaeological demonstration of Roman Limes we divided the Danube to thematic design sections (upper part of the Danube-Early Empire, Danube Bend-Late Empire, under part of the Danube-Golden Age of Pannonia), we attach story matrixes to them and mention the Hungarian heritage parks, which banter to Danube and Roman Empire. The designers agreed about introducing two emphasized Roman locations, as the giant attraction to the tourists, the fortress of Brigetio at Komárom and the fortress of Alisca in Ócsény. The syllabus of active tourism is divided to smaller chapters, the first of these is the bicycle tourism, where the section of EuroVelo bike path and the future World Heritage sites were liaised. At the equestrian tourism there are serious equestrian developments, which are already accomplished along the Danube, but some of these attraction components do not work together, therefore we made a suggestion about the configuration of an EuroHorse 5 route along Danube and renewal of the Kincsem – National Equestrian Programme. As part of the water tourism to help the Kayak-Canoe Association's work, we made a suggestion to build a harbour. With the Hiking Association we drew a route for hike-loving tourists.

At the industrial tourism we would turn the industrial cities' latest developments along the Danube to a thematic route (from AUDI to nuclear power station). At the part of medical tourism, we analysed the baths in the Danube area. At the chapter of gastro tourism, besides the fisherman's soup, the wine regions in the Danube area and Hungaricum were represented. At the part of castles, the castle buildings, which banter to Danube, were thematically introduced. At the National Parks we took the matching and the variant points, and we made the programme suggestions about how we can accept the extent visitors as a result of World Heritage title. At the pilgrimages, we analysed the spots of the different religions, we made a suggestion to build the unitary cardinal's, bishop's, abbot's

pilgrimage. Towards the Danube regions' development, we thought there is a need of creating the Budapest-Duna card.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the Duna Limes World Heritage Project is completed and sent to UNESCO and ICOMOS to assess it. The two organizations asked in their reply to get the tender again in 2018, together with the Dutch-German-Austrian-Slovakian-Hungarian participants. We hope that they will judge it positively – because they promised so. Hungary also has another roman heritage, which increased the tourist attendance of the city significantly. The Early Christian Necropolis of Pécs became World Heritage Site of UNESCO in 2000, which was both good for the crypts, and for the city. These crypts came from the Roman Era. Heritage Committee explained, they accepted such cultural historical treasures on the list, because they represent the ancient building structure and the early Christian burial architecture mixed with the arts of the North and West Roman provinces, through the architecture and wall-paintings. The underground crypts and relic chapels show the endurance and faith of the late Roman European Christian communities and also present the eternal roots of civilization and culture which still has effects for nowadays (Jilek S. 2006).

If the UNESCO Heritage title could be awarded to the limes, there would be an economic advantage:

- increment the number of visitors, the durations of stay, the capacity's usage and the purchasing's power,
- developing the attractions, visitors centres and accommodation's,
- building the transport network,
- built up the Danube destination and the Danube industrial area.

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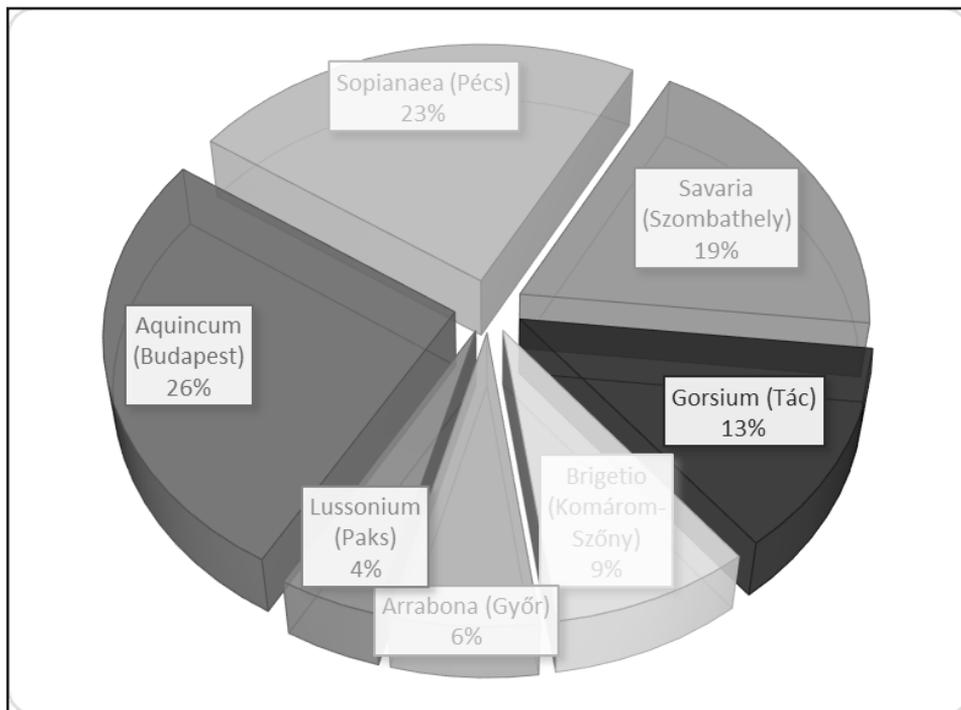


Figure 3. Those who knew something about the limes, already visited it.

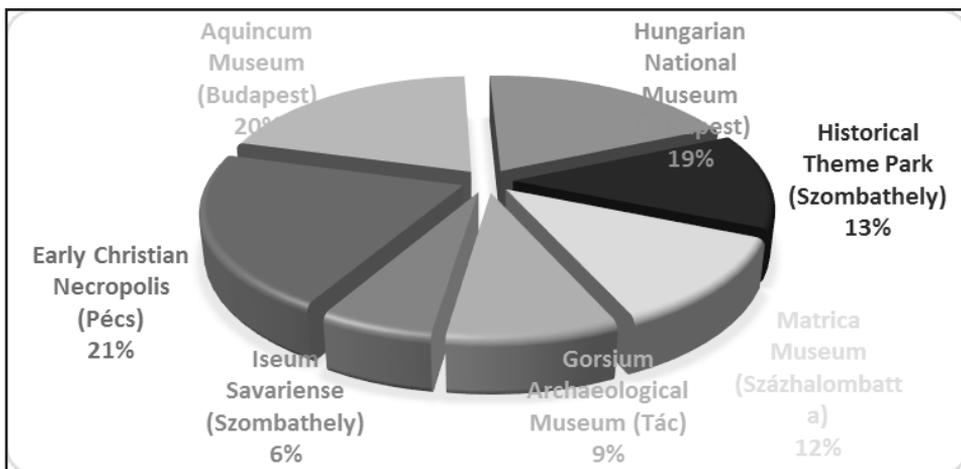


Figure 4. Known Roman museums in Hungary