

CHRONICLE

Hungarian Geographical Bulletin 59 (2) (2010) pp. 234–237.

Symposium in Professor József Tóth's honour

Pécs, 17–18. March 2010

In this March a renowned scholar of Hungarian geography, Professor József Tóth turned 70. Professor Tóth, rector emeritus, earned acclaim for his remarkable professional career. Back to the 1970s he contributed significantly to the formation of the core of the community of Hungarian geographers what is currently representing the field of science and did it from the scientific workshops of Szeged and Békéscsaba. As a result of his tenacious work in Pécs, the Institute of Geography at the UP has grown four times greater and the university has incorporated a 15-year-old Doctoral School of Earth Sciences. His scientific interest has been focused on half a dozen key topics, while his investigations and findings were published in about 500 articles and 13 books. At the beginning of Tóth's career his main interest was the Great Hungarian Plain, the features of its settlement network and the possible directions of its development. Since the 1980s he has become interested in the problem of defining the terms settlement and region, and of identifying their specific features. He has also been interested in finding the place and role of geography among sciences. He developed the tetrahedron model that defines spatial nodes according to four basic dimensions. On the other hand he was carrying out investigations concerning the geographical space since the end of the 1970s. Since the mid-1990s he began to focus on cultural geography as a new direction of his discipline.

On the occasion of the jubilee and as a token of their respect, the staff of the Institute of Geography, University of Pécs (UP) organized a symposium. As an additional factor of organizing the symposium the institute could also celebrate the 15th anniversary of the establishment of the UP's Doctoral School of Earth Sciences – founded by Professor József Tóth.

The symposium was held on March 17 and 18, 2010 at the University of Pécs and its aim was to celebrate professor József Tóth together with the geographical public of Hungary. The two-day event was hosted by Zoltán DÖVÉNYI, director of the Institute of Geography at UP, who also opened the symposium. Róbert GÁBRIEL, rector of UP greeted professor Tóth as a former rector and as a school founder. On behalf of the Faculty of Sciences István GERESDI, dean, acknowledged his efforts for building and strengthening the institute and the doctoral school. Professor Tóth has played a prominent role not only in scientific activities but in the public life as well. Among his many roles and functions he is the head of the Pécs-Baranya section of TIT (National Association for the Dissemination of Scientific Knowledge) so Erzsébet SCHMIDT, director, also congratulated him on his birthday. A laudation on behalf of the PhD students was presented by Bertalan RADVÁNSZKY. Three books were dedicated to Professor Tóth as gifts. First, he received the first volume of *Tér, Talentum, Tanítványok* (Space, Talent, Disciples), which contains publications written by

the members of the institution's departments and the leaders of partner institutions. It was delivered by István Péter Kovács, assistant lecturer, who also expressed his appreciation of the professor's hard and productive work. The second volume of *Tér, Talantum, Tanítványok* was handed over by Noémi Livia Görcs, PhD student. This book contains important contributions of present and former PhD students of the Doctoral School of Earth Sciences. The third book, which is about Nepal, was presented by Zoltán WILHELM, the director of the Institute's Asia Centre.

Concerning the professional programmes; leaders, members and representatives of the most important Hungarian geographical research centres gave presentations (and forwarded greetings), on themes relating to the professor's research topics. Tamás CSAPÓ from University of West Hungary (NYME TTMK) gave a lecture on Hungarian small, medium and large towns and cities. Árpád HANUSZ, on behalf of the Institute of Geography of the College of Nyíregyháza, summarized cross-border tourist destination management cooperation and its possibilities, focusing on the border area along the Upper Tisza. Károly Kocsis, director of Geographical Research Institute HAS (MTA FKI), professor of Miskolc University gave a brief introduction of the geographical research and higher education centres of the Carpathian Basin. Zoltán Kovács, head of department at the University of Szeged, introduced the relationship between cities and the creative economy focusing on the interaction of them in the past decades. Gábor NAGY, director of the Alföld Department of Centre for Regional Studies at Békéscsaba, characterized the current conditions of cities of the Great Plain. Aquincum, a former settlement and its connection with the landscape was analysed by Ferenc SCHWEITZER, professor emeritus, retired director of MTA FKI. Hungarian lingual relative roots were observed by a cultural geographical approach of István SÜLI-ZAKAR, head of department at University of Debrecen. Mária SZABÓ director, Gergely HORVÁTH and Gábor CSÜLLÖG as representatives of the Institute of Geography and Earth Sciences of ELTE gave a presentation on the reclamation and revitalization of former industrial areas and rust belts of Hungary by introducing some case studies. Finally, on behalf of the host institution and the organizers András TRÓCSÁNYI, associate professor, head of a geography department at UP, gave a presentation with the title "Our geography" on the scientific and academic work of professor TÓTH and its impact on research activities by his colleagues.

An exhibition entitled 'Homo Ludens' on the main corridor of the institution was also prepared as part of the symposium. It was opened by Zoltán DÖVÉNYI, who emphasized the colourful and multi-faceted character of the celebrated scholar. After the presentations of the symposium, a reception was awaiting the guests at Tettye Restaurant, where professor TÓTH was knighted and became a member of Pécs Wine Order.

On the second day, as a continuation of the professional programme, those who were interested could participate on a local urban field trip. It was led by András TRÓCSÁNYI who introduced the "another face" of Pécs. First they visited the Central Mecsek, where they had the occasion to take a look at former zones of recreation and entertaining areas, and visited the closed mining areas and those ghettos of the periphery. The city's industrial park where the two major enterprises of the city: Elcoteq (a subsidiary of the Finnish firm in consumer electronics and communications technology industries) and Alexandra (the largest publishing house in Hungary), are situated was also visited by the participants. They have also been guided to the possible south-eastern expansion of the city, by taking a look the airport of Pogány, the new M60 motorway junction and those huge shopping centres that are to be built by the entrances of the motorway.

Visiting Pécs in 2010, the year when the city holds the title of the Capital of European Culture it is important to observe the works on high investment projects; there-

fore the participants got a short overview of the Zsolnay Porcelain Manufacture, to be transferred to a Cultural Quarter, the city's new conference and concert centre named OPUS, the Regional Library and Knowledge Centre, often referred to as the Beehive. These huge investments are elements of the city's rehabilitation processes and Eastern expansion of the downtown areas. All these changes play an important role in the settling and flourishing of the Quaternary sector that is supposed to rely on knowledge economy and culture.

Judit Gyüre–Szilvia Kékesi and Klára Stefán



József Tóth (left) at the 2nd British-Hungarian Geographical Seminar, Szeged, 1977
(Photo by L. BASSA)



Professor Tóth with his wife at the symposium (Photo by Gy. MÁNFAI)



Róbert GÁBRIEL addressing the audience (from left to right: István Péter Kovács, Noémi Livia GÖRCS, Zoltán WILHELM, István GERESDI, Zoltán DÖVÉNYI, Erzsébet SCHMIDT, Bertalan RADVÁNSZKY) (Photo by GY. MÁNFAI)



Professor TÓTH as a newly elected member of Pécs Wine Order (Photo by GY. MÁNFAI)

HUNGARIAN GEOGRAPHICAL BULLETIN



FÖLDRAJZI ÉRTESÍTŐ

ORDER FORM

To be returned to: Geographical Research Institute Hungarian Academy of Sciences,
Budapest, P.O. Box 64. H-1388 Hungary.

Tel/Fax: (36) 1 309 2628, E-mail: magyar@mtafki.hu

Detailed information: www.mtafki.hu

Please send me copy(ies) of Hungarian Geographical Bulletin

Volume: Number:

Amounts to be transferred to: MTA FKI, Acc. No.:

IBAN: HU 34 10032000-01717345-00000000 SWIFT code: MANEHUHB

Name:

Address:

City Country

Date:

Signature

.....