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## DANUBE.GARDENS

### **The Danube – a river tale**

For centuries, it has shaped the gardens and the walls built around them. The Danube is to thank for riches and power but also for destruction and decline.

### **The river. It means LIFE.**

Its water is the basis for all growth: from letting the grain grow in the fields to enabling trade in goods to flourish across narrow borders. People settled along the river and built prosperous cities and villages. Craftsmen and poets, merchants and saints, scholars and peasants, the river left them all stranded and let them cultivate land and life on its banks. Let them cultivate the intellect and the soil. The monasteries and universities tell these tales. As do concert halls and theaters. Fields and gardens tell these tales.

### **The river. It means MOTION.**

Like a constant in the flux of stormy, changeable life, the river has flown relentlessly toward the sea at a uniform pace nearly unaltered for thousands of years. By contrast, the land and the life along its banks move at completely different speeds: Nature, be it field, meadow or forest, has its own rhythm, as does humankind and its work. Growth and destruction are measured in days, decades, centuries. Fortresses fall to ruins, riparian woodlands become parking lots, the celebrated and the insignificant both return unto dust. The river as a metaphor for nature's mysterious plan, the flow of its water, the growth of trees, the change of seasons all subject to ever-assertive motion. Next to it all is this vibrant life in which human beings intervene as creators, overriding plans and the motions to which they are subject, countering nature with their own concept of time.

### **The river. It means REFLECTION.**

All life, all motion is reflected in the water of the river, that of the constellations and the ships, that of bodies of people, houses and trees on its banks, birth and death. In just the same way, life and motion are reflected in the buildings and in nature: walls that change, gardens that grow. The fate of the comings and goings of power and influence, of destruction and development, of eras and schools of thought. Reflection shows how close reality and fantasy are to each other: reflected, both blur into a single image. The motion of water shifts the view to familiar things, conjures up new perspectives, changes color, shape and form. The image created through reflection leaves the question open as to whether what we see matches the real image of what is reflected. But just one glance suffices to attain certainty! Also certainty that what is now the reflection, which, after all, is also real, might – possibly – already have become a different image.