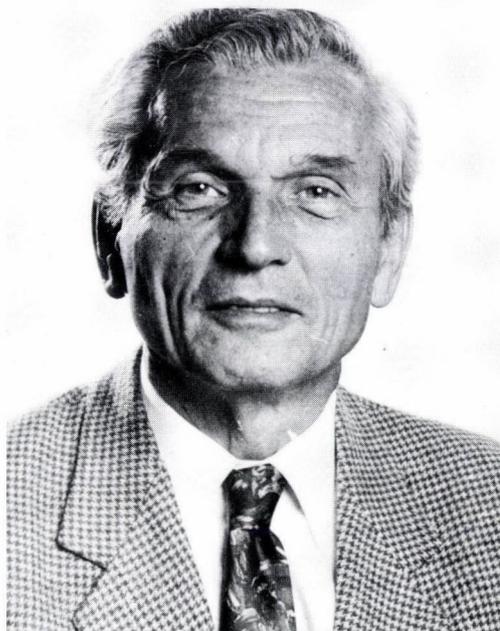


## CHRONICA



SÁNDOR BÖKÖNYI  
(1926–1994)

Sándor Bökönyi, member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, died on Christmas Day 1994 at the age of 68. In addition to having been an internationally acknowledged archaeozoologist, he served for twelve years as the director of the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences.

Sándor Bökönyi's scientific significance may be best appraised within the context of archaeozoology's development in Hungary. The first archaeozoological work in Hungary was published by Ferenc Kubinyi in 1859 who discussed horse and camel osteomorphology relevant to the conquering Hungarians. That year was hallmarked by the publication of Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* in the international scientific literature. Two years later, Ludwig Rüttimeyer's groundbreaking work, *Die Fauna der Pfahlbauten der Schweiz* laid the foundations of classical archaeozoology.

Although Kubinyi's work was not directly continued, the identification of animal bones from archaeological sites began in a sporadic manner. Gyula Brummel published a series on the animal breeding of the Conquering Hungarians in 1900. József Besskó wrote his dissertation in 1906 on the craniology of horses from the Period of the Hungarian Conquest. The research trend, best described as "domestication history", subsequently culminated in the works of Béla Hankó published between the two world wars. In his valuable historical research, however, Hankó did not rely on a solid basis of osteoarchaeological evidence. In contrast to this historically inclined work, Sándor Bökönyi initiated modern archaeozoological research in Hungary: he was the first in this country to consider the broad evidence of excavated bone materials to create a more objective picture. Archaeozoology, therefore is a discipline that should never be mistaken for research into the history, of domestic animals.

Sándor Bökönyi grew up in rural northeastern Hungary in a family of country teachers. It may not be accidental therefore, that his higher education started in 1944 at the Veterinary Department of the Palatine Joseph University of Technical and Economic Sciences in Budapest that subsequently became the Veterinary Faculty of the newly established University of Agricultural Sciences. He obtained a veterinary diploma in 1950.

Sándor Bökönyi's scientific career started as Andersen's tale of the ugly little duck. Dropping his first research subject in serology as a graduate student, he started frequenting the storage facilities of the Museum of Natural History and the National Center of Museums and Monuments where excavated animal bones lay unexplored. At first, the young "Animal Man" with his king size callipers was the laughing stock of fellow archaeologists. His research, however, was officially acknowledged when he was offered a position at the Department of Archaeology of the Hungarian National Museum where he established the museum's archaeozoological collections. In 1973, he left to join the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, a powerhouse of prehistoric archaeology at that time. Even today, archaeozoology in Hungary is widely associated with the problems of prehistoric research such as the process of animal domestication. This perception has been inseparable from Sándor Bökönyi's investigations since it was the faunal material from large-scale prehistoric excavations that led to the emergence of local archaeozoological research during the 1960s and 1970s.

European archaeozoology at that time, was concentrated in German speaking areas, where Sándor Bökönyi's peers, notably the late Elisabeth Schmid in Basel, Joachim Boessneck in München and Hans R. Stampfli in Solothurn (to name only three recently deceased, respected colleagues) pioneered in the research into local faunas. Thus, parallel work in Hungary not only contributed important faunal information in the field of archaeozoology: thanks to his intensively cultivated knowledge of English, Sándor Bökönyi soon linked the traditional Central European school of archaeozoology to anglophonic prehistoric research in the Middle East. This radically new approach was in great demand during the 1960s, especially among North American archaeologists who sought to maximize the application of "objective" scientific data in social anthropology under the broad term *New Archaeology*. While this paradigm has never caught on in Hungary, Sándor Bökönyi made valuable contributions to this type of research especially in the form of faunal data from the Middle East.

Following a year spent as a Ford research fellow in the United States in 1966–1967, he paid a half year long visit to Iraq in 1969 within the framework of the cultural exchange program between that country and Hungary. The comprehensive study of Middle Eastern faunal materials during these two trips lay the foundation of his subsequent research career in the area.

Political turmoil that increasingly plagued the Middle East has driven western archaeologists out from most countries in Southwest Asia. Iran, Afghanistan and Iraq, parts of the "Fertile Crescent" where Sándor Bökönyi had several projects at stake became less and less accessible, during the last two decades. As excavation teams were forced to move to new, more peaceful countries, especially in the Arabian Peninsula, Sándor Bökönyi was invited to move along with them. Consequently, his systematic scientific activity covered the entire region, in addition to relevant areas in the Balkans and, to some extent, Italy. Recent short research trips to Armenia and India further enhanced the unusually broad spectrum of historical zoogeography encompassed by Sándor Bökönyi's research. As the result of these frequent trips, during which he contributed his ideas to international scientific advancement, he brought home the spirit of innovation motivating his research.

The steady pace of Sándor Bökönyi's professional advancement was rewarded by the degree "Candidate of Biological Sciences" in 1960 and "Academy Doctorate in Biology" in 1969. It also characterized his administrative work as the head of the Interdisciplinary Department at the Archaeological Institute of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences between 1979 and 1981, and as the director of the entire institute between 1981 and 1993. Instead of indiscriminately adopting trendy ideas, however, he consistently argued for anthropocentric archaeology, that is, anthropology *lato sensu*, a relatively new concept in Central Europe. He envisaged a broad range of specialists working in close cooperation on each archaeological topic.

Within his narrow and special field, archaeozoology, Sándor Bökönyi's was not only a founding member of the *International Council for Archaeozoology* (ICAZ), but also took part, in close cooperation with the late János Matolcsi, in organizing the first meeting of this body at the Hungarian Agricultural Museum in 1971. This important event, led to the emergence of archaeozoology's most significant organization that numbers several hundred members from five continents.

Sándor Bökönyi sat at the Presidium in the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Archaeological Committee of Hungary, the Committee on Hungarian Ancient History and the Section of Art- and Architectural History of the Scientific Qualification Committee of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences. He was the archetype of a modern scholar who represented Hungary in a number of international *fora* as well, thereby accommodating his clear national identity with a broad, cosmopolitan view of the world. He became a member of *Academia Europaea* in 1992, following long standing memberships in the Animal Husbandry subcommittee of UISPP and the executive Committee of ICAZ. In addition to being on the editorial board of several international journals, as a member, he participated in the work of DAI (Germany) and ISMEO (Italy).

As the head of the Archaeological Institute, he introduced the concept of "Microregion research" in Hungarian archaeological work. This meant, in effect, that the aforementioned multidisciplinary team of highly specialized professionals could concentrate efforts within a relatively small geographical area in order to produce the most detailed diachronic study possible of both the environment and culture. Such a project was first carried out during his directorate in Békés county, southeastern Hungary.

In addition to encouraging progressive research trends as director, he has always been proud of the infrastructure of the Archaeological Institute, giving due credit to restorers, librarians, photographers and draftspeople as well as the financial department. He actively supported the archaeological applications of informatics during his tenure thereby preparing the Institute for the next millennium. Moreover, he set an example to colleagues by his personal discipline and back breaking working habits.

Although many would argue that Sándor Bökönyi served as director of the Archaeological Institute during its most prosperous period, no one would deny that he had to work very hard to keep abreast with developments in the outer world. In spite of his tremendous efforts financial resources gradually dried up by the late 1980s as the "paternalistic" state started gradually withdrawing from subsidizing the public sector.

Following political changes Sándor Bökönyi, a moderate professional, was unanimously *re-elected* as director of the Archaeological Institute by the overwhelming majority of the Institute's staff. After the end of his term as director, he was given the status of research professor at the Archaeological Institute. Having become full member of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences in 1990, he used his respect, and scientific as well as administrative leverage on behalf of the Institute at a time when it was increasingly needed.

In addition to scientific investigations and organizing work, Sándor Bökönyi's teaching activity was also eminently important. He delivered lectures in archaeozoology to students in archaeology and physical anthropology at the Loránd Eötvös University of Budapest starting in the 1951–1952 academic year. He was promoted to the rank of Honorary Professor at that institution in 1984. Guest professorships included two semesters of teaching at the University of California in Los Angeles in 1970–1971, as well as shorter periods at the universities of Saarbrücken (1980) and Rome (1983). Another invitation to UCLA followed in 1992. Aside from instructing archaeology students on the history of animal exploitation in general, he trained several individuals both in various countries in Europe and the United States to become specialists in the identification and evaluation of animal bones. His painful absence, however, is not simply a personal tragedy. It will inevitably hinder the international development of archaeozoology at a time of gross deterioration in research and development policy-making and worldwide budget cuts in the humanities and social sciences.

*L. Bartosiewicz*

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## ERZSÉBET MÁRITY

(1951–1994)



Eine tragisch kurze, aber vielversprechende und bewegte Laufbahn war unserer so jung verstorbenen Archäologenkollegin vergönnt. Stets war ihre Arbeit von großem Fleiß und Zielstrebigkeit gekennzeichnet, von der Achtung ihrem Beruf gegenüber und einem tiefen Bewußtsein ihrer Berufung durchdrungen. Letzteres gab ihr die Kraft, zahlreiche Hindernisse zu überwinden und das fast noch als Kind erwählte Berufsziel zu erreichen.