

Pecs



Town Center

By Pablo Gorondi, Associated Press Writer

PECS, Hungary — A church without a steeple; a near-Mediterranean climate far from the Mediterranean Sea; winemaking traditions in the region dating from the Roman Empire. The southern Hungarian city of Pecs, in brief.

In 2010 — along with Essen, Germany, and Istanbul, Turkey — Pecs will also be a European Capital of Culture. Located 125 miles south of Budapest, it is a comfortable three-hour train ride from Hungary's capital.

Pecs, or Sopianae as it was called by the Romans, has over 2,000 years of its history on display. Besides its Hungarian traditions, the city has remnants of the Roman times, dating back to around 350-400 A.D. and the even more visible Muslim structures left behind by the Turks, who occupied the city for over 140 years from 1543.

The Inner City Parish Church may not have an impressive name, but it is one of the most beautiful places of worship you will ever see.

Standing atop Szechenyi Square in the city center, the church has undergone numerous transformations since the Middle Ages and you'd be forgiven for not recognizing it — because it looks like a mosque!

Actually, the stones of the Gothic Church of St. Bartholomew were used by

the Turks to build the mosque of Pasha Gazi Kassim. After the Turks were expelled from Pecs in 1686, the mosque was taken over by the Jesuits, restoring it to its Christian use.

The mosque's minaret survived until 1753 and for a time the Baroque church had its own steeple. But the steeple and many of the additions to the mosque were removed during later restoration works.

As a compromise solution, a metallic tower some 20 feet tall mechanically rises another 30 feet or so each time its three bells are rung.

Fragments of epigraphs with quotations from the Quran can still be seen on the walls and the dome rises over 72 feet above ground level of what is considered the largest monument of Turkish architecture in the country.

From Roman times, the most notable remains are the early Christian burial chambers, the earliest dating to the fourth century.

While archeologists have been exploring them for centuries, the addition of the cemetery to UNESCO's list of World Heritage sites in 2000 gave the dig a fresh boost.

The remains of the Cella Septichora — an early Christian chapel from the fourth century with seven apses (vaulted recesses) first explored in the early 1900s — are now included in a new visitors' center which opened to the public just a few months ago.

Thanks to a labyrinthine set of hallways and walkways, the burial chambers can be seen from practically every angle: some from the top, others from the bottom, others through a door or window, in each case the best view depending on the chamber's features, which include frescos and other decorations.

Other attractions in Pecs include the Modern Hungarian Picture Gallery, the neo-Romanesque Cathedral on Dom ter, the Mosque of Pasha Yakovali Hassan, also beautifully reconstructed, and the Zsolnay Museum, dedicated to the famous Art Nouveau ceramics, tile and porcelain makers. The museum is set to re-open in mid-September after renovations, but the city is also home to the Zsolnay factory and a shop next door where you can buy Zsolnay designs.

About 22 miles southeast of Pecs are the Villany Hills, whose southern slopes and valley are shielded from the cold north winds and offer a home to one of Hungary's best-known wine regions.

Villany is also a town which is the unofficial capital of the local vineyards, which spread along a series of small villages where it seems every family has its own little winery.

The Villany-Siklos Wine Route, which winds through 11 localities, can be a methodic way to explore the wine cellars, though how methodic you will still be after the second or third wine-tasting is hard to guess.

Source: http://www.usatoday.com/travel/destinations/2007-07-18-pecs-hungary_N.htm

Early Christian Necropolis

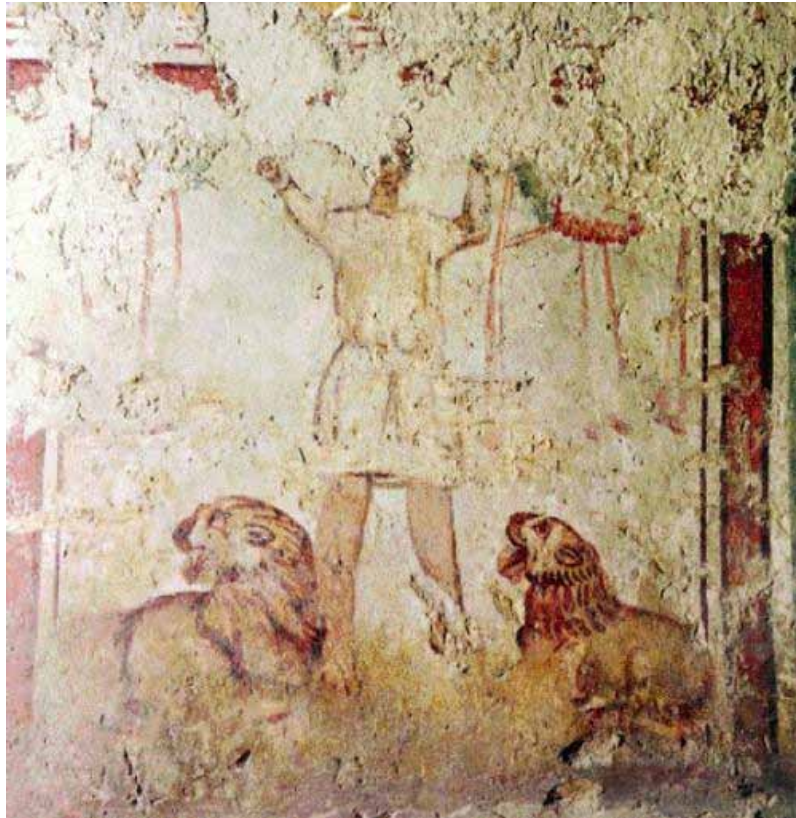


In the 4th century, a remarkable series of decorated tombs were constructed in the cemetery of the Roman provincial town of Sopianae (modern Pécs). These are important both structurally and architecturally, since they were built as underground burial chambers with memorial chapels above the ground. The tombs are important also in artistic terms, since they are richly decorated with murals of outstanding quality depicting Christian themes.

佩奇的早期基督教陵墓

公元4世纪，罗马帝国索皮阿瑙埃省（现代的佩奇城）建造了大量带有装饰的基督徒墓地。墓地不仅有地下墓室，而且地面上还有礼拜堂，在结构和建筑方面都具有重要意义。墓室里的装饰以基督为主题，创作精美细腻，这一切使皮阿尼亚基督徒墓地在人类建筑史和艺术史上都占有一席之地。

Source: UNESCO/BPI



The burial chambers and memorial chapels of the Sopianae cemetery bear outstanding testimony to the strength and faith of the Christian communities of Late Roman Europe. The unique Early Christian sepulchral art and architecture of the northern and western Roman provinces is exceptionally well and fully illustrated by the Sopianae cemetery at Pécs.

Source: <http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/853/>

Source: <http://www.citytour96.com/tourinform-pech>

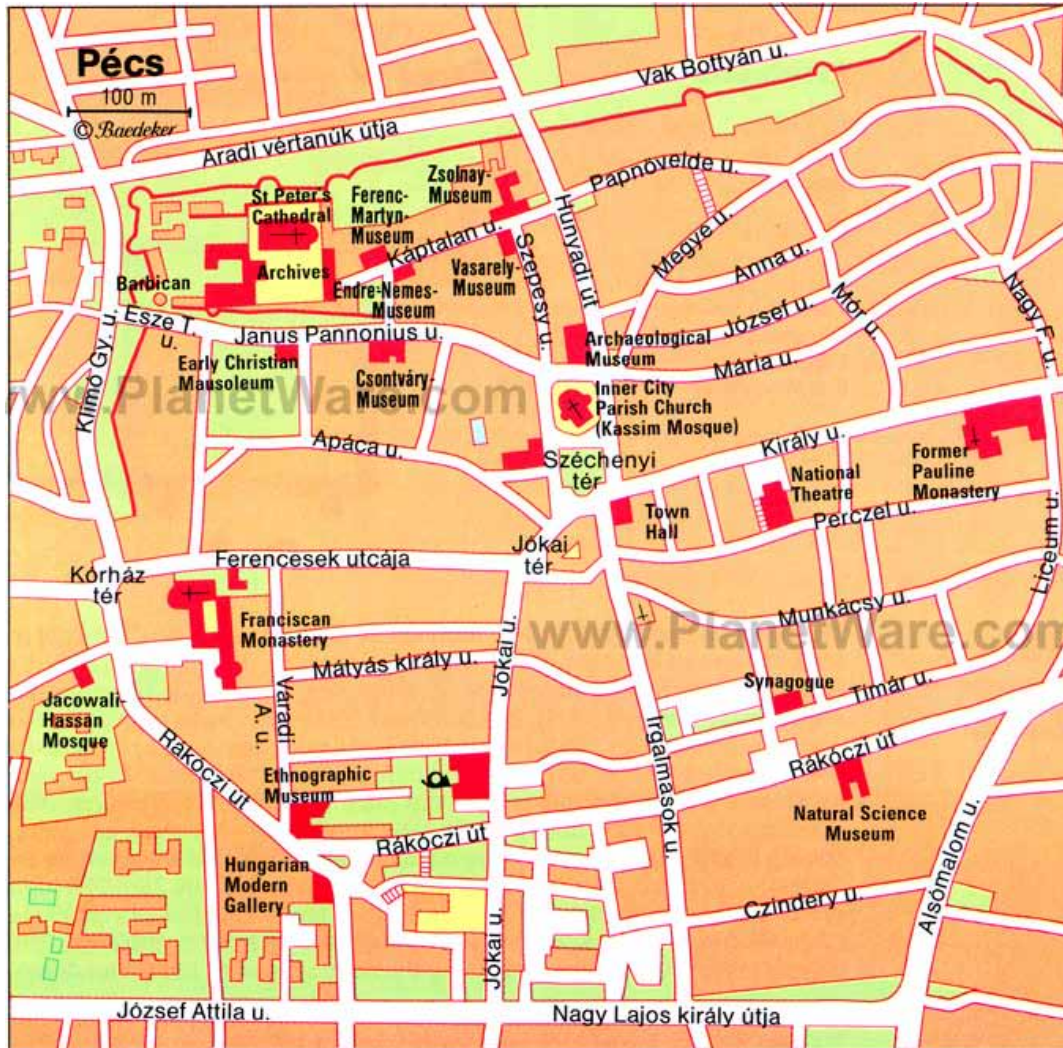


Széchenyi Square is the centre of Pécs and as such plays an important role in the life of the town. In the market of bygone days, where up to the early 20th century women from the surrounding villages dressed in colourful traditional costumes sold their produce, visitors today can be witnesses of craft fairs and merriments. One of these is the Easter Wait (Húsvétvárás) including a fair of hand-ornamented painted eggs from all over the country on the weekend before Easter each year. Each September, as a part of the Pécs Festival (Pécsi Napok), the square is the venue for the Festival of Grapes and Wines (Szőlő és Bor Ünnepe) with a fair, a vintage parade and tastings of the famous Baranya wines.

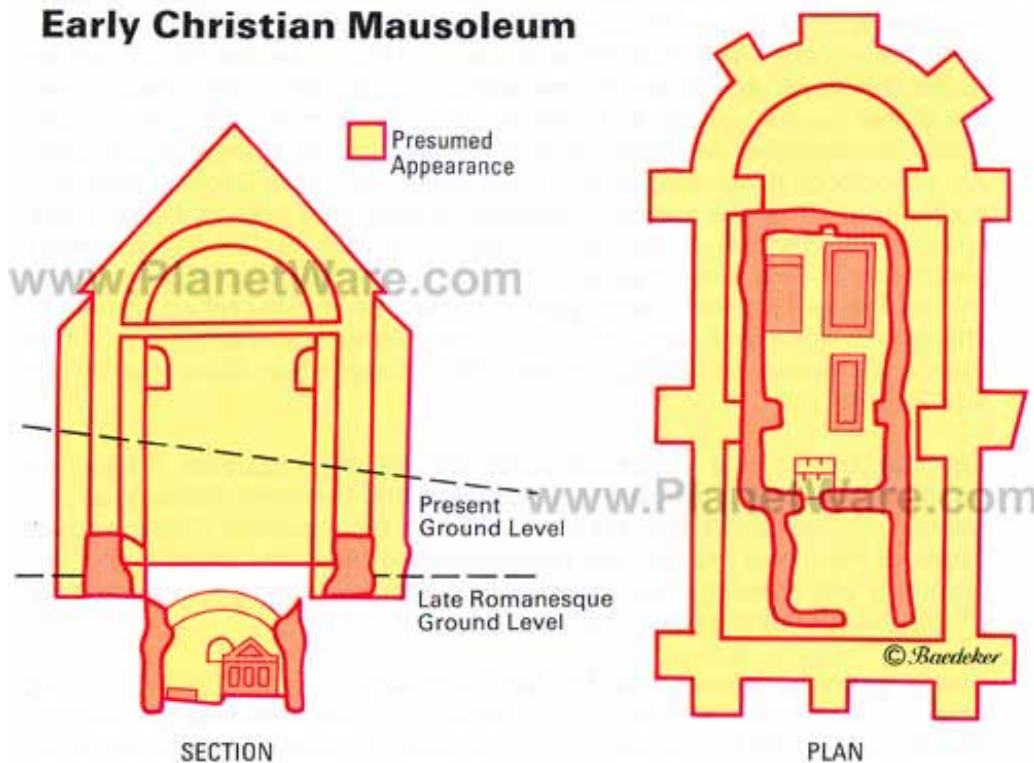
Pécs lies at the foot of one of the higher chains of the Mecsek Hills. First named Sopianae, the settlement came under the authority of the Roman Empire in 10 BC. The early Christian period of Sopianae is preserved by the Early Christian Necropolis uncovered in the area in front of the current Cathedral around the former Mons Sacrum (Sacred Hill). This unique heritage complex was entered onto the World Heritage Sites. The first Hungarian king, St Stephen, established the bishopric and the cathedral of Pécs in a charter dated 23rd August 1009 in Győr. The first Hungarian university was founded here by the Anjou King Louis I the Great in 1367. The period between 1459 and 1472 was the era of Bishop Janus Pannonius and the flowering of Renaissance culture in Pécs. This spirit can still be traced in the features in the town centre, a district that is made even more special by the numerous characteristic buildings surviving from the Turkish times. The most famous of the major factories in Pécs is the Zsolnay Porcelain Manufacture. The world-famous products made in this works over the past century can be seen not

only in the local Zsolnay Museum, but are also decorating numerous public spaces. A plenitude of museums safeguards the town's historic remains in addition to the heritage buildings. Several contemporary fine arts collections enrich the list of things to see and do in the town, among which are galleries dedicated to world famous artists of Hungarian origin like Victor Vasarely or Amerigo Tot.

(Source: <http://hungarystartshere.com/Pecs>)



Early Christian Mausoleum



Source: <http://www.planetware.com/map/pecs-map-h-h24.htm>

In 1975-76, at the point where Janus Pannonius utca cuts through Dom tér, archaeologists stumbled upon the foundations of a chapel and east apse, and under it a 4th C Roman burial chamber. The walls of the chapel now stand above ground level, but the burial chamber remains below ground. The entrance to the latter by way of a covered staircase to the left of the chapel first leads into a small exhibition room documenting the archaeological dig. The burial chamber itself has a barrel-vaulted roof and three sarcophagi; its walls are decorated with naturalistic frescos in painted frames portraying Adam and Eve and Daniel in the Lion's Den; they date from the second half of the 4th C and are very similar to those found in the catacombs of Rome . Some more underground burial chambers have been unearthed close to the cathedral, but to date only that on the right-hand side of Dom tér (down the slope on the south side of the archive building) is open to the public. Not yet open to visitors are the Cella Trichora, a catacomb with three conches (semi-circular vaulted roofs) and fragments of a mosaic floor on the west side of the cathedral, Chambers 1 and 2 (also with wall-paintings) to the south of the cathedral, and the most unusual catacomb below the archive building, called Cella Septichora because of its seven apses.

In the rear courtyards of the houses at Apáca utca 8 and 14 ; (can also be seen through the glass walls at other times) archaeologists have uncovered parts of an Early Christian necropolis around a chapel, consisting of three burial chambers and 110 Late Roman graves. It is attractively and informatively presented with explanatory boards (Apáca utca 4).

Source: <http://www.planetware.com/pecs/early-christian-mausoleum-h-br->

[tomb.htm](#)

BENEDICTINE ABBEY MUSEUM (BENCES APATSAGI MUZEUM), TIHANY
The building of the abbey once again has a religious function, although one part acts as a museum. The Lapidarium is particularly attractive.

The original building sculptures, which were removed from the church during the renovation work carried out in 1881-92, are stored in the Lapidarium east of the Cathedral and can be seen by visitors. They include the west door, which was made from Roman gravestones, the reliefs from the crypt entrance and the 12th C Altar of the Holy Cross.

Source: <http://www.planetware.com/pecs/lapidarium-h-br-lap.htm>



The Christogram

The Christogram is the chosen symbol of the Pécs/Sopianae World Heritage Site. This first official symbol of Christianity can be seen in the Peter-Paul crypt. In 2000, during the excavation of Crypt V, archaeologists discovered the symbol as part of a bronze church lantern, assumed to be of Byzantine form and origin. The same symbol appeared to Emperor Constantine in a vision before the battle of Malvius bridge on 28 October 312 AD, accompanied by the words: "Win under this sign!"

On the example found in Pécs, in addition to the initial letters of Christ's name (X=khi, P=rho), the other two letters (A=alfa, w=omega) also refer to Christ. "I am the alpha and the omega, the beginning and the end..." (The Book of Revelation, 21.6)

Source:

http://en.pecs.hu/cikk/0837/424515/20080909_pecs_paleochristian_cemetery_1.htm