

The Land of the Five Genii

In his essay *The Land of the Five Genii*, Béla Hamvas divides the Carpathian Basin, and within it Hungary, into five distinct spiritual-cultural regions that live in tension with, or in harmony with, one another. In each of these five areas, a different genius loci – the spirit of the place – is at work, conveying a characteristic quality of the landscape and shaping the consciousness, outlook, and destiny of the people who live there.

According to Hamvas, the task of the Hungarian genius is to harmonize forces and influences that are often contradictory, to create balance, and from this unique mixture to bring forth something original.

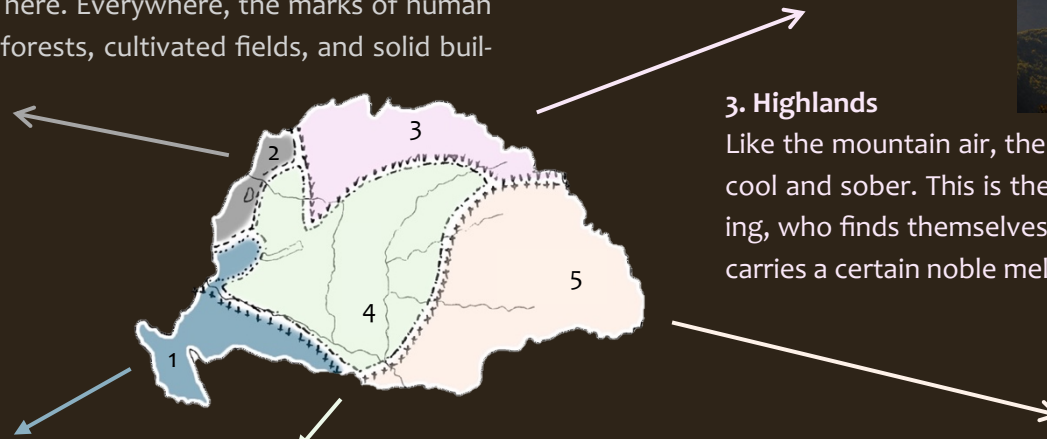
2. Cultural Landscape

This genius represents organization, predictability, and social discipline. The fabric of communal life and civic well-being is central here. Everywhere, the marks of human work are visible: orderly roads, well-tended forests, cultivated fields, and solid buildings.



1. Hills

This is the realm of the Genius of the South, where sunlight illuminates everything sharply, bringing clarity and serenity to thinking. This landscape radiates calm and security and carries within it the sense of the enduring presence of peace.



4. Great Plain

This genius represents the raw, elemental strength of the Hungarian destiny. There are no horizontal boundaries here; therefore, the longing for freedom in the people who live here is boundless. The soul does not wish to be civilized or confined by European rules. This genius is the instigator of rebellion.



3. Highlands

Like the mountain air, the spiritual quality of this landscape is cool and sober. This is the genius of the reflective human being, who finds themselves not in the crowd, but in solitude. It carries a certain noble melancholy or veiled quality.



5. Transylvania

This region is full of mystery, legend, and historical layers. This genius contributes inwardness, deep religiosity, and spiritual elevation to the Hungarian character.



„Here you see illuminated from a deeper aspect how folk-character is formed from a spiritual beings which are absorbed into man with his food. It is one of the means by which the great spiritual guidance of the Earth distributes the different national characters over the earth; foods which produce one or another effect have been distributed in such a way that the character of a certain people arises from the nourishment that it obtains. Rudolf Steiner: *The Influence of Spiritual Beings Upon Man*, Lecture I 1908. January 6 (GA 102)



Light meat dishes and pasta prepared with abundant fruits and vegetables are characteristic, such as plum dumplings. Meat dishes are mainly made from poultry.



Hearty potato- and cabbage-based dishes are typical, along with lamb and dairy products made from it, especially curd cheese.

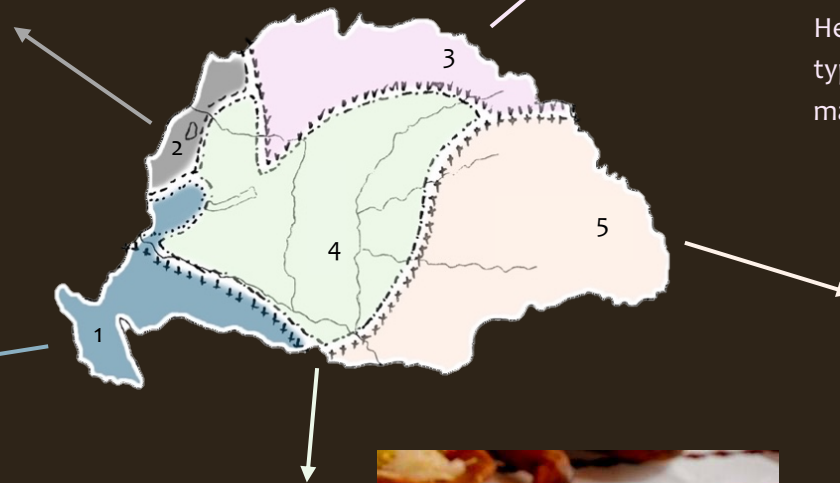
According to Hamvas, wine is the “drink of the soul,” which frees us from the greyiness of everyday life and restores the soul’s original cheerfulness.



The cuisine of the Great Plain is characterized by substantial, spicy meat dishes cooked in cauldrons, often accompanied by pasta as a side or addition. Paprika is used as a spice, with sautéed onions and fat as a base.



A slightly sour flavor profile and dairy-curd-based dishes are typical. A specialty is the főzelék: a thick vegetable-based dish (e.g., carrot, peas, squash, lettuce, sorrel, etc.), usually served with egg or meat.



Here I am
facing
light and shadow

ASD Conference 2026 Hungary

June 1 Monday– June 6 Saturday, 2026

Hotel Marina-Port

Balatonkenese



Social Evening at the Lake: Feeding One Another

On Friday evening, we would like to invite you into a social experience that is simple in form, yet rich in meaning.

Participants from different countries and cultural backgrounds are invited – if they wish – to prepare a given quantity (around 20 portions) of a dish from their own national cuisine and to offer it to others. In this way, we will quite literally feed one another: not as hosts and guests, but as equals, each of us bringing a gift from home and placing it into the shared space.

You may be familiar with the well-known parable about heaven and hell, where in both places people sit around a table with long spoons. In hell, they starve because they try to feed only themselves. In heaven, they are nourished because they feed one another.

This image quietly accompanies our intention for the evening.



The setting could hardly be more fitting: the hotel offers a beautiful lakeside location, with dedicated outdoor areas for cooking, grilling, and sharing food, as well as sheltered spaces for eating together. All necessary facilities and equipment are available on site. The kitchen team will also prepare the ingredients in advance in a ready-to-cook form, using what is locally available. Participants will only need to complete the final step of cooking and sharing.

This evening is not about culinary perfection. It is about gesture, encounter, and the subtle social art of offering and receiving. Different tastes, smells, textures, and stories will meet – just as we do throughout the conference.

More practical details, including how to register a dish and coordinate participation, you will find on the conference's landing page.

We simply invite you to carry this picture in your soul, and perhaps already sense what you might like to bring into the shared table by the lake.