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## ABSTRACTS

### Gál, Zoltán: “After the Golden Age” Territorial Reorganisation of Hungarian Bank Centres between the World Wars

The paper analyses the impact of the Hungarian banking system on the hierarchical setting of urban network in the interwar period. It is based on previous research on territorial distribution of banking functions in the early twentieth century calculated by Christaller's Central Place Theory. The spatial development of the Hungarian banking sector was determined by two parallel processes, namely by border changes, and by processes of spatial concentration and institutional centralization following international trends. The dissolution of the previously integrated financial market with the detachment of provincial financial centres was only partially responsible for the disproportionate growth of the asset concentration of Budapest banks. The importance of the remaining financial centres was further decreased by the natural process of market concentration from the beginning of the twentieth century. This led to the merging of many provincial financial institutions into Budapest-based banks or becoming parts of the affiliate networks of the largest banking corporations.

After World War I and the great economic depression the consolidation of the banking system was further stimulated by active state interventions. Building an extensive network of provincial branches, banks with Budapest headquarters were weakening the positions of local banks with limited scope of territorial functions. The paper analyses the changing spatial hierarchical order of provincial financial centres and gives examples of the defensive strategies of provincial banks with larger financial muscle.

### Hajdu, Zoltán: The Geo-Historical Study of the Changes in the State-Building Processes in the Carpathian Basin

The study surveys the state-building processes of the Carpathian Basin, and the approaches of historical geography in this field, with special attention to the presence of Hungarians in the region from 895 to present.

There is a constant reminder in the course of this study that the basin as a geographical entity and the historical-political relationship with this geographical space have always been present in the state-building processes in the Carpathian Basin. The awareness of the basin as geographical space and some kind

of geographical study and interpretation of the Carpathian Mountains as boundary appear in every study of historical geography.

The area of modernisation was significantly greater than the territory of present-day Hungary and successor states. Between 1867 and 1918 the most significant framework of modernisation processes was the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy. At the same time historical Hungary had an important role as an area of partial integration.

Following the fragmentation in 1920, the possibility of uniform political development was lost, even in times when the majority of the region was under German influence during World War II, and Russian rule between 1945 and 1990. The European Union brings new opportunities and challenges into the long-term development of the Carpathian Basin. In this ever-changing scene, future developments will resolve whether it is integration or adaptation to the surrounding environment that will become dominant.

### Jankó, Ferenc: Villages in Town: The Place of Outskirts in the Urban Morphology of Sopron's Historic Quarter

The paper surveys the development of historic outskirts of Sopron from the mid-nineteenth century to 2000 using land-registry maps, land registers, and research data. The main focus of the study is the ways urbanisation overcame the rural morphological character in the region. The first part of the essay defines the place of outskirts in the urbanisation process of historic towns in Transdanubia (West Hungary). The diffusion of urban lifestyle, the occupational re-stratification of agricultural population, and the urban planning of the communist era discouraged their elimination altogether. Examining the development of urban fabric through the example of Sopron, it has become conspicuous that the outskirts developed into districts as characteristic as the downtown areas. Furthermore, as a Hungarian peculiarity, the outskirts, too, were defended by city walls from the beginning of the seventeenth century

The first land-registry survey was a snapshot of the condition of the town at the very beginning of urban development. Although in the second half of the nineteenth century intensive transformation and concentration processes commenced, some parts of the outskirts, unaffected by traffic, remained largely untouched. The rural elements of morphology underwent only small-scale transformation, not primarily by vertical rebuilding, but by becoming self-contained. In addition to the rural character, a distinctive element of morphology of historic outskirts, the phenomenon of the so-called 'part-houses', emerged as a result of densification within the boundary of plots. Eventually these became legal institution.

The means to preserve the character of historic outskirts is not restricted to judicious architectural regulation only: social and economic rehabilitation integrated into urban politics is also indispensable.

### Keményfi, Róbert: The Mythic Historico-Geographical Background for 'Our Cultural Force': The Notion of a Hungarian Mesopotamia

During the period of the formation of the consciousness of national origins for ethnic and language-based proto-communities, and also later, in the period of modern nation-building, the historical consciousness of peoples entering this process late or without an independent statehood contained ideological systems through which they could date or trace the 'vitality' and primordially of their own culture back to the ancient cradles of human civilization. It is this ideological framework where the notion called 'Hungarian Mesopotamic idea' belongs. This can be summed up as follows: the connections with ancient fluvial civilizations, including the Southern-Uralic areas around the Caspian Sea, Lake Aral, and the Tien-san (often identified as Turanian peoples), together with the Sumerian-Hungarian linguistic relationship derived from this 'Turanian character', have provided Hungarians with a secret forgotten knowledge that elevates them among the ranks of culture-creators generating a universal civilization. In this view, all social 'concerns' and historical tragedies derive from the fact that academic thinking, the Hungarian way of social development, and political decision makers have always failed/continue to fail to recognize this. The Hungarian nation would surely not 'lag behind' if this 'ancient cultural force', and 'high civilization' (e.g. the runic alphabet and writing) were reintroduced to help the nation to ascend again.

However, it was not only in quasi-scholarly or 'esoteric' historiography where the Mesopotamic idea, refuted by relevant professional scholarly criticism, occurred. It also appeared in Hungarian geographical scholarship between the two world wars. This contained elements of the Hungarian 'Turanian' heritage, and mapped how the impact of the culture acquired there influenced spatial processes in a way that is still recognizable today. Moreover, beside this notion, Hungarian geography – a discipline not yet fully detailed and developed – made the Carpathian Basin itself seem to be a peculiar 'Hungarian Mesopotamia'.

This present study aims to describe the general characteristics of geographical mythopoeia, exploring how the idea of a 'culture-generating natural environment' appeared in Hungarian geographical scholarship between the two world wars. This is followed by a survey of early German research examples that served as a basis for this notion catching on in the Hungarian-speaking regions. Also included is a detailed discussion of what role this geographical Mesopotamic

principle played in the 'scholarly' support of revisionist efforts surfacing in the inter-war period.

### Rácz, Lajos: Climate-Environmental Crises in Hungary in the 1830s

The main research questions of this study were to find out if there were a huge number of weather anomalies the 1830s and whether these extreme anomalies influenced the Hungarian nobility's stance on social reform.

The research was based on documentary sources and time series of instrumental observation in Buda. The research results verified that the decade of the 1830s was one of the most extreme periods of modern Hungarian environmental history. For the eleven years analysed, the average of monthly anomalies per year was nearly half a year (5.7 months). The gravity centre of climate change was 1833 and 1834. In 1833 alone there were seven months when weather anomalies occurred, moreover, there were five cases of extreme monthly averages of temperature and precipitation as well. Similarly, in 1834 there were seven extreme months; however, double anomalies occurred in only three cases. The structural climate analysis of the 1830s reveals a rather cold and dry climate profile.

It is inferred that the high frequency of climate anomalies and series of ecological and economic conflicts positively influenced the attitudes of Hungarian nobility towards social reform.