

## THE DEVELOPMENT OF MECSEK TOURISM: THE “SHELTER” OF DÖMÖRKAPU (1930–1941)

<sup>1</sup>Patrik Zsolt Varga

<sup>1</sup>MSc student, University of Pécs, Faculty of Business and Economics, Leadership and Organisation Programme; patrik.varga96@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009-0008-3370-8087

### ABSTRACT

The shelter of Dömörkapu was built in the largest city of South Transdanubia by one of the most important civic organisations of Pécs, the Mecsek Association, in 1931. From the late 1920s, Pécs was one of the first settlements in Hungary to undertake deliberate tourism development. The town had enhanced tourism infrastructure, defined its range of tourist attractions, and launched the first marketing campaigns to promote and highlight the area. The goals of the Mecsek Association also fitted perfectly in this strategy. The Mecsek Association, founded in 1891, started the active tourism in the Mecsek region. The pinnacle of its initiatives was the establishment of the Dömörkapu hostel. This accommodation fully met the needs of its guests. The tourist hostel embarked on a path of long-term development. Continual modernisation efforts enabled the accommodation to adapt to evolving tourist demands. The establishment currently operates successfully as Hotel Mediterrán.

*Keywords: destination management, Mecsek, Pécs, tourism development, tourism history*

*The completion of the paper has been supported by the ÚNKP-23-2 New National Excellence Program of the Ministry for Innovation and Technology from the source of the National Research, Development and Innovation Fund.*



Received: 16 September 2024

Accepted: 2 November 2024

Published: 17 December 2024

## A MECSEKI TURIZMUS FEJLŐDÉSE: A DÖMÖRKAPU MENEDÉKHÁZ (1930–1941)

<sup>1</sup>Varga Patrik Zsolt

<sup>1</sup>MSc-hallgató, Pécsi Tudományegyetem, Közgazdaságtudományi Kar,  
Vezetés és szervezés szak; patrik.varga96@gmail.com, ORCID: 0009–0008–3370–8087

### ABSZTRAKT

A Dél-Dunántúl legnagyobb városában található Dömörkapu Menedékházat Pécs polgári szervezete, a Mecsek Egyesület építtette 1931-ben. Pécs az 1920-as évek végétől Magyarországon az elsők között kezdett tudatos turizmusfejlesztésbe. A város turisztikai infrastruktúrájának fejlesztésén túl meghatározták Pécs turisztikai kínálatát és megkezdték a települést és a Mecseket népszerűsítő marketingmunkát is. A város turizmusfejlesztéséhez kitűnően illeszkedtek a Mecsek Egyesület célkitűzései. Az 1891-ben megalakított szervezet tagjai kiépítették az aktív turizmus mecseki infrastruktúráját, túrákat szerveztek és népszerűsítették a Mecsek látnivalóit. Ezen munkálatok ékköve volt a Dömörkapu Menedékház, amelynek létrehozásával az Egyesület 40 éves jubileumát ünnepelte meg. A dömörkapui szálláshely maximálisan kielégítette a turisták igényeit. A díszes avatást követően a turistaszálló hosszú távú fejlődésnek indult, és folyamatos modernizáció révén tartott lépést a turisták megváltozott fogyasztói igényeivel. A létesítmény jelenleg Hotel Mediterrán néven üzemel.

*Kulcsszavak: desztinációmenedzsment, Mecsek, Pécs, turizmusfejlesztés, turizmustörténet*

*A tanulmány elkészítését az Innovációs és Technológiai Minisztérium Új Nemzeti Kiválósági Programjának (ÚNKP–23–2) a Nemzeti Kutatási, Fejlesztési és Innovációs Alapból származó anyagi támogatása tette lehetővé.*



Benyújtva: 2024. szeptember 16.

Elfogadva: 2024. november 2.

Publikálva: 2024. december 17.

## **1. Introduction**

The history of tourism is an increasingly prominent subfield of economic history, examining the impacts of tourism within a multidisciplinary environment. This discipline explores both the demand and supply sides of tourism, their interactions, and their relationships with the surrounding environment. A tourism history study describes the economic context of the period, the interconnections among economic actors, and the broader economic network, as well as the direct and indirect effects of tourism. It also provides insights into the entrepreneurial attitudes of the era, which can explain the motivations behind the tourism-induced investments. Pécs has long been famous for its tourist appeal, which has progressively intensified since the final decades of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. However, the economic development of the city was disrupted by the First World War and the Serbian occupation. From the late 1920s, the city began a conscious tourism development and destination management strategy, initiating infrastructural investments, defining its tourism portfolio, and launching targeted marketing campaigns. The increased visitor traffic to Pécs was a direct result of these efforts and prevailing national tourism trends, such as the introduction of low-cost express trains and the organisation of nationally significant fairs. Consequently, multiple economic sectors transformed, which also altered the employment structure of the city. In addition to changes in hospitality, the accommodation sector, particularly the hotel industry, changed greatly (Lengyel, 1989; Romváry, 2010; Borsy, 2010; Kaposi, 2022). In this study, I examine the establishment and operation of the Mecsek Association’s tourist hostel at Dömörkapu.

## **2. Literature, sources, research questions**

In my study, I have used multiple types of sources. Numerous contemporary scholarly descriptions have informed me of the economic history of Hungary between the two World Wars. Several studies have detailed the distinctive economic circumstances of Pécs following the First World War, where the impact of the war was aggravated by the Serbian occupation. Various tourism literature sources presented the tourism development of Pécs starting from the latter half of the 1920s. The annual reports and financial statements of the Mecsek Association gave insight into the conscious development of Mecsek as a tourist destination. These reports were essential in understanding the activities of the association in the area. Articles from contemporary local and national press sources emphasised the strong connection between the tourist traffic in Pécs and the tourist hostel of Dömörkapu. These sources revealed how the accommodation integrated into broader national developments and its subsequent economic impact on Pécs and were instrumental in contextualising the establishment of the building. My primary research at the Baranya County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives uncovered documents – construction plans, permit requests, and procedural records – demonstrating the success of the hostel. Various museum collections, alongside other sources, shed light on the importance of the accommodation.

This paper is structured around two key questions:

- How did the visitor traffic of Pécs evolve after the First World War?
- How was the tourist hostel established, and what was its significance in terms of tourism?

### 3. The economy of Pécs in the 1920s

The Great War had a profound impact on the Hungarian economy, and Pécs was no exception. The economy of the city experienced a significant plunge, causing a decline in standards of living, and the emergence of social issues. A few industrial businesses had managed to sustain themselves during the war through government contracts, but the prolonged conflict led to labour shortage, which caused a cut in production. The tourism and hospitality sectors suffered substantial losses. The worsening shortage of raw materials led to a drop in consumption. The Hungarian government financed the war by issuing war bonds, which drastically reduced savings. On top of all this, the sudden increase in government orders generated significant inflation (Babics, 1952; T. Mérey, 1985; Kopasz, 1988; Siptár, 1996; Tegzes, 1999; Kaposi, 2002, 2020).

The challenges faced by Pécs did not cease with the end of the war. In mid-November of 1918, the city came under Serbian occupation. During this 33-month period, the Serbs systematically looted the South Transdanubian region and the city of Pécs. Economic consolidation was slow to occur after the occupation ended. Both Pécs and its inhabitants became heavily indebted. After 1921, the impoverished economic actors increasingly relied on the financial sector, leading to a significant dependence on banks (Siptár, 1996; Gál, 2005). Financial institutions achieved considerable capital accumulation through their services, which they reinvested in other sectors (e.g., industry and commerce), giving banks increasing influence over the local economy. During this period, numerous public limited companies formed, often backed by a bank. For businesses, operating as a company became a matter of survival, as it became the only option for raising capital for stable operation. In 1925, the József Hamerli Machine Factory and Iron Foundry (Hamerli József Gépgyár és Vasöntöde) transitioned from sole proprietorship to corporate entity, operating under the name of Sopiana Machine Factory and Iron Foundry Inc. (Sopiana Gépgyár és Vasöntöde Rt.) (Kaposi, 2006, 2023a). This was an increasing trend in the tourism sector too. In 1922, with a starting capital of 10 million crowns, the Transdanubian Hotel and Food Inc. (Dunántúli Szálloda és Élelmiszerüzemi Rt.) was established under the name of the Transdanubian Bank Inc. (Dunántúli Bank Rt.), combining hospitality and tourism units into a single organisation in the city. This company operated the Pannonia Grand Hotel, Hotel Nádor (Nádor Szálló), and the Golden Ship Hotel (Aranyhajó Szálloda) as well (Magyar Compass, 1922; Pécsi Lapok, 23. 04. 1922; Pécsi Est, 25. 04. 1922; Trebbin, 2006).

During the complicated economic period of the 1920s, Pécs played a crucial role in driving change, replacing investments from the previously dominant private sector. Through the Speyer loan, the city invested in several infrastructure projects that provided

employment for many of the unemployed, and the completed ventures contributed to steady progression. The development efforts during this period primarily focused on utilities and transportation: electricity services expanded, waterpipes and sewage systems were improved, but transport infrastructure was just as significant. The Hungarian State Railways (MÁV) held a regional administrative role, and local railway vehicle repair shops provided livelihoods for many. Additionally, the council-owned tram system contributed to the budget with its profitable operations (Majdán, 2005; Kaposi, 2023a, 2023b).

#### 4. The beginnings of the Mecsek Association

By the 1890s, the idea of setting up a civic association dedicated to the Mecsek region had taken root in the city. The members of this association aimed to develop the infrastructure for hiking tourism and make it accessible for the public (B. Horváth, 2002).

The local citizens officially founded the Mecsek Association on April 30, 1891, marking the establishment of the city’s first tourist organisation. The association had 162 members, including first county official Kálmán Kardos (president), notary public Simon Bánffay (vice president), local industrialist Vilmos Zsolnay (vice president), and secondary school teacher József Kiss (secretary). According to the 1906 bylaws of the organisation, “*the objectives of the association were to facilitate pedestrian and carriage traffic in the Mecsek and surrounding areas by establishing suitable routes; to enhance, organise, and maintain the Mecsek and Tettye in accordance with the needs of tourism and group excursions; to preserve historical monuments and antiquities from destruction; and finally, to extend its activities to the aesthetic interests of Pécs and its surroundings*” (MNL BaVL X. 66. b., 13. 06. 1903: 2–3). Furthermore, the association promoted and encouraged a healthy lifestyle among the population (Pécsi Figyelő, 29. 10. 1890; Baronek, 2012).

From its initiation, the Mecsek Association (M. A.) worked tirelessly to promote the Mecsek and Tettye regions. The systematic, deliberate, and organised management of tourism was a direct result of the relentless efforts of the association’s members. The M. A. kept a close cooperation with the city, the forestry service, and nearly all residents of Pécs. In 1891, the association marked approximately 25 kilometres of hiking trails, which were implemented and maintained over the following years. The first trail, christened the Kardos path, was ceremonially opened in 1892. As a result, the number of visitors to the mountain region in 1892 already exceeded the total sum of the previous decade (Pécsi Figyelő, 18. 05. 1892; B. Horváth, 2002). Following their initial success, the M. A. continued its work, inaugurating the István viewpoint on Jakab Hill in 1892 (Pécsi Figyelő, 15. 06. 1892; B. Horváth, 1990). They organised group excursions for themselves and for other tourist associations visiting the region (B. Horváth, 1992). Catering to the needs of tourists was a top priority. The association installed benches, planted trees, and in 1893, constructed the first trail shelter at the upper part of Kardos path, where refreshments and food could be purchased.

By 1930, the M.A. made significant contributions to both Pécs and the Mecsek. They built lookouts on elevation points of the Mecsek: Zengő (1900), Bertalan Rock (1901),

Misina (1908), and Big-Tubes (1910). Among these, the József Kiss viewpoint on Misina was the best-known at the time – the predecessor of the TV tower. In addition to the overlooks, the M. A. established various resting areas and additional routes, often funded by donations from local citizens and businesses. Beyond the construction of infrastructure, the association also contributed to the development of the region and the local economy in other ways. They gave lectures on the Mecsek's flora and fauna, promoting beauty spots on the mountain range by presenting photographs, postcards, short films and other marketing tools, thereby successfully popularising the region. The association published annual reports providing accounts of its activities, finances, and objectives from the previous years. Furthermore, they maintained international relations with other associations, thus spreading the word about Baranya County on an international scale (like Switzerland) (B. Horváth, 2002).

The M. A. became an active participant of the local economy, directly affecting its development. They included local businesses in realising numerous projects. Their membership increased steadily, and during its existence, it became the largest association of Hungary. Naturally, the organisation also faced many challenges during its operations.

## **5. The construction of the tourist hostel of Dömörkapu**

By the mid-1920s, Pécs became an increasingly popular tourist destination. This growth in tourism was driven by the increased number of annual fairs (12 per year) and the hosting of several national conferences and professional gatherings. A significant change occurred when the University of Pozsony (Bratislava) relocated to Pécs, with the city providing substantial support for its operations from 1923. The presence of the university, with its multiple faculties, stimulated local commerce, hospitality, and the construction industry. Accommodating the needs of students and professors required new clinics, libraries, cafeterias, and dormitories. These investments triggered multiplier effects across various sectors and brought intellectual enrichment to the city (Bezerédy, 1996; Kaposi, 2023a).

The transportation infrastructure developments continued. From 1932, so-called “penny trains” were introduced across the country, allowing passengers (typically travelling from the capital) to combine their train tickets with city tours, catering, and accommodation. At this time, the most prominent hotels in Pécs were Hotel Nádor, the Pannonia Grand Hotel, the Hunting Horn (Vadászkürt), the Railway Hotel (Vasúti Szálloda), and Hotel Excelsior (Bártfai, 2009; Varga & Kaposi, 2023). From 1930, alongside the infrastructure development, the city embarked on a conscious tourism development strategy, defining its own tourism portfolio, distinguishing between the cultural and heritage attractions of the downtown area and the Mecsek Mountain, the latter of which was valued for its hiking tourism potential. Marketing efforts for these distinct attractions began, utilising films, postcards, brochures, and even replicas of the key of Pécs (Pécsi Napló, 16. 07. 1935; Dunántúl, 30. 10. 1928; Gonda & Kaposi, 2022).

By 1931, the M. A. planned to celebrate its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary by constructing a two-story tourist hostel. Although records may use the archaic expression “shelter”, this particular

building was not a trail shelter. It offered a great variety of services, just like any other hotel, despite not officially being one, but rather serving as a hybrid of the two. The accommodation was planned to be built next to Dömörkapu, designed to meet the highest standards of the time. Easy accessibility, stunning scenic views from the Mecsek, and wind protection were deciding factors in choosing the hostel’s location (Kaltneker, 1931). József Kiss introduced a proposal for the hostel during an April board meeting. The plans were presented by engineer László Hoffmann on April 8 (MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. “F” 4750/1931, 08. 04. 1930). The idea met with great enthusiasm. The local press provided detailed coverage of the board meeting on May 24, offering a glimpse inside the future building: *“The new jubilee accommodation will be built below Dömörkapu on land owned by the association (...). The ground floor will house a 60 m<sup>2</sup> restaurant, a 25 m<sup>2</sup> club room, the apartment of the caretaker (2 rooms, kitchen, pantry, cellar), a lobby, restrooms, and a staircase, with an open front terrace measuring approximately 100 m<sup>2</sup>. The first floor will feature five rooms (2 single, 3 double) for vacationers or possibly tourists, a large lobby, a corridor, and a small pantry that, in time, could serve as a bathroom once water pipes are installed. The second floor will accommodate five tourist rooms with a total of 22 beds, a corridor, and a lobby where extra beds can be placed. On the upper floor, there will also be secluded areas, and on the first floor, an open terrace accessible from two guest rooms. The guest rooms, with their simple yet elegant furnishings and pristine white furniture, will provide a pleasant home for those wishing to stay for an extended period.”* (Pesti Napló, 01. 05. 1930; Dunántúl, 25. 05. 1930: 9).

The construction of the tourist hostel of Dömörkapu is an excellent example of the direct economic impact of the M. A., which aimed to involve as many local economic businesses as possible in the construction process. A call for tenders was issued for the work, attracting multiple bids. The association members decided to divide the construction of the hotel into work segments, such as landscaping, masonry, concrete work, tiling, placement and insulation tasks, carpentry, sheet metal work, roofing, joinery, iron fittings, painting, glazing, locksmithing, plumbing, and the installation of iron stoves, energy-efficient stoves, and ceramic stoves (Dunántúl, 13. 07. 1930; Dunántúl, 15. 08. 1930). The selected bids were presented at the regular annual general meeting in September. *“The Mecsek Association will soon begin constructing a beautiful, two-story tourist and vacation lodge next to Dömörkapu, with a total cost of nearly 70,000 pengő (hereinafter referred to as P). The general meeting enthusiastically approved the immediate commencement of construction and decided that as many local craftsmen as possible from Pécs would be employed, dividing the work into parts for Himmel and Szlipcsevics, Vince Kecskés, Nándor Siebenfreund, György Matiovics, Károly Pozsegovics, Aladár Tichy, and Antal Berkics, craftsmen and contractors from Pécs. The city is supporting the construction of the jubilee tourist lodge with a grant of 10,000 P and a low-interest loan of 17,000 P, facilitated by Treasury Councillor Ernő Visnya through the Savings Bank of Pécs (Pécsi Takarékpénztár).”* (Dunántúl, 14. 09. 1930: 3). In exchange for the generous support of the city, however, Pécs

became the new owner of the trail shelter on the Kardos path (Pécsi Napló, 12. 07. 1931; B. Horváth, 2002).

The association officially requested approval for the project from the city council on September 8, 1930. The application revealed that the hotel was to be built under land parcel numbers 9475 and 9476, utilising spring water from the Mecsek (MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. “F” 21468/1937, 06. 09. 1930). The hostel was modern, designed to fully satisfy the needs of tourists. A contemporary newspaper columnist shared a similar view, stating that the hotel “*can confidently compete with many foreign mountain resorts in terms of both comfort and beauty*” (Városok Lapja, 01. 01. 1934: 6).

Construction progressed well, with most M. A. members participating. The minutes of the meeting held on March 26, 1931 reveal that by the end of 1930, before the winter frosts set in, the building had already been roofed (MNL BaVL X. 66. a., 26. 03. 1931). The association reported on the completion of the hostel of Dömörkapu in its yearbook: “*The building features a large dining room, an association room, 5 guest rooms with 8 beds, 5 tourist rooms with 20 sleeping places, a 2-room apartment of the caretaker, a bathroom, and a room of the maid, all in a simple yet durable design that meets even the highest of expectations. Water supply is temporarily provided by a manually operated tank located in the attic and a cistern with a usable volume of approximately 15 m<sup>3</sup>, as there is a possibility of connecting to the city water supply in the near future. Construction began in September 1930, and the building was roofed within 90 working days, and after the unusually long and harsh winter, it was completed in another 90 working days. Including the terraces, the building has an internal volume of 1,685 m<sup>3</sup> and, together with landscaping and all ancillary works, cost 32.30 P per cubic meter, while the total furnishings consumed approximately 15,000 P. We installed electricity and landline, provided comfortable furniture for the terraces, making the hostel a cozy and popular place, promising to become the jewel of the Mecsek mountains.*” (Kaltneker, 1931: 31–32).

The construction of the hostel was not only significant at a regional level. A Budapest newspaper agreed that the accommodation would greatly contribute to boosting tourism in the Mecsek region (Uj Nemzedék, 22. 04. 1931). The hotel opened to hikers on July 29, 1931, following a press preview, offering food and drinks. However, the guest rooms became available slightly later, in August. Like many other tourist hostels of the time, the establishment had its own policy, emphasising quietness and services tailored to tourists. It was primarily built for hiking tourism, meaning leisure guests were generally able to use any unoccupied rooms at a higher cost and for shorter periods only (Dunántúl, 31. 07. 1931; Dunántúl, 09. 08. 1931). In its final layout, the building offered 28 beds, consisting of 4 single and 3 double guest rooms, as well as 3 so-called tourist rooms with 6 beds each (3 bunk beds per room) (Pécsi Hirek, 27. 07. 1931; Pécsi Hirek, 03. 08. 1931).

The hotel was completed at a total cost of 68,093 P, covering not only the construction expenses and furnishings but also any unforeseen expenses (MNL BaVL X. 66. a., 1931). The project’s budget was made up of membership fees, revenue from the services of the M. A. (such as admission fees for viewpoints, sales of refreshments, organised tours, evening



events, and balls), donations (from Pécs and the Hungarian Tourist Association), loans (provided by the Savings Bank of Pécs), and 58 association bonds (each valued at 100 P, with an annual net interest rate of 6%). According to the archival records, in March 1931, the M. A. decided to increase a previously obtained loan of 17,000 P. This decision was not due to poor organisational management but rather to address potential liquidity issues that could have arisen during the year of construction. To mitigate this, the association requested a credit line of 35,000 P from the Savings Bank of Pécs. The bank approved the contract, setting an annual net interest rate of 9%, in addition to the nominal value. To manage the situation caused by varying cash flows, the M. A. issued association bonds, each at a nominal value of 100 P, a 10-year maturity, and a net annual interest rate of 6%, to be redeemed by July 1, 1931 by those who wished to support the Dömörkapu project (MNL BaVL X. 66. c., 01. 07. 1931). The bond system also stipulated that from 1932 onward, one-tenth of the bonds would be repaid annually through a lottery, with interest payments made on the remaining bonds every July 1<sup>st</sup>. Pécs played a significant role in the development of this complex financial structure. In a general assembly of the city held on September 30, 1930, Pécs decided to support the construction of the hotel with 10,000 P, donated in 1931 and 1932, 5,000 P each (MNL BaVL X. 66. a., 30. 09. 1930; MNL BaVL X. 66. a., 26. 03. 1931).

The hostel, built in approximately 180 days, was inaugurated on September 13, 1931. The association’s four decades of work culminated in establishing hiking tourism in the Mecsek region, the opening of the Dömörkapu hostel being their ultimate masterpiece. Prior to the inauguration, the Mecsek Association held a ceremonial general assembly, where they honoured members who had served for 40 years, such as Dr. Andor Nendtvich and György Reéh (Dunántúl, 15. 09. 1931).

## **6. The development of the hostel in the 1930s**

With the establishment of the tourist hostel, a long-term development had started. The “shelter” quickly became an integral part of the tourism sector, and, by extension, the broader tourism processes of Pécs.

The Mecsek Association envisioned a continuous operation plan for accommodation throughout the year. Initially, the facility lacked central heating and had only temporary access to running water. However, the building was winterised to mitigate seasonality, allowing it to attract guests even during the winter months. By the end of 1931, two tourist groups from Budapest had spent Christmas in the Mecsek region (Dunántúl, 22. 12. 1931). A lessee was responsible for operating the hostel. Footfall steadily increased. According to local press reports, in the summer of 1932, the price of a single-bed terrace room was 75 P, and a double-bed room could be reserved for 100 P. Full board was offered by renowned expert and restaurateur Károly Piller, at a daily rate of 4 P (Dunántúl, 21. 06. 1932; Pécsi Napló, 04. 09. 1932). The establishment was frequented by hikers in the summer, and winter sports enthusiasts in the winter. In 1934, to promote winter sports, the Mecsek Association constructed a ski slope approximately 1,315 meters long stretching between

Misina and Dömörkapu, costing around 5,000 P (Pécsi Napló, 22. 10. 1933; Dunántúl, 28. 03. 1934; Kaltneker, 1934).

A paved road was constructed to Dömörkapu, facilitating easier access to the hotel (Kiss, 1933). This development was likely a result of Pécs mayor and M. A. president Dr. Andor Nendtvich's persistent efforts, which were recognised by renaming the hostel to "Dr. Nendtvich Andor House" at the regular annual general meeting on May 28, 1932 (Dunántúl, 31. 05. 1932). The accommodation welcomed domestic and international guests alike (Dunántúl, 20. 08. 1932). Following the road's construction, a taxi service was established in 1933, allowing transportation from downtown Pécs to Dömörkapu for only 1 P (Dunántúl, 14. 06. 1933). The real breakthrough, however, came with the introduction of scheduled bus services. The fare from Széchenyi square to the hotel was only 0.8 P round trip (Dunántúl, 25. 06. 1933). These transportation developments further increased the visitor traffic of the Mecsek region.

Since its establishment, the lodge had been continuously expanded and regularly improved (e.g., by the installation of electric lighting on the asphalt road connecting Dömörkapu to the city in 1935). The first major investment was the 1936 renovation. Archival sources reveal that on August 6, the M. A. requested the city to approve an extension of the hostel and the addition of an ancillary outbuilding. According to the attached blueprints, the association aimed to increase the capacity of the hotel and to ensure a continuous water supply for the entire tourist house from the reservoir of the Mecsek Sanatorium. Following negotiations with the city, the budget for this large-scale investment amounted to 12,690 P. The high cost was justified by the inclusion of a larger diameter pipe system, which would also support a potential future vacation settlement, aligning with the interests of Pécs. As a result, the modification was approved. The city agreed to cover half of the construction costs, provided the association covered the remaining 50%, approximately 6,345 P. Moreover, the association was responsible for ensuring that the wastewater system of the hostel did not contaminate the water supply of the city. Following the acceptance of these conditions, preparations for the project commenced. Due to the financial situation of the M. A., 5,000P served as a deposit, leading to a prolonged negotiation with Pécs over the remaining balance until 1940. Ultimately, the city, on grounds of equity, waived the remaining 1,515 P. The association also sought support from the Hungarian Royal Minister of Commerce, who donated 2,000 P to advance the project. The organisation managed its finances well, having fully repaid its loan to the Savings Bank of Pécs by 1935. After resolving the financial matters, a closed tender process for the supply of pipes and other fittings attracted five companies. The most favourable offer came from Mannesmann Piping and Ironmongery Trading Inc. (Mannesmann Cső- és Vaskereskedelmi Rt.). After procuring materials worth approximately 7,723 P, the construction work was completed, resulting in the newly renovated Dr. Nendtvich Andor House, which now accommodated 30 guests (MNL BaVL XV. 1. b. 392, 1935; MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. "F" 21468/1937, 1937; MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. "F" 17-100206/1940, 1940).

*“Our tourist house was expanded over the past year with a water supply, bathroom, an 8-bed male and a 6-bed female tourist room, and a 2-room caretaker's apartment. (...) As a result of the renovations, the restaurant has been extended, and the room reserved for association members is now available again. The ancillary facilities have also been significantly expanded, like the kitchen and the bar, with separate buildings for the laundry room, wood and coal storage, and a Priester station for wastewater drainage. We have provided tourists with three washbasins, a shower room, and in our garden, three shower installations to ensure a comfortable stay. The expansion now includes four single rooms, six double rooms, one eight-bed room, and one six-bed room, exceeding the tourist traffic proportions. (...) Although the room furnishings are simple and lack hotel luxury, they offer comfort and a homely atmosphere through their cleanliness and simplicity. Each room is equipped with a spring mattress bed, two feather pillows, a duvet, bedside lighting, a wardrobe, a washbasin, a table, and an armchair. Rugs in front of the beds, curtains on the windows, a lampshade on the light, a wall mirror, and some pictures add a touch of comfort without luxury.”* – as detailed in the 1936 annual report of the M. A. (Kaltneker, 1937: 6–7).

The continuously modernising building, expert management, and its location undoubtedly contributed to the accommodation hosting numerous gala dinners, meetings, and social events.

## **7. Conclusion**

Once Pécs recognised the beneficial effects of tourism early on, the city quickly embarked on a conscious tourism development strategy. Starting in 1925, Pécs developed its own tourism portfolio. Influenced by early marketing efforts, deliberate destination management, and national tourism trends, Pécs experienced continuous growth in visitor numbers. Numerous hotels catered to visitors, striving to meet the consumer demands of the time. The tourist hostel of Dömörkapu operated by the Mecsek Association was an exceptional accommodation. Since its opening in 1931, the hostel continuously improved, turning into an increasingly popular establishment. It soon became a favoured destination within the tourism sector of Pécs, as evidenced by the steadily rising number of overnight stays. The hotel significantly contributed to the long-term tourism development of the region, remaining a beloved and frequently visited hotel during the planned economy years following the Second World War. The building underwent several renovations, most recently in 1991. During the privatisation period, the Hungarian State Railways purchased the property and opened the hotel with a capacity of 70. Today, the accommodation continues to operate as a three-star hotel.

## References

- Babics, A. (1952). *A pécsvidéki kőszénbányászat története* [History of coal mining in the Pécs area]. Budapest: Közoktatásügyi Kiadóvállalat, 256 p.
- Baronek, J. (2012). *A 121 éves Mecsek Egyesület* [121 years of the Mecsek Association]. *Pécsi Szemle* 15 (1): 46–57.
- Bártfai, E. (2009). *A magyar szállodaipar története 1848–1945* [History of the Hungarian hotel industry, 1848–1945]. In: Rubovszky, A., Szigeti, A. & Walkó, M. (eds.) *A magyar vendéglátás és turizmus újkori története*. Budapest: Szaktudás Kiadó, pp. 292–337.
- Bezerédy, Gy. (1996). *A pécsi vásárok 1846–1937* [Pécs markets, 1846–1937]. In: Szirtes, G. (ed.) *A pécsi vásárok 150 éves története. A termékbemutatótól a nemzetközi vásárig*. Pécs: Pécsi Ipari Vásár Vállalkozásszervező és Tanácsadó Kft., pp. 17–52.
- B. Horváth, Cs. (2002). *A Mecsek Egyesület története 1891–2002* [History of the Mecsek Association, 1891–2002]. Pécs: Mecsek Egyesület, 253 p.
- B. Horváth, Cs. (1992). *A Mecsek Egyesület története I* [History of the Mecsek Association, vol. 1]. (1891–1916). In: Uherkovich, Á. (ed.) *A Janus Pannonius Múzeum évkönyve 36. (1991)*. Pécs: Janus Pannonius Múzeum, pp. 133–148.
- B. Horváth, Cs. (1990). *A Múzeum Helytörténeti gyűjteményében lévő, Pécszet ábrázoló képes levelezőlapok III. A Mecsek* [Pécs picture postcards III. Mecsek]. In: Uherkovich, Á. (ed.) *A Janus Pannonius Múzeum évkönyve 34. (1989)*. Pécs: Janus Pannonius Múzeum, pp. 175–190.
- Borsy, J. (2010). *Ipari kisüzemek, vendéglátás* [Small industrial businesses and catering]. In: Nagy, I. G. (ed.) *Források Pécs város polgárosodásáról (1867–1921) – Tanulmányok és források Baranya megye történetéből 15*. Pécs: Baranya Megyei Levéltár, pp. 71–144.
- Gál, Z. (2005). *A pécsi magánbankárok felemelkedése és bukása a 19. század derekától az 1930-as évekig* [Rise and fall of private banks in Pécs from mid-19<sup>th</sup> century to the 1930s]. In: Szirtes, G. & Vargha, D. (eds.) *Mozaikok Pécs és Baranya gazdaságtörténetéből*. Pécs: Pro Pannonia Kiadó, pp. 35–54.
- Gonda, T. & Kaposi, Z. (2022). Innovative tourism development in a Hungarian regional centre in the 1930s. *Journal of Tourism History* 14 (2): 202–214. DOI: 10.1080/1755182X.2022.2117858
- Kaltneker, P. (1937). *A Mecsek Egyesület Évkönyve a XLVI-ik egyesületi évről. 1936* [Yearbook of the Mecsek Association, 1936]. Pécs: Mecsek Egyesület, 76 p.
- Kaltneker, P. (1934). *A Mecsek Egyesület Évkönyve a XLIII. Egyesületi évről. 1933* [Yearbook of the Mecsek Association, 1933]. Pécs: Mecsek Egyesület, 66 p.
- Kaltneker, P. (1931). *A Mecsek Egyesület Évkönyve a XL. egyesületi évről. 1930* [Yearbook of the Mecsek Association, 1930]. Pécs: Mecsek Egyesület, 50 p.
- Kaposi, Z. (2023a). *Gazdasági változások Pécsen az 1920-as években* [Economic changes in Pécs in the 1920s]. In: Lengvári, I. (ed.) *Felsőoktatás Trianon után*. Pécs: PTE Egyetemi Levéltár, pp. 9–48.

- Kaposi, Z. (2023b). Válságból válságba. A pécsi kereskedelem változásai 1921–1930 [From crisis to crisis: Changes in commerce, 1921–1930]. *Közép-Európai Közlemények* 16 (1): 9–26.
- Kaposi, Z. (2022). Pécs gazdasági fejlődése 1867–1914 [The economic development of Pécs, 1867–1914]. In: Kaposi, Z. & Vonyó, J. (eds.) *Pécs története VI. Iparosodás – polgárosodás. Pécs a dualizmus korában (1867–1918)*. Pécs: Pécs Története Alapítvány – Kronosz Kiadó, pp. 103–192.
- Kaposi, Z. (2020). Pécs gazdasági változásai az első világháború idején [Economic changes in Pécs during World War I]. *Közép-Európai Közlemények* 13 (3): 99–122.
- Kaposi, Z. (2006). *Pécs gazdasági fejlődése 1867–2000* [The economic development of Pécs, 1867–2000]. Pécs: Pécs-Baranyai Kereskedelmi és Iparkamara, 326 p.
- Kaposi, Z. (2002). *Magyarország gazdaságtörténete 1700–2000* [Hungary’s economic history, 1700–2000]. Budapest–Pécs: Dialóg Campus Kiadó, 431 p.
- Kiss, J. (1933). *A Mecsek Egyesület Évkönyve a XLII. egyesületi évről. 1932* [62nd Yearbook of the Mecsek Association]. Pécs: Mecsek Egyesület, 54 p.
- Kopasz, G. (1988). A baranyai kisipar és a kézművesiparosok helyzete a szerb megszállás alatt [Small businesses and craftsmen in Baranya county during the Serbian occupation]. In: Szita, L. & Vonyó, J. (eds.) *Történeti tanulmányok Dél-Pannóniából I*. Pécs: Pécsi Akadémiai Bizottság, pp. 131–139.
- Lengyel, Gy. (1989). *Vállalkozók, bankárok, kereskedők. A magyar gazdasági elit a 19. században és a 20. század első felében* [Entrepreneurs, bankers, and traders: The Hungarian economic elite in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century]. Budapest: Magvető Kiadó, 181 p.
- Magyar Compass (1922): *Nagy Magyar Compass (Azelőtt Mihók-féle) 1920/21 XLVIII. évfolyam az 1922-ik évre. Pénzügyi és kereskedelmi évkönyv. II. rész: Biztosító-, ipar- és közlekedési vállalatok, állam és városok pénzügyei* [Great Hungarian compass: Financial and commercial yearbook, 1922]. Budapest: Stephaneum nyomda, 1459 p.
- Majdán, J. (2005). Pécs, mint közlekedési központ (1846–1946) [Pécs as transportation hub]. In: Szirtes, G. & Vargha, D. (eds.) *Mozaikok Pécs és Baranya gazdaságtörténetéből*. Pécs: Pro Pannonia Kiadó, pp. 55–85.
- Romváry, F. ed. (2010). *Pécs Lexikon I–II*. Pécs: Pécs Lexikon Kulturális Nonprofit Kft., 1050 p.
- Tegzes, F. (1999). Pécs közéletmezése az I. világháború idején [Public catering in Pécs during World War I]. In: Font, M. & Vonyó, J. (eds.) *Tanulmányok Pécs történetéből 5–6*. Pécs: Pécs Története Alapítvány, pp. 139–149.
- T. Mérey, K. (1985). *Dél-Dunántúl iparának története a kapitalizmus idején* [History of South-Transdanubian industry under capitalism]. Budapest: Akadémiai Kiadó, 289 p.
- Trebbin, Á. (2006). *A pécsi Nádor Szálló regénye. Fejezetek egy pécsi szálloda történetéből 1846–1988* [Chapters from the novel of Hotel Nádor, 1846–1988]. Pécs: Házmaster ’98 Kft., 262 p.

Siptár, L. (1996). A Pécsi Takarékpénztár rövid története (1845–1948) [The short history of the Pécs Savings Bank]. In: Vonyó, J. (ed.) *Tanulmányok Pécs történetéből* 2–3. Pécs: Pécs Története Alapítvány, pp. 55–66.

Varga, P. Zs. & Kaposi, Z. (2023). A modern szállodaiipar létrejötte Pécsett a XIX–XX. század fordulóján [The beginnings of a modern hotel business at the turn of the 20th century in Pécs]. *Turizmus Bulletin* 23 (4): 40–47. DOI: 10.14267/TURBULL.2023v23n4.5

## Press releases

### *Dunántúl*

(28. 03. 1934): A Mecsek Egyesület egy...; (25. 06. 1933): Július 1-től...; (14. 06. 1933): A Mecsek Egyesület hírei; (20. 08. 1932): A dömörkapui turistaházban...; (21. 06. 1932): Nyaralás a Mecseken; (31. 05. 1932): A Mecsek egyesület közgyűlésén Nendtvich...; (22. 12. 1931): Két budapesti turistacsoport...; (15. 09. 1931): A 40 éves Mecsek Egyesület; (09. 08. 1931): A vikendezők százai keresik fel...; (31. 07. 1931): Megnyílt a Dömör kapui szálló; (14. 09. 1930): Hetvenezer pengős költséggel turista és üdülőház épül a Mecseken; (15. 08. 1930): Tömeges ajánlat érkezett be a Mecsek-Egyesület...; (13. 07. 1930): Versenytárgyalási hirdetmény; (25. 05. 1930): Kétemeletes menedékház épül a Mecseken; (30. 10. 1928): 30 ezer idegen fordul meg évente Pécsett.

### *Pécsi Est*

(25. 04. 1922): A Pannóniát és Nádort a Dunántúli Szállodai és élelmiszerüzemi RT...

### *Pécsi Figyelő*

(15. 06. 1892): A Mecsek – egyesületből; (18. 05. 1892): A Kardos Kálmán-út megnyitása; (29. 10. 1890): A Mecsek-szépítő egyesület célja.

### *Pécsi Hírek*

(03. 08. 1931): A Dömörkapui turista...; (27. 07. 1931): Az új mecseki menedékház.

### *Pécsi Lapok*

(23. 04. 1922): Vendéglőket és szállodákat bérlő részvénytársaság.

### *Pécsi Napló*

(16. 07. 1935): Elkészült a város ajándék-kulcsa; (22. 10. 1933): Szerdai választmányi ülésen...; (04. 09. 1932): Utóidény a Mecsek Egyesület...; (12. 07. 1931): A Mecsek Egyesület köréből.

### *Pesti Napló*

(01. 05. 1930): Új menedékház épül a Mecsekben.

### *Új Nemzedék*

(22. 04. 1931): Még a tavasszal megnyitják a mecseki turistaházat.

### *Városok Lapja*

(01. 01. 1934): Mecseki képek.

### **Archival sources**

Baranya County Archives of the Hungarian National Archives (MNL BaVL):

MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. “F” 17–100206/1940 (10. 05. 1936): the entire process of the construction of the sewerage and water supply and refurbishment of the hostel of Dömörkapu, pp. 1–111.

MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. “F” 4750/1931 (08. 04. 1930): construction documents and plans of the Mecsek Association for a two-storey tourist house, built on parcels 9475 and 9476 on the Mecsek, pp. 1–6.

MNL BaVL IV. 1406. h. “F” 21468/1937 (06. 09. 1930): construction matter of the Mecsek Association for a two-storey tourist house and construction documents for the extension of the tourist house of Dömörkapu 1935–1936, pp. 1–18.

MNL BaVL X. 66. a. box: entries related to the hostel of Dömörkapu in the general meeting minutes and records of the Mecsek Association 1930–1933, pp. 1–40.

MNL BaVL X. 66. b. box: records from the annual meetings, general documents, visitor books and policies of the Mecsek Association, construction logs of the hostel of Dömörkapu, pp. 1–67.

MNL BaVL X. 66. c. box: financial documents of the Mecsek Association, including annual reports, payments, invoices, and receipts 1931–1946, pp. 1–16.

MNL BaVL XV. 1. b. 392. (18. 03. 1944): the sewerage and reconstruction plan of the Dr. Andor Nendtvich House, pp. 1–2.