OBITUARY

Dr. Pál Lipták (1914-2000)

On July 6, 2000, P Lipt k, professor emeritus, passed away in Budapest.

He was born in B kscsaba on February 14, 1914. He attended secondary school in his hometown; between 1932-1937 he studied natural history and geography at P zm ny P ter University in Budapest, where he eventually took a teachers' degree in 1937. From 1934 on he was a member of E tv s J zsef Collegium. At the same university he obtained doctorate "summa cum laude" in the arts in 1938 with his dissertation entitled "The Geography of B k scsaba." From September 1, 1938, he taught at the teacher training college at Miskolc. In 1939 he joined the army for a two-year compulsory military service, after which, in 1941, he got a teaching position at the public Teachers' College in Budapest. In 1943 he was elected teacher in "Fasori" Secondary School in Budapest.

In April 1944 he joined the army again, and in May he was taken captive by Soviet troops to return home in 1948 only. Afterwards he taught at a primary school, the successor of "Fasori" Secondary School. During the summer of 1949 he worked as a scientific official, then as a research-fellow for the Anthropological Collection of the Museum of Natural History, where he continued the work interrupted by the war. In March, 1956, he became Candidate of Biological Sciences by defending his thesis "The Major Questions of Anthropology in the Territory between the Danube and the Tisza Rivers between the 7th and 13th Centuries AD."

On March 16, 1960, he was appointed head of the Department of Anthropology at J zsef Attila University, Szeged. In January, 1969, he defended his doctoral thesis "The Anthropology of Hungarian Ethnogenesis" and became Doctor of Sciences. In July, 1969, he was appointed professor. He retired from the department in Szeged in the summer of 1980.

His research was focused on questions of historical anthropology, especially Hungarian ethnogenesis. His work was characterised by a well-founded specialization. In the greater part of his hundred scholarly publications he dealt with the analysis and synthesis of historical anthropological finds. His attention was focused on the periods of Hungarian migration, the Hungarian Conquest and the Arpads and Hungarian ethnogenesis in this context. Based on examinations on skeletons, he improved the method of anthropotaxonomical differential diagnosis for europids and mongolids. In 1983 he published his book entitled "Avars and Ancient Hungarians."

In a few monographies on local history he co-authored communications on the anthropology of the living Hungarian population.

He took short field-trips abroad and participated in congresses. He was a member of the Anthropological Theme Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences (1958-1962), later on its Committee (1962-1985), and the editorial board of Antropol giai K zlem nyek (Communications in Anthropology) (1957-1992), and was the editor-in-chief of Acta Biologica Szegediensis (1975-1980).

As part of his academic work he wrote a textbook for university students entitled "Anthropology and the Evolution of Man," which was the first of its kind. Several of his students earned their doctoral degrees under his supervision. In 1989 he was awarded the Bartucz Lajos Commemorative Medal, and in February, 1994, the title of "professor emeritus" by J zsef Attila University.

P Lipt k's death means that we lost the last member of the excelling generation of Hungarian anthropologists (Mih ly Mal n, J nos Nemesk ri, Mikl s Feh r) trained in the mid-1930s.

His work has left a lasting mark on the face of Hungarian anthropology.

From Pál Lipták's major communications


Data to the Bronze-Age Anthropology of the Territory between the Danube and Tisza Rivers (1957) Anthrop Kzl 1:1-3. 
Anthropology and Historical Anthropology (1959) Anthrop Kzl 3:111-120.
Der die Anthropologie der Bevölkerung des s slichen Teils der ungarischen Tiefebene in der Arpadenzeit (Gyula Farkas, co-auth.), 1968.
M ra Ferenc M z v. 2:135-141.
Physical anthropological examination of a cemetery in Mokrin from the early Bronze Age. (Gyula Farkas, co-auth.), 1971, Diss et Monogr 11.
Beograd 239-271.
Origin and development of the Hungarian people on the basis of anthropological remains. (1975) Hung Pas 4:79-94.

On His Life and Works