

IN MEMORY OF DR. L. VÉRTES
1914—1968

By
GY. DÉNES

Dr. L. V é r t e s, palaeoarcheologist, doctor of historical sciences, member of the Council of the Hungarian Society of Speleology and Karst-Research, chief of the Palaeolithological Collection of the Hungarian National Museum died on the 20th August 1968, in 54 years of age.

Two weeks before his death, on the 7th of August we still roved together the labyrinth of the cave of *Castle-hill of Buda* and he made enthusiastic plans: how and where a new speleological exhibition should be set up, and he intended to display there in a separate room the life of the cave-man and his tools. On our way home he talked about his plans: about the monography he wanted to write about the fossils of *Vértesszöllös*, as well as on his method of making speak — by means of computers — the palaeoliths, the tools of prehistorical man, so that they could confess about the great mistery of development into man.

It is hard to belive that he left us for ever, that we shall miss this always vehemently arguing, sometimes pungently ironical, but always helpful man with his youthful appearance and with his eyes shining with joy and full with life, this enthusiastic, persistent, tireless research worker, never being without ingenious ideas, who felt always that the Hungarian cave-investigations were his special responsibility, and always took his part in their worries and enjoyed their successes with them.

He was led into the circle of speleologists by his interest in searching the nature. He joined the speleological group of the Tourists' Club of the Friends of Nature and took part in investigations in the *Legény-* and *Leány-cave*. In 1939 he worked with O. K a d i é in the excavations of the *Solymár-cave*, then he acquainted himself one after another with nearly all important caves of the country. In 1941 he conducted excavations in the *Istállóskő-cave* but without any serious plans. In 1943 we find him again in the *Solymár-cave*, this time already as employed by the Hungarian National Museum. The leader of the excavation, A. T a s n á d i-K u b a c s k a wrote about him: "Hanging on a single rope over an abyss of ten meters he cut out — over his head — the white bones of fossil animals from the though red clay. Had the thousand years old debris in the vast fissure of the limestone hill given way, the collector struggling in the light of the Davy lamp would be buried irremediably by the ruins. He worked alone, with the courage of those who are braving death".

Returning to Budapest after the war he went to the National Museum where he was charged with the lead of the Cave Inspectorate organised in the frame of the Museum. He flung himself into the research work of caves. In the spring of 1946 he continued the investigation of *Solymár-cave* interrupted by the war; in summer we find him in the *Mecsek-mountains* — with the joint expedition of the Hungarian Society for Cave-exploration and of the Tourists' Club of the Friends of Nature — taking part in the excavations of *Mélyvölgy-stone-niche* and of several other caves, while in autumn he is

busy with investigating the fillings of the stone-niche II. of *Pilisszántó*. The results of these works were published one after another in later years. Inbetween, his interest turned from the palaeontology towards prehistoric archaeology.

In 1947 he organized an expedition to the *Bükk*-mountains and began the excavation of the *Istállóskő*-cave. "This was the first professional excavation of my life" — he wrote later — "this was the first real adventure, the voyage of discovery into a new and as yet unknown world...". He succeeded excavating the fireplace of the cave-man and took it in the Museum. He continues his work in the *Istállóskő*-cave in the next year too; then he organizes excavation in the *Uppony*-niches and he can visit the *Istállóskő*-cave only during trips. Then he returns again and in 1950–1951 executes a lot of excavations in the cave. Besides the publication of his results in scientific papers, he described the excitingly interesting story of the excavations in his book about "The Chronicle of the Bear-Man".

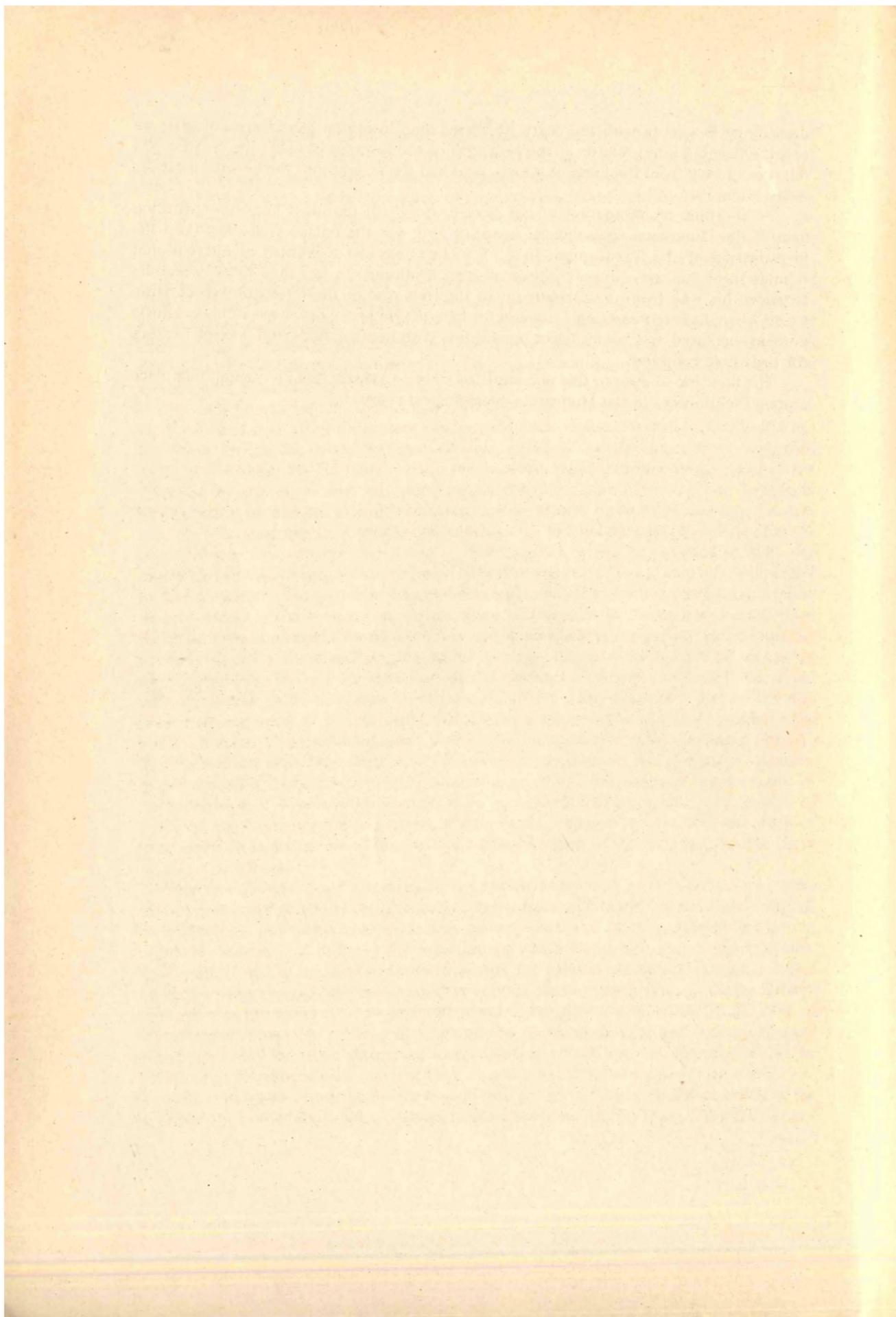
In 1951 he was appointed chief of the Stone-age Collection of the National Museum. He conducted new excavations with modern methods to the classical palaeolithic finding places such as the caves: *Subalyuk*, *Szeleta*, *Peskő*, *K. Lambrecht*, *Szelim*, *Jankovich*, *Bivak* and *Kis-Kevély*. He takes part in the excavations in the *Baradla*-cave and in the detection of the *Béke*-cave. His publications come out one after another, especially his monography of *Tata* in which he describes his efforts made in excavating this new site. He published excellent educational works, too. The greatest success of his life was bestowed on him with his excavation of *Vértesszöllős*, where he detected in 1963 the nearly half a million years old settlement of the cave-man embedded in calc tuff sedimented by karstic wells in the course of hundred-thousands of years. In two years he succeeded to excavate here the remnant of a nape-bone of the prehistoric man of *Vértesszöllős* which is of the same age as the *Sinanthropus* and he detected a rock-surface with footprints which is of unrivalled scientific value. In his last five years he concentrated all his energy to *Vértesszöllős*. Beyond the detection of the findings — which fascinated the whole scientific world — he succeeded to achieve that the finding-place of *Vértesszöllős* this excavated settlement of the prehistoric man in due conservation is now available to the public in form of a protected area. Amidst his innumerable tasks he found time to describe with the title: "Kavicsösvény" (Gravel-path) the exciting story of the excavations of *Vértesszöllős*. Nevertheless, the projected great work, the complex monography of the settlement of *Vértesszöllős* could not be completed any more, nor was he able to feed into the computer the thousands of data-cards prepared in course of the work of long years, in order to get answer to the basic questions of the process, during which man was developed.

He spent twenty years investigating the ancient stone age. At first he was interested in the typology of paleoliths, later he turned towards the mathematical-statistical methods of archeology and in his studies he was basing more and more on the judgement of numbers, indices and rations. His attention turned towards the origin and historical development of the tools of work and towards the rules governing it, and in order to be able to use the modern computers for solving these great problems, he undertook the task — in his age of 50 — to get familiarized with higher mathematics. M. K r e t z o i writes about him: "He realized that behind the numbers, indices and indicators there are to be found the first staggering ideas, conceptions of the ancient pre-man as he formed and transformed his ancient tools in the continuous struggle for existence. His investigations were interrupted and we will not get for a long time the answer for the questions he was going to solve perhaps in the immediate future. This is why the palaeo-

archeology lost more with the death of Vértes than losing an expert archeologist; we lost the talented interpretator of the problems of the forming of man; the creative pen fell prematurely from the hand of a man, who had the insight into the new perspectives of his science”.

At the time of foundation of our Society (in 1910) the most important working area of the Hungarian speleological investigations was the palaeo-archeology and the investigation of the fossile man. In L. Vértes we lost a worker of international reputation of this speleological science of great traditions. In less than three decade he struggled his way from an amateur up to the first row of the international scientific world where he is representing a domain for himself. He broke new ways in his scientific domain, he dared and could detect new results with new methods and way of looking for the whole mankind.

His lifework — even in this uncompleted state — assures him an outstanding place among the pioneers of the Hungarian speleological research.



IN MEMORY OF PROF. DR. F. PAPP
1901—1969

By
L. MAUCHA

Our Society still exists though its heart ceased beating when Prof. F. P a p p breathed his last on the 8th January 1969. In our era of modern medical science, this statement does not appear perhaps as a paradoxical one and it would be difficult to find a better analogy to appreciate the role our departed co-president, Honorary Member of the Hungarian Speleological Society filled in our organisation. During the first ten years of existence of our Society he has filled really the function of heart in our body, he took all responsibilities upon himself and provided new blood for the wearied members, without having any rest. And in the broader sense of the word, too, he was a whole-hearted man, friendly towards all of us and especially to the young men whose sincere affection was bestowed on him meritedly through all his life.

In the course of years we got little knowledge of his personal life, he kept secret even the dates of his name-day and birthday and with his modesty so characteristic for great men he escaped from all personal ovations. He was born at *Budapest* on the 31th July 1901. He studied at the University of Budapest and became certificated high-school teacher in geography in 1924. As early as in his university-years he was interested in the problems of mineralogy and petrography; he completed in these years his first study: "Vapours and gases of the magma". In 1924 he was appointed as assistant to the Chair for Mineralogy and Geology of the Technical University of Budapest. In 1925, he obtained his Ph. D., majoring in mineralogy and petrography. In 1928 he became assistant lecturer and from this year on he lectured about petrography for first year students of architectural engineering. In 1932 he got a foreign scholarship and conducted ore-microscopical studies at the institute of Prof. O r c e l in the cabinet for minerals of the Paris Museum. In 1935 he became privat-docent with his study: "Selected chapters of petrography". In 1943 he was nominated first lecturer, in 1953 he became full professor at the Technical University and from 1960 on he was director of the Chair of Mineralogy and Geology.

His scientific activity was highly many-sided. His petrographical investigations had a pioneering importance. In his younger years, he studied the diorities of Hungary, the granite of the *Mecsek*, the andesites in the vicinity of *Kövesd* and the eruptives of the *Börzsöny*-mountains, made a geological resurveying of the *Tihany*-peninsula. Having returned from his study-trip in Paris he started the microscopical investigation of ores of the *Börzsöny*-mountains and other districts in Hungary. His mineralogical studies contributed in great part to the knowledge of his native land. He detected the presence of haematites of *Hargita*-type on the *Huszár*-hill at *Bernece*; in the course of his mineralogical-petrographical investigations he discovered the occurrence of pyrrhotine, melnikovite-pyrite, marcasite, phacolite, chalcedony, calcite, dacite, chiastolite as well as of shale and contact clay-shale in the *Börzsöny*-mountains. In the *Mátva*-mountains he demonstrated the presence of tetrahedrite and dacite, in the surroundings of *Szarvaskő*

that of ilmenite. Later on, his attention was turned towards hydrogeological problems. He began his investigations in this direction with a study of springs of the *Börzsöny*-mountains in 1929. In 1932 he made contributions to the study of underwater wells of the *Gellért*-hill; he became one of the most comprehensive and open-minded specialists of the mineral springs and healing waters of *Budapest*. The practical problems of interaction of water and rocks also arose his interest. His detailed investigations of landslides made him one of the pioneers of engineering-geological investigations in Hungary. His comprehensive work on the investigations of mineral springs of *Budapest* made him to win the prize of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. At the Chair of Mineralogy and Geology he organised a Department for Spring-Research in dependence of the Research Institute for Rheumatism and Balneology of the Central Commission for Spas and Health-resorts. He initiated many young engineers into the investigations of springs and it is his merit that so many valuable studies appeared about the Hungarian healing waters.

An important part of his hydrogeological works was the study of karstic waters. His essay: "The karstic waters of *Transdanubia* and the possibilities of their exploitation at *Budapest*" disclosed with basic fullness the problems involved — many of them being still unsolved. In another study he gives a comprehensive representation of the quantitative and qualitative characteristics of karstic waters based on a modern way of looking; he worked out a new integrated system of the springs observing new viewpoints. He was one of the founders of the Hungarian Hydrological Society and its president for two years (1959—1961); then he served as president of the Editorial Committee of the *Hydrological Review* up to his death.

His engineering-geological activity began in 1933 with an investigation of the marbles in Hungary. He published a lot of studies about landslides of the *Castle-Hill* of *Buda*, the building stones of *Transdanubia*, the geological substructure of *Budapest* from the point of view of the foundation of buildings, the occurrence and use of the ashlar of the country, the places of occurrence of gravel and sand as well as the quarries of Hungary, the use of the geological study-results with tunnel-construction, and about the engineering-geological conditions of the surroundings of *Zebegény*. His manual of determination of rocks, written for the use of engineers, has been of a gap-filling importance in the geological literature of the country.

In the years after World War II he joined in the leading of the speleological research of the country, too. In 1954 he organized at the Chair of Mineralogical and Geological a Students' Scientific Association for Karst and Speleologica Research, then in 1957 he founded a *Karst-Research Station* at the *Vass-Imre*-cave near *Jósvafő*: this was one of his most important life-works, by which he succeeded realizing an age-old aim of Hungarian speleologists. At this station the regular scientific study of the karst-problems, though on a small scale, could start.

He has dealt with the geological connections of speleology in several publications, and more than that he gave a detailed program for the scientific study of karstic areas and caves in his studies written about the engineering-geological aspects of karstic phenomena. He supported the research-groups engaged in karst-studies throughout the country and took part in every action of our Society. He made great efforts in his personal diplomatic manner to provide means necessary for the publication-costs of our yearbooks, for the creation of a speleological museum on the *Castle-Hill*, for supporting of expeditions abroad, and he made steps for the appreciation of the importance of cave-investigations by higher authorities, for the creation of a *Baradla*-Committee

as well as in support of a protection of caves and their mineral treasures. With his never flagging enthusiasm he served the interests of the Hungarian speleological research by continuously arousing the interest of the youth, by organizing speleological courses and scientific and educational lectures and encouraging the young men to exploratory and scientific actions.

Prof. P a p p was — as past president of numerous scientific societies and committees and as a man and scientist, as a pedagogue and organizer — one of the greatest personalities. The number of his publications amounts to about 120. Until his death, he remained — with his youthful enthusiasm — a true friend of the youth. Owing to his unselfishness and helpfulness, in the last years he renounced even his own research work, in order to be able to devote all his time to the cave-investigations and other public affairs. His pedagogical and science-organisational works — conducted for several decades — resulted in flourishing of the Hungarian engineering-geology, hydrogeology and speleology. All the Hungarian speleologists and karst-investigators will keep his memory with gratitude, esteem and love.

