

Zoltán Keresztesi – 75



It is a rare occasion that the professional career of a specialist coincides almost exactly with an accelerating transformation of the technology of the academic domain he has been involved in deeply. Nonetheless this is just the case with Zoltán KERESZTESI who has been chief of the Department of Cartography of the Geographical Research Institute (GRI) HAS for several decades. Most of his half-century activities cover this period of cartography when classic technology based on photo- and lithography was replaced by computer assisted mapmaking.

KERESZTESI received his diploma of geographer-cartographer at the Faculty of Natural Sciences of Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, in 1960 and joined the Geographical Research Group (RG) HAS in the following year. This group, led by Márton PÉCSI, was thoroughly engaged in thematic mapping, particularly in elaborating the methodology of geomorphological mapping. This way the young cartographer entered the academic sphere.

For ten years (1963–1973) KERESZTESI returned to his *alma mater* as an assistant professor, to teach the young generations and to project and set up a modern laboratory of cartography providing equipment for reproduction photography, typesetting, preparation for printing. He defended his dissertation in hydrogeographic mapping in 1965. At the same time he kept on maintaining close contacts with the RG, where established a similar laboratory after his return, in the mid-70s.

Later KERESZTESI became involved in large-scale projects, participating in the edition of two maps for Atlas of the Danubian Countries (*Atlas der Donauländer*) edited by Josef Breu: those of hydrology and geomorphology. At the GRI the engineering-geomorphological mapping of Budapest was completed by 1980 at a scale of 1:20 000. Then the legend of a new type of base map for the environmental assessment of urbanized and technogenous areas was created with his active participation.

The 1980s were dominated by atlas cartography in his life work. He became the editor of the physical geographical section of the second edition of the National Atlas of Hungary (NAH) and co-author of some of the maps. These efforts in organization and coordination yielded an atlas that gained a high governmental recognition: the editorial board members received Széchenyi Prize in 1990. Two years later a thematic atlas in palaeogeography came out (on the Late Pleistocene–Holocene Environment of the Northern Hemisphere), prepared in international cooperation. The responsibility for lithography and printing rested completely with KERESZTESI's department. It should be mentioned that the high quality was reached in spite of the very modest technological background. For instance, the printing of copies of four-colour maps was carried out on the monotint

press of the GRI. This was one of the last pieces among the series of atlases produced by the traditional way, with the strict division of design, drawing, colour separation, and printing from plates.

In the 1990s KERESZTESI was championing the new technology – computer aided mapping. All over the world cartography laboratories grew up with workstations, PCs and peripherals: scanners, plotters and printers. KERESZTESI was in charge of purchasing instruments for the GRI for long decades. It has been largely his merit that by the mid-90s a SUN workstation with Arc/Info electronic map publishing software supported by PCs produced NAH supplementary map folios. The primary demand towards the system was the adequate preparation for printouts. At the same time GIS-based mapping of Hungarian ethnic minorities in the Carpathian basin started with the establishment of textual and graphic databases: their merges resulted in a map series at different scales (Burgenland, Slovakia, Transcarpathia, Transylvania, Vojvodina, the Pannonian territory of Croatia, Prekmurje) authored by Károly Kocsis. The long lasting editorial work and computer assisted mapping was completed with a double ethnic map of Hungary (scale of 1:500 000; 1941–2001) in 2009. The first decade of the new millennium saw the publication of *Magyar Tudománytár* in six volumes by the Centre for Social Studies of HAS. Some of the volumes are richly illustrated with maps produced by the small workshop of a couple of gifted young cartographers guided by KERESZTESI. Initially solicited by high EU circles, three pieces of the “in maps” albums with a strong geographical orientation (on South-Eastern Europe, Ukraine and Hungary) were published in English in the second half of the decade. The Hungarian version of the latter (*Magyarország térképekben*) appeared in May 2011.

The editorial board of the Hungarian Geographical Bulletin (HGB) congratulates Zoltán KERESZTESI on his 75th birthday. For he has shown

- a high accomplishment in technology of mapmaking,
- persistence in teaching cartography to young generations,
- consistence in the application of innovations,
- skills in organization and leading large-scale projects.

Ferjan Ormeling, Secretary-General and Treasurer of the International Cartographic Association in a lately evaluation of our journal HGB wrote: “To have access to a cartographic laboratory where cartographers are able to illustrate in a relevant way the papers and articles to be incorporated in the journal is a real bonus and the scientists working in the GRI of the HAS might not treasure this sufficiently. The level of the cartographic illustrations in HGB is very high, and I hope it will remain so.” Thank you, Zoltán!

László BASSA