

In Memoriam Géza Hámor (1934–2007)

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With death of Professor Géza Hámor, Hungarian geology and geologic education suffered an irrecoverable loss. A researcher and instructor who devoted his entire life to his profession has left us. He not only carried out geologic activity at a high professional level, but also organized and directed research, training and the education of his talented young successors.

He obtained a Maturity Certificate (Secondary School Diploma) in his native town Kecskemét in 1952, and graduated as a geologist from the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University in 1956. He had already established a link to the Geological Institute of Hungary during his secondary school years. Initially he worked as a temporary drilling hand there; later, as a university student, he also prepared for his geologic career in the Institute.



Between 1956 and 1991 he climbed every step of the career ladder of the Geological Institute of Hungary: he started as a trainee, worked as a research fellow, then became Deputy Head of Department, Head of Department (1965–1974), Deputy Director (1974–1979) and finally Director (1979–1991). His principal research activity was in the fields of geologic mapping, Neogene stratigraphy, basin analysis, geodynamics, quantitative facies analysis, and paleo-reconstruction. He was an internationally acknowledged expert of Miocene paleoenvironments, evolutionary history and geodynamics of the Pannonian Basin and the surrounding regions.

As a mapping geologist, he took part in the successful realization of three comprehensive geologic mapping programs (E Mecsek Mts, Nógrád-Cserhát Mts and Börzsöny Mts) and the related raw material exploration. He presented the scientific results of these investigations in regional monographs, in co-operation

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with his fellow researchers. As a leader he played a determinant role in organizing four mapping-exploring expeditions abroad (to Cuba, Mongolia, Libya and Vietnam).

As a project manager, with his colleagues he further developed the methodology of geologic mapping and map plotting, the use of section-like aerial photographic interpretation in Hungary, the Hungarian geochronological scale based on radiometric measurements, the magnetostratigraphic investigation of Neogene key sections, as well as the lithostratigraphic formation system of the Hungarian Neogene. He also established and published a methodology of paleoenvironmental and paleogeographic reconstruction.

Together with co-authors he compiled the geologic maps of the E Mecsek, Cserhát, and Börzsöny Mts, edited the paleogeographic maps and the atlases on the Neogene of Hungary, the Carpathian Basin, as well as all of Central and Eastern Europe. He was an initiator and co-author of the publication of the Hungarian regional maps (at a scale of 1:50,000) and the Geological Atlas of Hungary (a set of 42 different maps at a scale of 1:500,000).

He published the results of his research in 22 papers (with 46 maps), 5 monographs, 19 book chapters, 26 studies, 21 professional papers, 7 methodological papers, thereby laying the foundation for understanding the Neogene of Hungary and of the entire region of the Pannonian Basin for decades.

His outstanding management talent and deep humanity were clearly reflected in his activity as a director of the Geological Institute of Hungary. He established a new concept for research, setting as an aim the synthesizing of the results of the earlier, very intensive geologic research, and publishing the evaluated material, in order to carry out a modern geologic survey of the basins as well as of the mountainous areas; additionally strengthening the hydrogeologic, construction geologic, environment geologic and agrogeologic sectors. In order to fulfill these aims the structure of the Institute was considerably reorganized, the focus of its activity was shifted, its publications renewed and also significantly increased in number. Under his direction, the Geological Institute focused on activities based on basic research and geologic surveys, as well as taking versatile practical application into account.

Professor Géza Hámor already became involved in university teaching as a researcher of the Geological Institute, and always paid special attention to the education of youth. He had taught the regional geology of Hungary and of the surrounding areas as a university instructor in the Institute of Mining and Geotechnology of the Technical University for Heavy Industry of Miskolc since 1976, then since 1987 at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University. He organized, and between 1988 and 2004 led, the Department of Regional Geology, which had been transferred to the Geological Institute of Hungary, as its Department Head. He initiated and implemented summer field camps for the students outside of Hungary (in the Carpathians and Alps).

Following his retirement, since 2004 he had been the Director of the Geological Nature Conservation Area and Open-Air Geological Museum of Tata, all the while continuing his teaching activity. In 2006, Eötvös Loránd University awarded him the title of "Professor Emeritus".

He was an active member of the Hungarian Geological Society for more than 50 years, elected as Secretary of the Society in 1963 and as Chief Secretary in 1972; between 1986 and 1991 he was the President of the Society. Under his presidency the activity of the Society became more organized, and its regional organizations were strengthened. He also paid special attention to developing international relations. In 1993, he became an Honorary Member of the Hungarian Geological Society.

Géza Hámor was a member of the Geological Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Science for decades, and had been the Chairman of the Miocene Sub-Committee of the Hungarian Stratigraphic Committee for a long time. The establishing of the Hungarian lithostratigraphic system is connected to this period.

He was the Editor-in-Chief of the Annual Report of the Geological Institute of Hungary and *Földtani Közlöny*, and a member of the Editorial Board of *Acta Geologica Hungarica* for decades.

His international reputation is well illustrated by the fact that he was the Vice Chairman of the Regional Committee of Mediterranean Neogene Stratigraphy after 1991, and a member of its Executive Committee until 1999. He was elected as a Corresponding Member of the *Geologische Bundesanstalt Wien* (Austrian Geological Survey, Vienna) in 1985, an Honorary Member of the *Societas Geologorum Poloniae* in 1986, a Corresponding Member of the Austrian Geological Society in 2000, and an Ordinary Member of the Scientific Council for Petroleum of the Croatian Academy of Sciences and Arts in 2001.

The profound scientific knowledge, organizational skills, and tireless research activity based on a sense of vocation, of Géza Hámor cannot be recovered. We shall miss his humanism, unshakable optimism and the positive radiation of his personality. However, the achievements of his efforts will survive and help researchers of the next generations for a long time. His colleagues and students will maintain his memory, and his works enrich the science of geology.