



Rock room in a beehive rock at Mész hill

cone. 7 chambers have been cut into its sides and a room into the inside.

Southwest of Nyerges hill there is the rock berm of Pajdos or Pajodos with 9 ragged chambers. Its not the shape, but the name of the berm that is worth mentioning: "pajod" was a creature of "palóc" beliefs, that was thought to eat the Sun or the Moon at solar or lunar eclipses.

East of Nyerges hill there is the Mész hill with three rock cones with chambers on its southern slope. On the top of one cone there is an interesting hole surrounded by a ledge and a room (or so-called "bújó") cut into the inside. The room between the two groups of rocks is also worth visiting; here we can recognise the remains of a fireplace, a shelf for sleeping cut into the rock and holes for storage. If we look around carefully in the surrounding forest of young wattles, we can recognise the survivors of a long-ago cultural landscape: old medlar, walnut and apple trees as well as the tendrils of feral grapes.

Norht-northeast of Mész hill there is Cakó hilltop with a group of rocks that is very difficult to reach. However, its four rocky ridges, overgrown with young wattle trees, offer 36 chambers for the most determined visitors. Besides their big sizes, the chambers other curiosity is, that their back walls are usually bigger than their entrances. Several chambers are of herring-bone, gothic shape. Also, there is the most beautiful rock group of the area here; three rock towers reminiscent of the tuff towers of Cappadocia.

The historic road between Eger and Szomolya, called "Via ad Szomolya" (today with the "Kő-út" tourist track) also ran here, at the southern feet of Mész hill. In the track the wheels of carts broke the soil and the rocks during the centuries, thus allowing the powers of nature destroy freely. This is how the gorge-like defile could have been formed in the rhyolite tuff.



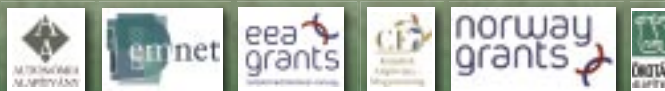
Map: Cartographia Kft.

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Szala | 6. Tihamér |
| 2. Király-szék and Tetemvár | 7. Köporos |
| 3. Kisvölgy street | 8. The Pajdos area |
| 4. Szépasszony valley | 9. Nyerges hill and Mész hill |
| 5. Koszorú street and Farkas valley | |

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Eger
Cellars and beehive rocks



CELLARS IN EGER

The viticulture and viniculture of Eger probably originates from the Árpád era, since the wine needed for the liturgies of the episcopate established in the town is likely to have been grown locally. Viniculture of the area was further enriched both by Western European characteristics imported in the 12th century by Vallon settlers from the Low Countries as well as by traditions of the Balkans and Southern Europe introduced by Greek and Serbian people fleeing the Turkish and by Aromanian wine traders settling in the area.



Cellar at Kőporos

At the climate of the Carpathian Basin – favourable for growing grapes – special circumstances are needed for fermenting good quality wine. These are provided by wine cellars cut into rocks, which must be considered a Hungarian speciality. Medieval sources first mentioned the cellars of Northern Hungary.

In the 15th century the property book of the chapter of Eger already mentioned the pits under Király-szék: these could have been the first cellars in Eger cut into the gritty sediment under the lime tuff (sinter) berm of the present-day Tetemvár street. These pits were simple, the shape of the irregular rooms following the bends of the rocky berm. More elaborate cellars were only cut in the beginning



Old wine-press houses at the Szala area

of the 1500s, later becoming the basis of the dungeons of the Castle of Eger. These were already used for storing wine.

In the 16th century Turkish threat boosted the making of cellars: the spacious cellars of Almagyar street could have been cut in these days as well as the cellar system of the church hill in Felnémet which was occupied by the Hungarian free army of "hajdú" men after the fall of Eger (1596), who kept bothering the Turkish leaving the castle. The pasha got fed up with the attacks and he had the cellars filled in. They were only undone in 1706, after the Turkish were expelled, and most of these cellars are still in use nowadays. However some walled-up cellars were found at the landscape arranging for the railway built in 1906 to connect Eger and Putnok, and some more pits are found even nowadays. Some cellars without a wine-press house at Kisvölgy street, Szala and Great Kőporos areas are also old ones. The Great and Small Kőporos areas got their names from the mines of stone powder that was used for cleaning dishes ("kőpor" means stone powder).



Abandoned cellar at Mész hill

At the second half of the 19th century, after the serfs were freed, the making of cellars boosted again. The lines of cellars with wine-press houses in Great and Small Kőporos, Szala and Tihamér areas, at Koszorú street, and in Farkas valley were probably cut in these days. First, the wine-press houses were also cut into the rock, right in front of the cellars, but later these were developed into the atmospheric lines of buildings, with pitched roofs and iron-barred windows, that we can see today. Grapes were processed in the wine-press houses, cellars were only used for fermenting wine. Most well-known cellars of Eger are in Great and Small Kőporos areas.

In the 1700s, after the Turkish were expelled, the cellar system of the primacy of Eger was started to be made. When Bishop György Fenessy returned to Eger he decided to replace seat of the episcopate from the castle to the city centre, so he bought two pieces of land and started construction works from the rhyolite tuff mined from the hills. Mining left a 3 km long labyrinth system under the ground, from the Hatvani gate of the town to the Rác gate in the north, which was needed for storing the wine tithe collected



A rock group at Mész hill

on the properties of the episcopate between Gyöngyös and Munkács towns. Nowadays this cellar system is a tourist attraction called "Town under the town" and one of the 7 miracles of Hungary.

The most famous line of cellars in the town, the Old Line in Szépasszony valley, was also cut between the 16th and 19th centuries and only extended in the 1900s with new cellars. Today the lines of cellars in Szépasszony valley are well-known among tourists.

BEEHIVE ROCKS NEAR EGER

South of the town, on the western slope of Nyerges hill we can find apparently one of the most beautiful groups of beehive rocks in the Bukkalja region. It includes a flat berm sticking out of the ridge and a separate rock tower connected to the berm by



The rock tower at Nyerges hill

a saddle-shaped ridge. On the berm there are some strange, dish-shaped holes that some say to have been used as pagan altars of sacrifice. Several people believe that the ridge was also made by men. On this rocky ridge there are 24 chambers and remains of chambers cut by people. However, some of these are quite dilapidated.

On the eastern slope of Nyerges hill, opposite the rock cones of Mész hill, there is a rock