

## Environmental history in Hungary, in Hungarian

After its explicit beginnings in the early 2000s,<sup>1</sup> Hungarian environmental history has gained in prominence both in research and education. The number of publications in this language has increased and environmental history is – in some form – part of the curriculum in several Hungarian universities. Importantly, researchers in other disciplines have shown an increasing awareness of and openness toward environmental history.

Even though several Hungarian environmental historians are well known abroad, much environmental historical research has not reached an international audience. Works published in Hungarian obviously pose the greatest difficulties for non-Hungarian readers. While environmental history is no exception to the general trend towards English as the dominant language of scholarship, Richard C. Hoffmann's claim that 'most history is published in the language of the country it describes'<sup>2</sup> is probably also true of Hungarian environmental history. Hungarian-language publications also fulfil the important function of integrating environmental history into local scientific structures. In the following paragraphs, we present some of the most important Hungarian language publications on environmental historical topics in the past decade or so. Needless to say, in the limited space available we cannot aim at an exhaustive collection. Instead, we focus on monographs and edited volumes with a significant environmental historical component. For standalone journal articles and book chapters, we refer the reader to the work of individual researchers. We also add that, as already observed by Andrea Kiss, there is a considerable amount of research in Hungary that is very close to environmental history but does not identify itself as such. Such works will not be included here either.

The first Hungarian monograph on environmental history was published in 2008 by Lajos Rácz, who was also the first Hungarian ESEH regional representative. His volume is based on the methodology and results of a number of disciplines – geography, history, archaeology, ethnography, natural sciences – which the author synthesised and reformulated from an environmental historical viewpoint. The resulting unparalleled synthesis of Hungary's environmental history (Lajos Rácz, *Magyarország környezettörténete az újkorig* [Hungarian Environmental History of the Modern Age] (Budapest: Magyar

1. Andrea Kiss, 'A brief overview on the roots and current status of environmental history in Hungary'. *Environment and History* **19** (2013): 391–394.
2. Richard C. Hoffmann, *An Environmental History of Medieval Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), p. 378.

*Environment and History* **23** (2017): 331–334.

Tudományos Akadémia Történettudományi Intézete, 2008), 261 pp.) was later reworked for international audiences and published as Lajos Rácz, *The Steppe to Europe* (Cambridge: The White Horse Press, 2013), 257 pp.

Also in 2008, András Kubinyi, József Laszlovszky and Péter Szabó co-edited a volume on the economic history and material culture of medieval Hungary: *Gazdaság és gazdálkodás a középkori Magyarországon: gazdaságtörténet, anyagi kultúra, régészet* [Economics and management of medieval Hungary: economic history, material culture, archaeology] (Budapest: Martin Opitz, 2008), 466 pp. Among the 22 articles, several tackled environmental historical topics, including, for example, L. Rácz's essay on climatic changes, L. Ferenczi's paper on water management, P. Szabó's work on woodland management and several articles on human–animal relationships that combined archival and archaeological data (e.g., L. Bartosiewicz on medieval fishing and the European sturgeon, K. Lyublyanovics on animal husbandry in towns and M. Daróczi-Szabó on animals in villages). This volume was also intended as a handbook so that individual articles contain extensive bibliographies of their respective topics.

Because of the geographical conditions in the Carpathian Basin, water has always played a significant role in human–nature interactions. As a result, historical investigations of water form a large part of Hungarian environmental history. In 2014, Krisztián Gergely Horváth (of the Department of Historical Sociology at ELTE University) edited a volume on water and society in Hungary over the last millennium. Specialists from archaeology, ethnography, art history, economy and history examined the complicated relationships between people and water over a long-term perspective. Given this disciplinary diversity, the editor's explicit aim was to provide a methodological framework for further studies. Five Hungarian ESEH members published their work in this volume, ranging from eighteenth-century winters on the Danube to post-war industry. Krisztián Gergely Horváth (ed.), *Víz és társadalom Magyarországon a középkortól a XX. század végéig* [Water and Society in Hungary from the Middle Ages until the end of the 20th century] (Budapest: Balassi Kiadó, 2014), 728 pp.

Water also forms the main topic of András Vadas' monograph published in 2013. By processing large numbers of primary sources (mainly seventeenth-century letters), the author demonstrates the connections between local society and the river Rába through the analysis of the effects of floods on bridges, mills and water regulation infrastructure. He also aims to show how a small study area can offer valuable conclusions about larger environmental historical issues, thereby providing a useful forum for broadening perspectives of Hungarian historians toward environmental history. András Vadas, *Körmend és a vizek. Egy település és környezete a kora újkorban* [Körmend and its waters: A settlement and its environment in the Early Modern Period] (Budapest: ELTE BTK Történelemtudományok Doktori Iskola, 2013), 128 pp.

One of the most significant publications in environmental history appearing in Hungarian is the special issue of the social historical journal, *Korall* (2013). As one of the most progressive social scientific journals in Hungary, *Korall* has embraced environmental history since its foundation in 2000. Entitled ‘Természeti kihívások – társadalmi válaszok’ [Environmental challenges – societal reactions], the special issue contains an interview with John R. McNeill, three book reviews and five papers on environmental historical topics, including the parks of Budapest (Erzsébet Magyar), nineteenth-century earthquakes (András Vadas), global climate change (Lajos Rácz) and floods on the Danube (Andrea Kiss and József Laszlovszky). The papers are available at <http://www.korall.org/lapszam/53>.

Environmental history *sensu lato* featured in a 2016 special issue of the journal *Természet Világa* [World of Nature] (vol. 147. special issue I.) entitled ‘Ember és környezet kapcsolata a Kárpát-medencében’ [The relationships between humans and the environment in the Carpathian Basin]. Guest edited by Pál Sümegei, the issue contains seventeen articles by geologists, geographers, archaeologists, palaeoecologists and historians about environmental changes in Hungary during the Holocene.

Several conferences have also been held to promote environmental history in Hungary. Geologist Miklós Kázmér organized the first two thematic conferences in Hungarian in 2006 and 2010. Selected papers (altogether 47) were published in two follow-up volumes in 2009 and 2011. The disciplinary diversity of Hungarian environmental history was well-represented in these volumes, which included contributions not only from historians but also from archaeologists, palynologists, ecologists, ethnographers, dendrochronologists and geologists. Miklós Kázmér (ed.), *Környezettörténet. Az utóbbi 500 év környezeti eseményei történeti és természettudományi források tükrében* [Environmental history. Environmental events in the past 500 years in light of historical and natural scientific sources] (Budapest: Hantken, 2009), 484 pp. Miklós Kázmér (ed.), *Környezettörténet II. Környezeti események a honfoglalástól napjainkig történeti és természettudományi források tükrében* [Environmental history II. Environmental events from the Conquest until the present in light of historical and natural scientific sources] (Budapest: Hantken, 2011), 315 pp. Also noteworthy are the several landscape historical conferences organised over some twenty years by György Füleky. Landscape history has close ties with environmental history, aptly demonstrated by a selection of topics from past conferences. Such topics include changes in landscapes and built environments, land use and land change in the eighteenth to twentieth centuries and the history of water use and management. In 2014, cultural historian László Kósa organized a workshop entitled *Környezettörténet, természeti katasztrófák, járványok* [Environmental history, natural catastrophes, epidemics] at ELTE University, Budapest. Papers presented there demonstrated that natural catastrophes and their consequences are a key topic in European

environmental history; six of these papers were later published in a special issue of the historical journal *Fons* (2015, vol. 22/3), attesting to the growing interest in these topics by Hungarian researchers. Last but not least, a workshop entitled *Történeti tájak – vizes élőhelyek: Régészet, környezettörténet, tájvédelem* [Historical landscapes – aquatic habitats: archaeology, environmental history, landscape protection], organised jointly by the Archaeolingua Foundation and the Cultural Heritage Studies Program of the Central European University, was held in January 2017 in Budapest to stimulate communication between specialists of wetland restoration and water historians.

DÉNES SALÁTA AND PÉTER SZABÓ

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